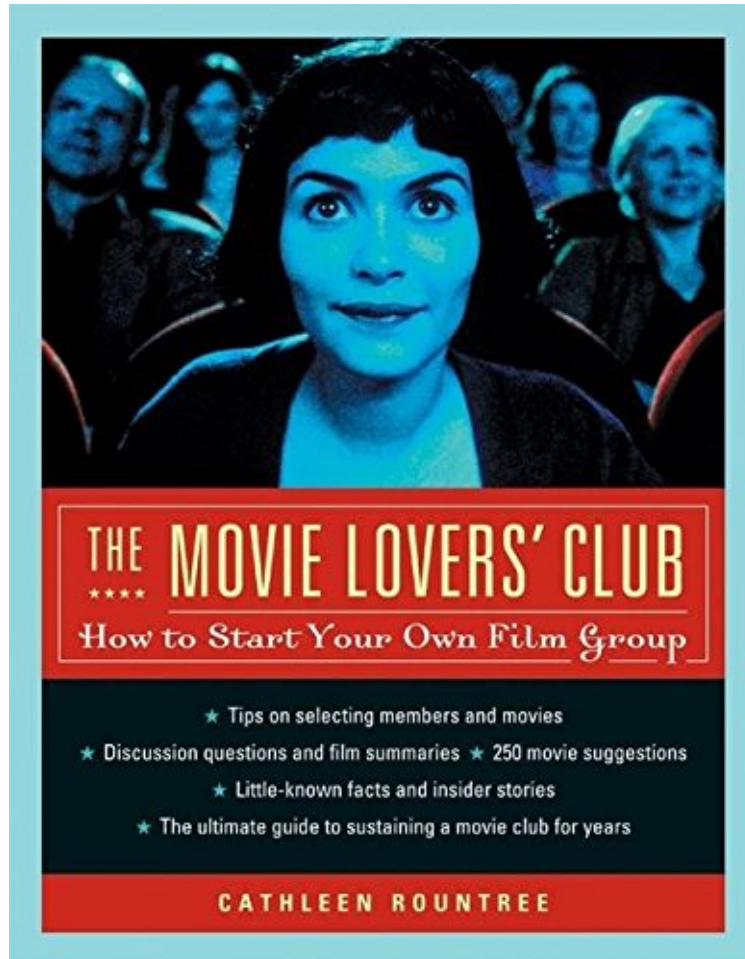


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## The Movie Lovers' Club: How to Start Your Own Film Group

*Cathleen Rountree*

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**Cathleen Rountree : The Movie Lovers' Club: How to Start Your Own Film Group** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Movie Lovers' Club: How to Start Your Own Film Group:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Less of a how-to book for the founder-leader than a text for the members. By Samuel C. The title is somewhat misleading. This is a general, introductory "text" about a generous collection of films, with summaries, commentary and questions for discussion. It's the sort of book not for the organizer but for all of the members of a film discussion group, offering opportunities for each member to ponder choices among the films proposed by the author along with the most interesting questions concerning individual films. The book has a somewhat randomly arbitrary quality. Some films selected by the author are popular favorites ("It Happened One Night"); others are art house cinema classics ("8 1/2"); most are titles likely to be unfamiliar to the average filmgoer. The author, moreover, loosely bunches them in categories that appear to be based on archetypal,

