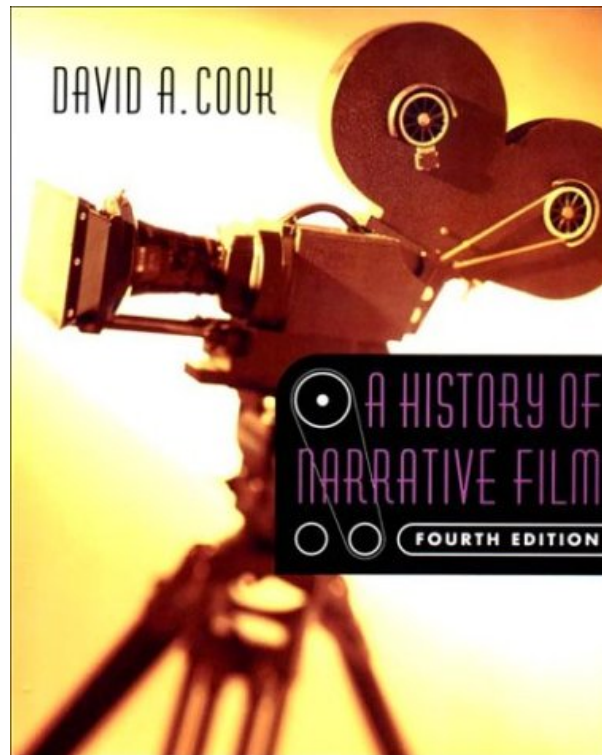
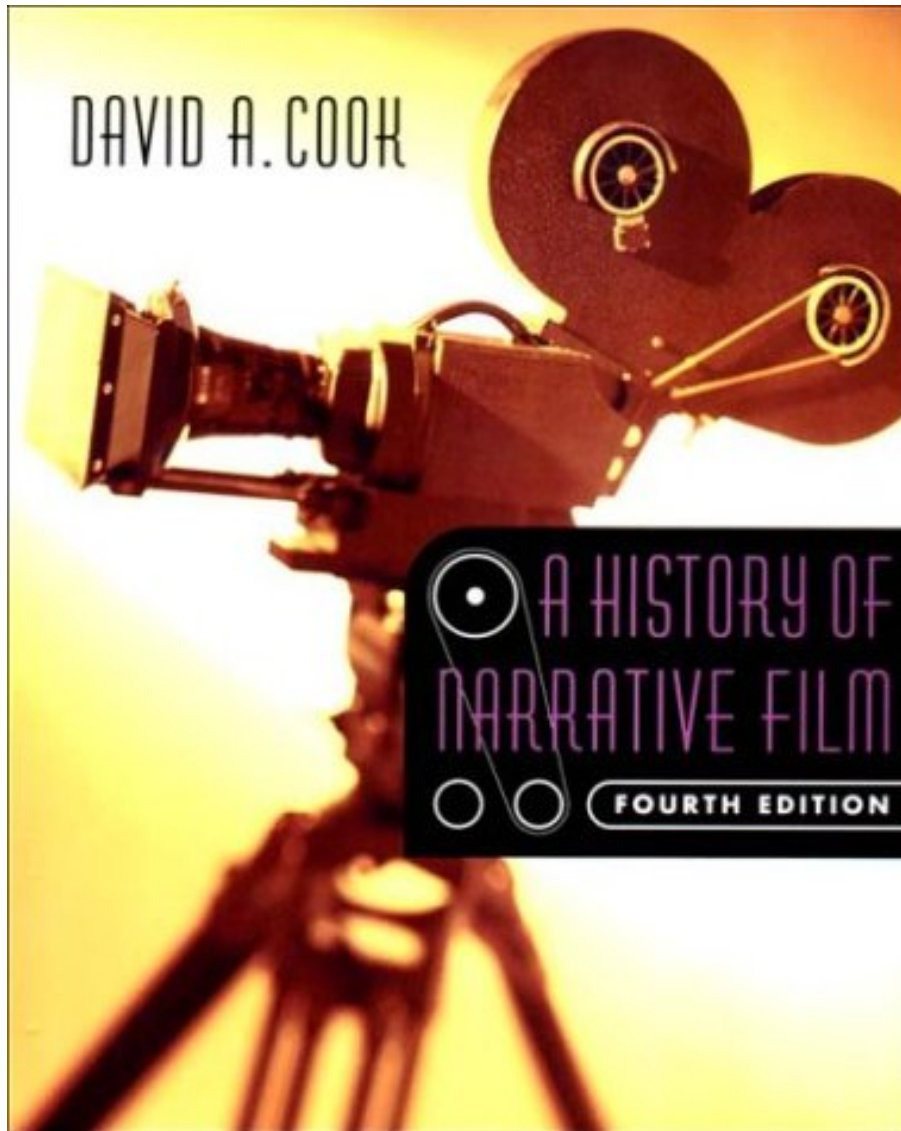


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About the Author

David A. Cook is a Professor in the Department of Media Studies at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. He is the author of *Lost Illusions: American Cinema in the Shadow of Watergate and Vietnam, 1970-1979* (University of California Press, 2002).

