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Autor: Jewell, Richard

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This comprehensive book illuminates the most fertile and exciting period in American film, a time when the studio system was at its peak and movies played a critical role in elevating the spirits of the public. Richard B. Jewell offers a highly readable yet deeply informed account of the economics, technology, censorship, style, genres, stars and history of Hollywood during its "classical" era.

A major introductory textbook covering what is arguably the most fertile and exciting period in film, 1929-1945

Analyzes many of the seminal films from the period, from *The Wizard of Oz* to *Grand Hotel* to *Gone with the Wind*, considering the impact they had then and still have today

Tackles the shaping forces of the period: the business practices of the industry, technological developments, censorship restraints, narrative strategies, evolution of genres, and the stars and the star system

Explores the major social, political, economic, and cultural events that helped to shape contemporary commercial cinema, as well as other leisure activities that influenced Hollywood production, including radio, vaudeville, theatre and fiction

Written in a jargon-free, lively style, and features a number of illustrations throughout the text