thematic considerations. It might be helpful for the author to provide more upfront exposition about the purpose and power of film, about what to look for in a film and how to "read" practically any film and, finally, what a member's goals, or hoped-for outcomes, might be. I've noticed that in my wife's book club (highly successful and long-lived), there's not much close reading of the text. Most of the discussion, in fact, occurs "away" from the text (by contrast I always tell students to stop looking up from their books, which is where the "real" action is). The author seems to assume likewise that a film club will not thrive if overly much is expected of it. Close, frame-by-frame readings of the "mise en scene" of a scene would probably do more damage than good, in effect "killing" the pleasure for the group, which admittedly has numerous "extra-cinematic" purposes and activities. Unfortunately, most popular film criticism and talk is less about the meanings of the film than the content of the script. As a result, the public absorbs only indirectly, if at all, cinematic language--the meanings that are specific to the film rather than its script or story. Some of the author's questions will likely encourage discussants to touch on such cinematic meanings; others are space-wasters ("How does 'Gosford Park' relate to 'Nashville'?" As a life-long admirer of the latter film, I'm afraid I've experienced far too often the unawareness of most filmgoers regarding "Nashville" with its 27 characters and seemingly incoherent story-line. General questions, or questions assuming too much of the participant, will be responded to in kind. The book contains a useful glossary and list of resources. It should be accessible to members of the group in terms of price, content, and writing style without threatening the all-important intermission or post-movie socialization (from my own discussions with the aforementioned participant in the book club, I must admit that I learn far more about the people attending the book club than I do about the book under discussion). 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Easy to read and authoritative: a very fine guide to getting together to talk about films. By Nate We hardly ever talk about movies anymore in public. We go to the theater and watch films in silence and then go home; if we do talk about movies it tends to be in the form of either wild approval or disappointed disapproval -- we talk about movies in the way we have learned to talk about movies from the critics whose job is to tell us how to spend our \$10 on movie night. We hardly ever have occasion to use movies any more as an occasion for getting together and thinking about who we are as revealed by movies or about the issues raised by films. What Cathleen Rountree has done in this very well organized and easy to read book is provide a model for how conversations about films can be intelligent, articulate and can build community. She sets her remarks about how to ask intelligent questions about the films we love in the context of a how-to guide to starting a film group. The idea, of course, is just like a book group except with the advantage that the participants will see the film together and so there is no excuse for the usual lame excuses about only getting halfway through the book and still having strong opinions about it. Her practical advice for such events is quite helpful -- drawn both from personal experience running such a club and from her background in teaching writing and film -- and gave me several helpful ideas for organizing film discussions in the classroom and as part of a regular film series that I run. Her suggestions for films to watch in such a club are quite strong, and could be used as a nice list of films to start with for someone who is interested in beginning to expand his or her film literacy. My only concern is that while most of the films she suggests are either classics or of a quality to have a timeless appeal, her "Contemporary Movie" sections will soon be out of date. It would be great if she had a website or blog that could keep these suggestions up to date, and supplement her own thinking with the responses from film groups around the world. Still, the basic ideas and examples for talking about films, as well as the advice in forming a film group will remain current even when some of the specific films she discusses are largely forgotten. UPDATE: As it turned out, when I wrote the above I was not aware that Cathleen Rountree DOES have a website that brings her suggestions for important films up to date. It is called "[...]" and it appears to be regularly updated and includes the author's reflections on recent films, reports from festivals, and other information. An excellent book made even better! 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A superb "starter kit" By Midwest Book Review The Movie Lovers' Club: How To Start Your Own Film Group by best-selling author and writing consultant Cathleen Rountree is a handy guide to building a sustainable community group based upon love of movies and discussion. Recommending a classic movie for one's club for each week of the year, from "About Schmidt" to "Finding Neverland", and offering detailed information about each suggested movie as well as numerous discussion questions, The Movie Lovers' Club is a superb "starter kit" for launching a new social circle.

Large screen TVs and full-line DVD services have liberated movie lovers from fear of parking and stale pop-corn. Across the country, movie lovers are staying in and creating their own version of book clubs but without the homework. The Movie Lovers Club the only guide for movie nights with friends motivates readers to form their own Lovers Club Clubs to explore the more than 100 excellent film suggestions, summaries, critical reviews, and insider anecdotes. Author Cathleen Rountree offers a years worth of must-see classic, contemporary, independent, and foreign films and provocative discussion questions to keep the cinematic conversation lively. With everything readers need to know to start a Movie Lovers Club, the books selections run the gamut and include powerful films such as To Kill a Mockingbird, Henry and June, and Real Women Have Curves. Whether a political group, girls night out party, or indie film devotee, movie watching reaches new depths with ideas on where, when, and how to launch a film group.

About the Author Cathleen Rountree, a life-long movie lover and author of nine books, researches and writes about the confluence of cinema, psychology, and cultural mythology. She speaks regularly at film, writing, and women's conferences and teaches at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She lives in Northern California