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Sophisticated in its analytical content, current and comprehensive in its coverage of all aspects of film and filmmaking, and informed throughout by fascinating historical and cultural contexts, A History of Narrative Film is widely acknowledged to be the definitive text in the field.

The Fourth Edition adds an entire chapter on computer-generated imaging, updates filmographies for nearly all living directors mentioned in the text, and includes major new sections that both revisit old content and introduce contemporary trends and movements.

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- Descriptive
- Helpful

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Great Book, Awesome price

By Amazon Customer

Fast shipping, Great Book, Awesome price! Would buy from again!

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

SDSU instructor

By Robert Jordan

Honestly, I didn't expect my San Diego State custom text to come up on Amazon, but since it is, I'll outline the edits. The book is used for a class that does NOT include any American cinema - I have also limited the chapters on 3rd world cinema and Asian cinema. I tried to reduce sections that were on films and filmmakers

who you have never heard of and will never see. Is it biased? Yes, but I felt it was more important to show 8 1/2 than Blood of the Condor - sorry.

84 of 88 people found the following review helpful.

Too much of a good thing?

By Robert Jordan

I've been teaching college film studies courses for about twenty years and I have been using Cook's book that whole time. It's an amazing effort which covers over a century of cinema from virtually every corner of the globe. Each edition has become larger and more exhaustive. So now we come to the fourth edition and I start to wonder when do we get TOO large and exhaustive?

The book is over 900 pages long. There are twenty-one chapters. Too much for a semester-length course - probably too much for two courses! I'd estimate there are ten thousand names (film titles and filmmakers). As an instructor, I look at it all and ask myself where do I even begin cutting to make it manageable for my classes? As a student, I'd guess you would ask, "how much of what I'm paying for am I going to actually read and learn about?" Seventy dollars isn't too bad compared to other college books of this length, but if you only read a third of it...?

A lot of film classes, sadly, my own included, tend to give you the greatest hits - the same fifty or so classics and nothing more. Cook rejects this and offers you literally hundreds of films that sound fascinating and make you want to see them. However, he seems so concerned not to exclude anything, that he name-drops. He'll devote a section of the book to films from a particular country and you get the impression, he's never seen them himself. He's just including them so the book won't be incomplete. There's no easy answer. He could ignore that country's cinema entirely and someone would criticize that decision. Instead he goes on and on about films you'll never see and won't be learning anything about.

I have a few personal criticisms of the new edition. Disney's animated films, he claims, are beyond the scope of the book, but then he discusses Japanese anime at some length. He has a section devoted to "splatter" exploitation films which includes pictures of a decapitated woman, a man with a drill going through his head and something really, really bloody coming out of ... well, you get the idea. If it were me, I'd cover Disney and skip the splatter section - or at least show fewer pictures. Am I just too old fashioned?

Cook has an especially difficult job with current world cinema. Like any other aspect of history, how do we really know what contemporary films are going to be classics fifty years from now and which will be forgotten? I agree with him some of the time: his detailed analysis of The Lord of the Rings trilogy. I disagree sometimes too: do you really think Moulin Rouge is going to be considered a "landmark" film even a decade from now?

Finally, a plea, not just to David Cook but to all cinema book authors: Stop including shot by shot breakdown photos from classic films! Do you really think we need to see A DOZEN PAGES of the Odessa Steps sequence of Battleship Potemkin?!! Can we all agree that video now makes these films readily available to any film buff and certainly to any college offering a cinema class? There are SIXTY photos taken from Citizen Kane alone. I know it's supposed to be the greatest film ever made, but won't readers just go out and see it for themselves?

So for the film fan who wants an entire college-level education on world cinema in a single volume, I cannot recommend this edition highly enough. For a student choosing cinema as a major, or for their graduate studies, it's going to be a great resource. But I envision two other people who may be reading this book. One's a student standing in line at the campus bookstore overwhelmed and demoralized by the sheer size of the thing in the shopping cart. The other is an instructor like me, who's wondering how I'm ever going to chop this opus down to something usable.

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