

Department of Communication and Culture
Film Studies (FILM) 305.04 - Lecture 60
Masculinity and the Melodrama
Summer 2013
LEC 60: TR 09:00 - 10:45; LAB 60: TR 11:00 - 13:45

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Web page: Blackboard
Office hours: Thursdays 14:00 to 16:00 or by appointment

Course Description

This course in film genre is a survey of the male melodrama, a form that has been peripherally recognized by critics for some time but which is now beginning to emerge more significantly in postfeminist scholarship. Male melodrama is defined roughly as the filmic male-protagonist response to emotionally charged conflict, often within a romantic or familial setting but more prominently within an all-male scenario (viz., war-time and sports dramas). Films relevant to this genre range from the silent film exemplars of *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (Murnau, 1926) and *City Lights* (Chaplin, 1931) to the war/post-war *M* (Lang, 1931) *Random Harvest* (LeRoy, 1942), *The Best Years of our Lives* (Wyler, 1946) to the more contemporary *Fight Club* (Fincher, 1999), *Brokeback Mountain* (Lee, 2005) and *Away From Her* (Polley, 2007).

Additional Information

Some course content contains material that is sexually explicit, violent or otherwise offensive. If you have concerns about this, please make them known to the instructor in advance.

Objectives of the Course

- To introduce students to melodrama and to its historic significance in film studies as a genre
- To encourage students to interpret melodrama beyond a single gendered form (viz.: the “female weepie”)
- To develop a critical approach to melodrama using contemporary film and feminist theory
- To relate melodrama as a genre to other film and literary genres

Internet and electronic communication device information

Cell phones, iPods and gaming devices should be off during class; laptops and iPads may be used for taking notes.

Textbooks and Readings

Readings consist of scholarly articles to be accessed through the University of Calgary library; an online listing of these readings will be available to students via Blackboard.

Assignments and Evaluation

You will be graded on five components:

1. Group presentations (15%): from July 9 to August 13
2. Literature review for final essay (15%): due July 23
3. Final essay (35%): due August 8
4. Take-home exam (25%): distributed in class August 8, hand-in August 13
5. Participation (10%)

1. Group presentations (15%): July 9 through August 13. Students will work in small groups to produce a 30-minute presentation on one of the assigned readings as it applies to a chosen film. Each member of the group will contribute to the research behind this project and take an equal part in its presentation.

2. Literature review (15%): due July 23. The literature review will reference five to seven academic articles in the field of film studies to support the final essay topic.

3. Final essay (35%): due August 8. This paper will comprise a) a scene analysis from a chosen melodrama, or b) a comparative analysis of two film melodramas or of two articles of relevant film theorists. Paper length: 2,500 words, not including References section.

4. Take-home exam (25%): distributed in class August 8, hand-in August 13. The take-home exam will challenge the student to compare and critique the theoretical models examined throughout the course. The exam will comprise a list of approximately 7 to 8 questions; students will choose two questions from this list and write short-essay-length responses to each. The response will total approximately 8 to 9 double-spaced pages.

5. Participation (10%). Students are expected to contribute insights during class on the course's readings, films and film theorists: this requires regular attendance, a willingness to speak up in class and a close reading of assigned articles.

All assignments must be completed or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: 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.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

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.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although 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. 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

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

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. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

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

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

Students' Union

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see
<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

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

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:

<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/ethics/cfreb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

A detailed schedule of lectures and readings will be provided the first day of class and posted on Blackboard.