

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Film Studies FILM 201-L01
INTRODUCTION TO FILM STUDIES

FALL 2018

Wed., Sept. 13 – Fri., Dec. 07 (excluding November 14th and November 16th)

Lecture, Wed. 17:00 – 17:50

Lab (film screening), Wed. 18:00 – 20:45

Tutorial, Fri. (Check Registrar)

Instructor: Ryan Pierson
Office: SS 214
Office Phone: 220-6720
E-Mail: ryan.pierson@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L
Office Hours: T/Th, 14:00 – 15:00

Teaching Assistants:

Jonas Cornelson, XXXX

Courtney McAlorum, XXXX

Sean Willett, XXXX

The Teaching Assistant office is at SS 250.

Course Description

This course introduces basic concepts of film analysis, which are discussed through examples from different national cinemas, genres, and directorial oeuvres. Along with questions of film technique and style, we consider the notion of the cinema as an institution that comprises an industrial system of production, social and aesthetic norms and codes, and particular modes of reception.

Objectives of the Course

This course provides foundational tools and concepts required for film analysis. Students will develop different ways of considering – and writing about – the formal, aesthetic, institutional, and cultural dimensions of the cinema. The course is intended to prepare students for further work in film studies.

Internet and electronic communication device information

This course observes a strict laptop and cell phone policy. During lectures, laptops may be used for note-taking only; *no laptops may be out during screenings or tutorials*. Use of handheld electronic devices (cell phones, etc.) is not permitted at any time.

Note on Attendance & Tardiness

If you miss a day of class, it is your responsibility to make up the material by getting notes from a classmate and, in the case of screenings, watching the film at the Taylor Library. Neither the instructor nor the TAs will provide you with lecture notes or Powerpoint slides.

In addition, tardiness to tutorials is disruptive to class discussion, and repeated incidents of arriving after the roster is taken will not be tolerated. After three incidents of either checking your phone or showing up tardy to a class, you will be referred to the instructor for a one-on-one meeting.

Communication

Please allow one full business day (M-F, 9:00-5:00) for response to emails. (E.g., if you send an email at 8 p.m. on a Saturday, do not expect a response at 8:45 that night; please anticipate possible issues accordingly.) In cases of confusion about material, assignments, attendance, disciplinary issues, etc., your TA is your first line of defense. If you have a specific issue with your TA, please notify the instructor directly.

Textbooks and Readings

David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith, *Film Art*, 11th ed., available at university bookstore.

Additional readings will be available on D2L.

Assignments and Evaluation

Class Participation (ongoing)

10%

In-class discussion is an essential component of the course. Students must come to class prepared to discuss the readings and screenings. Class participation grades will be evaluated each day in tutorials, on the following scale:

Substantial participation (one substantial, thoughtful comment): 10/10

Minimal participation (1-2 yes/no or single-word type comments): 5/10

Null participation (no comments): 0/10

Note that, by this scale, *attendance does not count toward participation. If you want participation credit, you must participate.*

If you are absent during a tutorial, you may get full participation by submitting a 200-word response on how the week's film makes use of the topic for the week (mise-en-scene, narrative, etc.), within 7 calendar days of your absence.

Discussion boards (ongoing)

10%

Between weeks 2 and 5, please pick **two (2)** weeks to submit a discussion board post. For each post, you will be asked to pick one of the key concepts from the textbook for that week, and apply it to a short clip of the film from the *previous* week. Analyze the clip, first in terms of its purely formal qualities using the key concept as your guide, then analyze its function in the film as a whole. Posts should be 150-250 words in length and should quote the textbook.

Between weeks 7 and 13, please pick **three (3)** weeks to submit a discussion board post. This post will not analyze a film clip; it will respond to the major claims and arguments of the

supplemental reading for the week (these readings are found on D2L). Posts should be 150-250 words in length and should quote the reading.

Midterm exam (Oct 19)

25%

In week 6, we will have an exam covering the major concepts and vocabulary terms from the first 5 weeks of class. The exam will be true/false and multiple choice.

Essay (due Nov 30, in tutorial)

30%

In week 12, you will submit a short essay (4-6 pages) comparing how a particular aspect of film form is used in two films from the course (e.g., how *Citizen Kane* and *Moonlight* use mise-en-scene to different effect). The essay should focus on an exemplary scene from each film and discuss how the aspect reflects the broader goals of each film. More specific instructions will come later in the term.

Final exam (scheduled by registrar)

25%

During finals week, we will have an exam covering the major concepts, historical points, and films from weeks 6 through 13. In other words, this exam is not cumulative. It will consist of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

All assignments must be completed in a timely manner, or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

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.

