

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

Film Studies (FILM) 301– Lecture 01

Topic in National Cinema: Iran

FALL 2019: September 5 to Dec. 6 (excluding Nov. 10-16)

Thursdays 10:30 – 12:20 (Lecture and Screening)

Tuesdays 9:30 – 12:15 (Lab)

Instructor:	Dr. Mohsen Nasrin
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Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	Thursday 12:30-1:30 or by Appointment

Course Description

Topics will explore various aspects of, or historical moments in, a particular nation's cinematic culture.

This course will examine key theoretical and historical aspects of Iranian cinema. Topics will include the study of Iranian film authors, realism in Iranian cinema, transnational cinema, and how these films question the status quo.

Course objectives

The course aims at familiarizing students with the socio-historical and cultural context of Iranian Cinema and connecting the notion of national cinema with more general aspects of film theories.

Textbooks and Readings

Readings will be posted on D2L weekly.

Internet and electronic communication device information

During class, students must turn off all cell phones, pagers, etc. Laptops may only be used for notetaking.

Assignments and Evaluation

Discussion Board Posts: (20%)

Film Introduction (as scheduled): (20%)

First Essay (September 26): (20%)

Second Essay (November 28): (20%)

Final Exam (registrar-scheduled): (20%)

Discussion Board Post: Students are expected to be active in class. As well they are expected to participate in the virtual campus discussion. Every four weeks you will be required to create one substantive original post regarding to screenings, readings or class discussions and every two weeks you are required to respond to another student's post. The original post will be due every Saturday by 11:59 PM and the responses are due by Monday at 11:59 PM. Each post should be at least two paragraphs in length and respond thoughtfully to the prompts by incorporating concepts from the reading and examples from screenings. The discussion board posts are also where you can accumulate extra credit. To get the extra credit, you must go above and beyond the discussion board requirements and contribute significantly to the discourse. Engaging with course concepts at an advanced level (specifically by referring to the key points of the readings) is a good way to get extra points. As always, please be civil in your discussions.

In sum there should be at least **3 original posts** and **6 responses**.

Film Introduction:

For this project, you will collaborate with your group (4-5 people) and on each Wednesday there will be a group presentation on a film related to the topic of the week. Each group has 20-30 minutes to introduce a movie that can be analyzed in relation to the reading and the topic of the week. Following this, each group has to create a single document – a production folder – that will be submitted collectively. The production folder should be submitted on the same day of the presentation. This document will analyze a single film from different angles, and will evaluate the film as an aesthetic and cultural artifact. Each member of the group will select a different approach (such as national, historical, auteurs, ideological and formal).

Grading will consist of two parts:

- Each individual presenter's contribution to the project, including depth of analysis, integration of appropriate scholarly sources, and structure of a presentation. (10%)
- An overall grade for collaboration, focusing on the ability of each section to build upon one another; introductory and concluding elements; and the ability of your group to work together and equitably divide labor. (10%)

Keep in mind that this assignment is **collaborative**. It is as important that you individually construct a well-argued, detailed, and relevant presentation as it is that your partners do so as well. (The details of the assignment will be discussed further in class)

First Essay (Sep 26): Your first written assignment is an essay comparing how Iran is represented in two Hollywood films of your choice. (Please take into consideration films such as *300*, *Argo*, *House of Sand and Fog*, *Wrestler*, *Crash*, and *Not without My Daughter*.) In his book, *Orientalism*, Edward Said introduces the thesis of cultural representation. (See reading assignment for Sept. 10-12) Discuss whether you think that Said's thesis is both relevant to and useful for studying these films. However, keep in mind that your essay should focus on certain cinematic elements to support your main arguments. If you do not have a background in film studies, some tips on how to write a film essay are included in the course outline. The essay

should be **four to five pages** in length and double-spaced. Further instructions on its format will be provided later.

Second Essay (Nov 28): Select an Iranian film that is not shown in class and analyze it in relation to one of the readings. The list of Iranian films available on reserve at the library will be provided. The essay should be **five to six pages** in length and double-spaced. Further instructions on its format will be provided later.

- You may not select the same topic (reading) for essay 1, 2 or class presentation.

Final Exam (registrar-scheduled): Some movie clips will be shown and you will answer questions in regards to them. The clips will be based on themes and scenes that were discussed in detail in class. For this reason, your dynamic attendance and participation throughout this course is essential for passing the final exam.

