

**University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film**

Film Studies FILM 403 L02

TOPIC IN THE DIRECTOR'S CINEMA (John Carpenter)

Winter 2016

January 12/April 12

Lecture: Tuesday 12:00 – 13:50, Lab Thursday 12:00 – 14:45

Instructor: Murray Leeder
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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-3:00, Thursday 3:00-4:00

Course Description

John Carpenter is a director of the New Hollywood generation who has maintained a distinctive style through a decades long career. He has specialized in horror, science fiction and action films, with the Western as a constant subtext running through his films. This course will screen many of his films and examine key literature about Carpenter, genre, the Hollywood system and authorship.

Objectives of the Course

The student will learn issues of cinematic authorship, especially in Hollywood, through examining the career of John Carpenter.

Textbooks and Readings

The Cinema of John Carpenter: The Technique of Terror (eds. Conrich and Woods). London: Wallflower, 2005.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Cell phones should be placed on silent during class time. Laptops may be used for the purpose of note-taking during lecture, but must be closed during screenings.

Assignments and Evaluation

25% **Assignment One:** Choose **one** of the following options:

Option 1: Timothy Corrigan writes about how in post-classical Hollywood, auteurship has come to resemble stardom and celebrity as an auteur's persona circulates in forms that render their films secondary. Analyze one text related to John Carpenter other than one of his films or television programs to identify how his authorial star persona manifests. Examples might include a commentary track for one of his or for someone else's films, a prominent interview, a public appearance, his music or his connections with the video game or comic book industries, etc.

Option 2: Carpenter's authorial persona includes his tendency to revise his past works. Write about either how *Assault on Precinct 13* revises Howard Hawks's *Rio Bravo* (1959), *Halloween* revises *Psycho* (1960) or *Someone's Watching Me* revises *Rear Window* (1954). Be sure to explore Carpenter's use of film form (including formal elements such as mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, sound, etc.) and not just plot elements, characterization, etc.

Option 3: Robin Wood argues that Carpenter is a reactionary filmmaker. Explain why and, with reference to at least three of his films, argue for or against this position.

You are required to draw on (and properly cite and source) at least two articles we have read in this course to strengthen and contextualize your argument. Assignment length: 4/5 full pages. Read the style guide provided on D2L and follow it fully. Marks may be deducted for students who fail to comply.

Due February 11.

35% **Assignment Two**

A list of suggested essay topics will be submitted mid-course.

You are required to draw on (and properly cite and source) at least three articles we have read in this course to strengthen and contextualize your argument. Assignment length: 6/7 full pages. Read the style guide provided on D2L and follow it fully. Marks may be deducted for students who fail to comply.

Due April 12.

30% **In-Class Presentation**

Every student is responsible for **one** in-class presentation on an essay we read during the course. Each will be of roughly 20-25 minutes, and take the following form:

First, the student will sum up the article's main points and central claims. This summary will be roughly half of the presentation.

Second, the student will discuss the article's strength and limitations, while drawing some connections between the article and (where relevant) the film screened that week or the course material more broadly.

Finally, the student should provide a few provocative and relevant questions for his or her fellow students and be prepared to lead discussion for a time.

Students will be graded on their understanding of the material, the rigour of their insights and their skill in presentation.

These will generally be held on the **Tuesday** meetings, and a sign-in sheet will be distributed early in the course.

10% Participation Grade

Students are expected to both attend both lectures and labs and participate in classroom discussion. Marks will be assigned determined by the quality and volume of participation. A student who attends regularly but does not participate in classroom discussion can expect no more than 5/10.

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 tutor or instructor if possible. 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.

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.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf.

Please note:

1. Students seeking accommodations for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors directly. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
2. When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.

3. For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

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 & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using letter grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%

0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	0%
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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 <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd 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/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333
• Calgary Police Service	403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911
• Emergency Text Messaging	http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage
• Emergency Evacuation & Assembly	http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safewalk Program 	<p>If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</p>
<p>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	<p>http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca</p>
<p>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	<p>http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</p>
<p>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	<p>https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</p>
<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</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

Information will be available through Desire2Learn.