

University of Calgary  
Department of Communication, Media  
and Film

COMS 717.90 -S02  
*Conceptualizing Film & Media*  
Winter 2015, January 12~ April 15 2015  
Seminar: Tuesdays 1:00PM - 3:45PM  
Screenings: TBA

Instructor: Dr. Lee Carruthers  
Office Location: SS232  
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Web Page: D2L course page  
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3-5PM

#### Course Description

This course assembles a diverse range of reading and viewing materials, challenging students to interrogate complex relationships between photography, film, memory, and history. In other words, it frames such questions as follows: what is the unique temporality of the photograph and of the moving image? What is their trauma? How is memory imbricated via filmic time? To what extent does the moving image produce historical knowledge, and what are its limits? What are the ethical dimensions of film and photography? And finally, how might we extend these questions productively to televisual and new media technologies?

This course does not require a background in film studies, but it does ask students to develop a basic film vocabulary to express their ideas. This terminology is simple to master and will facilitate engagement with the course materials. The format of the course will feature weekly screenings as well as seminar-style discussion: concerning the screenings, please see the section below. Filmmakers to be considered include Jean-Luc Godard, Alfred Hitchcock, Terrence Malick, Chris Marker, Errol Morris, Alain Resnais, Steven Soderbergh, Tsai Ming-liang, and others.

#### Additional Information

In addition to the weekly seminar on Tuesdays, there is a separate screening time every week: time and location will be announced at the first course meeting. The films are a required element of the course. If you are unable to attend the screening, the films can be viewed at the Media Library (3rd floor, TFDL) the following week, or may be viewed on your own time. Please be advised that the films are central course texts: missing a screening, or otherwise failing to view the films every week, will jeopardize your success.

#### Course Objectives

As a graduate seminar about film and visual media, students are asked to discern and discuss productive alignments between the course readings, the weekly screenings, and other visual materials. More specifically, students will engage a diversified literature, drawn from film studies and other disciplines, so as to acquire a specialized vocabulary for analyzing films and other texts. These competences will be evidenced in a major paper that speaks clearly and authoritatively about the course's central issues,

drawing on the scholarly materials provided while pursuing original perspectives. Most broadly, the seminar invites students to develop and refine critical, analytical, and conceptual skills, as well as historical knowledge, that will complement their own research activities in the future.

### Textbooks and Readings

The course readings include one textbook for purchase and a range of additional essays available electronically. All readings are required unless otherwise designated on the syllabus.

At the University Bookstore:

- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Hill & Wang, 1981.

All other readings will be made available via D2L.

### Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are for note-taking only. The use of cellphones and other electronic devices are not permitted during class time or film screenings. Your compliance with these policies is assumed: failure to do so will negatively impact your course grade.

### Assignments and Evaluation

Participation, weekly Regular attendance and informed contributions to seminar discussion are essential requirements of the course.	10%
Presentation 1 + report, selected dates Short presentation and 2-page summary that relates the assigned reading to the weekly film and initiates robust discussion. The schedule of presentations will be settled in Week 2 (January 20 <sup>th</sup> ).	15%
Presentation 2 + report, Week 13, April 14 <sup>th</sup> Short presentation and 3-page summary, outlining your plans for the final paper, and specifying a provisional research question and short bibliography.	25%
Final Paper, due May 1 <sup>st</sup> May be research-driven, or analytically based: 20 pages, 5000 words (approx.)	50%

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

### Submission of Assignments:

Please hand in your essays directly to your instructor. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox. Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS

320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

#### Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

#### Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of the course.

#### Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

#### Grading System

Work in this course will be graded using letter grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Faculty of Graduate Studies:

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4	Outstanding
A	4	Excellent - superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.
A-	3.7	Very good performance
B+	3.3	Good performance
B	3	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies

C+	2.3	All grades below "B-" are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. Individual programs may require a higher passing grade.
C	2	
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	
D	1	
F	0	

### Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media. For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

### Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/research/research-ethics>

### Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES	<a href="http://grad.ucalgary.ca/home">http://grad.ucalgary.ca/home</a> or 403-220-4938
CAMPUS SECURITY	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> 403-220-5333

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<p>403-266-1234      Emergency: call 911</p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a></p> <p>If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a></p>
<p>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a></p> <p>403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a></p>
<p>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Student Services Mobile App</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a></p>
<p>GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/">http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/</a></p> <p><a href="http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/ombudsperson">http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/ombudsperson</a> (403) 220-6420 or <a href="mailto:ombuds@ucalgary.ca">ombuds@ucalgary.ca</a></p>
<p>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html">http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html</a></p>
<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling Services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a></p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a></p> <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

### Schedule of Lectures and Readings

A detailed course schedule, listing the screenings and all required readings, will be made available via D2L when the course begins.