Some tips on how to write a film essay: Your paper should not be merely a “review” of the films. Comments like “the acting is great!” or “the cinematography is splendid!” are not quite appropriate. You must **analyze** the works. When analyzing films, ask yourself questions such as: “What effects do the cinematography, sound and editing have on the audience?”; “Do the characters symbolize something beyond their individual personality?”; “Is the filmmaker trying to convey a political or ideological message through her/his film?”; “How is the story structured (straightforward, linear structure with clear narrative progression or circular, elliptical story with complex relationships among characters), and how does this structure affect the spectator’s response?”. It is usually a good idea to read a few articles on the films you are analyzing so as to get a sense of the issues at stake in the works. The best place to start if you want to find articles on films and filmmakers is the FILM LITERATURE INDEX, which gives bibliographical information on film-related publications from 1973 to the present.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is no guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

Note: You must complete all assignments and exams or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments and hand in your essays directly to your instructor or tutor. If you are unable to do so, please use the drop box 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. **Note:** It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Be prepared to provide photo ID to pick up assignments in SS 320. Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and

personal information is collected in accordance with the ***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act***. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 5% or a partial letter 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); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation 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) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses 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 and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, letter grades will be used for written assignments, while percentage grades will be used for the final exam.

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%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

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.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library.

To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

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, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Sep 5: Introduction: What is National Cinema?

Screening (Short Films): *Accordion* (Jafar Panahi, 2011), *Hamin Yek Saat Pish* (Sina Azin, 2012), *2+2+5* (Babak Anvari, 2012)

*Group activities for the term will be assigned.

Reading: Willemen, Paul. "The National Revisited" in Vitali, Valentina and Willemen, Paul. *Theorising National Cinema*, British Film Institute. 2006. 29-43.

Sep 10-12: Historical Distance

Screening: *Chicken with Plums* (Marjan Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud, 2011)

Reading: Mader, Allison. *The Importance of Reading Said: Orientalism, Women, and Postcolonial Literature After 9/11*. Doctoral diss. University of Calgary. 2017. 14-32.

Sep 17-19: Filmfarsi

Screening : *Hamsafar* (Masoud Assadollah, 1975)

Reading: Khanjani, Ramin. "The Imperilled Tough Guy and the Feminine Insurgence in Ghalandar(1972)." in *Animating Eroded Landscapes: The Cinema of Ali Hatami* . Master Diss. Carleton University. 2012. 78-114.

Sep 24-26: Pre-revolutionary Art Cinema

Screening: *Prince Ehtijab* (Bahman Farman Ara, 1974)

Reading: Mirbakhtiar, Shahla. "The New Cinema Before the Revolution" in *Iranian Cinema and the Islamic Revolution*.

- First Essay should be handed in.

Oct 1-3: War and its Aftermath

Screening: *Bashu, the Little Stranger* (Bahram Beizai, 1986)

Reading: Lovatt, Phillipa, "Breathing bodies: sounding subjectivity in the war film" *Music, Sound and the Moving Image*, Volume 10, Issue 2, 2016.

Oct 8-10: Realist Tendencies of Iranian Cinema

Screening: *Offside* (Jafar Panahi, 2006)

Reading: Nagib, Lucia. "Realist cinema as World Cinema 1" in *The Routledge Companion to World Cinema*. Routledge. 2018. Chapter 25.

OCT 15-17: Minor Cinema

Screening: *Turtles Can Fly* (Bahman Ghobadi, 2004)

Reading: Erfani, Farhang. "Bahman Ghobadi's *Turtles can Fly* and Marginal Politics" in *Iranian Cinema and Philosophy*.

OCT 22-24: Kid's cinema

Screening: *Where is the Friend's Home?* (Abbas Kiarostami, 1987)

Reading: Mulvey, Laura. "Abbas Kiarostami: Cinema of Uncertainty. Cinema of Delay"

OCT 29-31: Intellectual Drama

Screening: *About Eli* (2009)

Rugo, Danielle. "Asghar Farhadi Acknowledging Hybrid Traditions: Iran, Hollywood and Transnational Cinema" in *Third Text*. Volume 30, Issue 3-4. 2016.

Nov 5-7: (R)eimagining the Past

Screening: *Under the Shadow* (Babak Anvari, 2016)

Reading: Sayyar, Sara Anahita. *Discovering Cultural Identity Through Film: A Rhetorical Exploration of Women in Persian Cinema*, M.A diss. University of Arkansas. 2019. 62-74.

Nov 12-14 (Reading Week)

Nov 19-21 Accented Cinema

Screening: *Le Passé* (Asghar Frhadi, 2013)

Readings: Naficy, Hamid. *An Accented Cinema*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001. 10-33.

Khanjani, Ramin. "Elegies for the vagrant souls: Reading Reza Allamezadeh's films of exile" in *Offscreen*. 2011. Vol 15. Issue 10.

Nov 26-28: Third Cinema

Screening: *Santoori* (Darious Mehrjui, 2007)

Reading: Pister, Patricia. "Arresting the Flux of Images and Sounds: Free Indirect Discourse and the Dialectics of Political Cinema" in Buchanan, Ian. *Deleuze and the Contemporary World*. Edinburgh University Press. 2006. 174-193.

- Second Essay Should be handed in.

Dec 3-5: Post National Cinema

***A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (Ana Lilly Amirpour, 2014)**

Reading: Abdi, Shadee ; Calafell, Bernadette Marie. "Queer utopias and a (Feminist) Iranian vampire: a critical analysis of resistive monstrosity in *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* " in *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 08 August 2017, Vol.34(4), p.358-370