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

For late assignments, one-third of a letter grade (A- becomes B+, B+ becomes B, etc.) will be subtracted from the assignment for each 24-hour period.

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.pdf>.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.

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.

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. 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 as per MLA guidelines. If you need help with your writing, you are strongly encouraged to 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. However, assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using raw percentage grades.

The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations* *
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%

1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	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 <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 (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	<p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</p> <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</p> <p>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</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</p> <p>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/</p> <p>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</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>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

I. The Feature-Length Narrative Film

Week 1, Sept 12: The Language of Film

Reading:

FA Chapter 2, “The Significance of Film Form”

Screening:

Moonlight (Barry Jenkins, 2016)

Week 2, Sept 19: Mise-en-scene

Reading:

FA Chapter 4, “The Shot: Mise-en-Scene”

Screening:

The Bad Batch (Ana Lily Amirpour, 2017)

Bonus video essay (optional):

The Nerdwriter, “Darth Vader: An Icon in 34 Minutes”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5NhHBjyJe4>

*discussion boards for mise-en-scene in *Moonlight* due Sept 19

Week 3, Sept 26: Cinematography

Reading:

FA Chapter 5, “The Shot: Cinematography”

Screening:

Wendy and Lucy (Kelly Reichardt, 2008)

Bonus video essays (optional):

Tony Zhou, “What Is Bayhem?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2THVvshvq0Q>

Tony Zhou, “Lynne Ramsay – The Poetry of Details”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjY9kf7TuUU>

*discussion boards for cinematography in *The Bad Batch* due Sept 26

Week 4, Oct 3: Editing

Reading:

FA Chapter 6, “The Relation of Shot to Shot: Editing”

Screening:

Mad Max: Fury Road (George Miller, 2015)

Bonus video essay (optional):

Folding Ideas, “The Art of Editing and *Suicide Squad*”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDclQowcE9I>

*discussion boards for editing in *Wendy and Lucy* due Oct 3

Week 5, Oct 10: Sound

Reading:

FA Chapter 7, “Sound in the Cinema”

Screening:

Under the Skin (Jonathan Glazer, 2014)

Bonus video essays (optional):

The Nerdwriter “See with Your Ears: Spielberg and Sound Design”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kavxsXhzD48>

Filmscalpel, “Sound Unseen: The Acousmatic Jeanne Dielman”

<http://www.filmscalpel.com/sound-unseen/>

**discussion boards for sound in Mad Max: Fury Road due Oct 10*

Week 6, Oct 17: Narrative

Reading:

FA Chapter 3: “Narrative as a Formal System”

Screening:

Citizen Kane (Orson Welles, 1941)

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II. Alternative filmmaking forms

Week 7, Oct 24: Animation

Reading:

Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, “The Principles of Animation”

Screening:

The Thief and the Cobbler (Richard Williams, 1993)

**discussion board responses to “The Principles of Animation” due Oct 24*

Week 8, Oct 31: Documentary

Reading:

Bill Nichols, “Types of Documentary”

Screening:

Paris Is Burning (Jennie Livingston, 1990)

**discussion board responses to “Types of Documentary” due Oct 31*

Week 9, Nov 7: Avant-Garde Film

Reading:

FA Chapter 10: section on “Experimental Film,” pp. 369-86

Germaine Dulac, “The Avant-Garde Cinema”

Screening:

News from Home (Chantal Akerman, 1976)

Films by Germaine Dulac and Maya Deren TBA

**discussion board responses to “The Avant-Garde Cinema” due Nov 7*

Week 10, Nov 14: NO CLASS, FALL BREAK

III. Film Industries and Film Cultures

Week 11, Nov 21: Studies in popular genre – the musical

Reading:

FA Chapter 9: “Film Genres”

Richard Dyer, “Entertainment and Utopia”

Screening:

Magic Mike XXL (Gregory Jacobs, 2014)

**discussion board responses to “Entertainment and Utopia” due Nov 21*

Week 12, Nov 28: 1920s USSR – the Montage movement

Reading:

FA Chapter 6, “Alternatives to Continuity Editing” pp. 252-262; Chapter 12: “Soviet Montage,” pp. 470-473

Sergei Eisenstein, “The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram”

Screening:

Battleship Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, 1926)

**discussion board responses to “The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram” due Nov 28*

Week 13, Dec 5: 1990s India – the rise of Bollywood

Reading:

Rosie Thomas, “Popular Hindi Cinema”

Screening:

Om Shanti Om (Farah Khan, 2007)

**discussion board responses to “Popular Hindi Cinema” due Dec 5*

Final Examination – Scheduled by Registrar (25%)