

FILM 403.14 L01
Topics in the Director's Cinema: Tim Burton
Fall 2012
M 16:00-18:50 (screening), W 15:00-16:50 (lecture)

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Office Hours: MW 13:00-15:00 or by appointment

Additional Information

Attendance at lectures and screenings and informed participation are essential components of this course and will help determine your final grade. Students must come to class prepared to discuss the required reading. Some of the materials and topics presented in class may include explicit content (sex, violence or language). If these materials make you uncomfortable, you are encouraged to speak with the professor. You will not be exempt from any class assignments but we will work together to accommodate your concerns.

Course Description

Topics will examine the distinctive style and concerns of a particular director or directors. This course may be repeated for credit.

Prerequisite: FILM 201.

Objectives of the Course

Perhaps moreso than any filmmaker working in contemporary Hollywood, Tim Burton has negotiated the seeming Scylla and Charybdis of art and commerce to forge an identity as a commercially successful auteur in an era dominated by blockbuster economics. His Gothic visual style has become such a signature of the director's work that it now transcends the screen—the Museum of Modern Art curated an exhibition centered on Burton's films that has now traveled to Canada, Australia, and France—yet almost thirty years after the release of his breakthrough feature, 1985's *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*, Burton remains one of the most sought-after directors for big-budget productions. As in other director's cinema courses, we will explore the recurring themes and motifs of Burton's work in this course. More generally, we will investigate how the traditional auteur cinema model itself must be adapted to suit directors like Burton. In order to do so, we will attempt to situate Burton within a history of Hollywood filmmaking, drawing connections to the rich tradition of classical Hollywood (and especially genre film) from which Burton emerges, and the generation of directors who have come of age inspired by his career.

In addition, considering Burton’s ongoing and prolific career (two films that he directed were released this year, in addition to a third which he produced), one of the secondary goals of this course will be to engage with the public discourse on Burton. We will do so via a jointly-authored class blog, which will require that students develop a basic familiarity with the tools of web publishing.

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Produce a sustained written analysis that incorporates ideas that are introduced during the course
- Demonstrate an engagement with and mastery of the theoretical issues underpinning the films screened in the course
- Write a term paper that follows all appropriate academic protocol
- Use web-based platforms to publish their own writing to a shared course website

Textbooks and Readings:

Tim Burton and Mark Salisbury, *Burton on Burton*. 2nd revised edition. London: Faber and Faber, 2006.

Alison McMahan, *The Films of Tim Burton: Animating Live Action in Contemporary Hollywood*. London: Continuum, 2005.

Tim Burton, *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy, and Other Stories*. London: Faber and Faber, 1999.

Additional readings available via the course website.

Course Website

Special note: for this course, we will be relying extensively upon web-based materials and using a standalone website built for this course, in lieu of the course Blackboard page. You can find this site at the following URL: burton.brendankredell.com.

Assignments and Evaluation

N.B.: At the outset of the course, students will be divided into four groups. As described below and in more detail on the first day of class, due dates for the following assignments vary depending on which group you are in; consult the table for more specific information.

Group/Week	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Blog Post	Response	Context	--	Proposal	Response
B	--	Blog Post	Response	Context	--	Proposal
C	Context	--	Blog Post	Response	Context	--
D	Response	Context	--	Essay	Response	Context

Group/Week	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	Context	--	Essay	Response	Context	--
B	Response	Context	--	Essay	Response	Context
C	Proposal	Response	Context	--	Essay	Response
D	--	Proposal	Response	Context	--	Essay

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Participation <i>Students are expected to regularly attend class and actively participate in class discussions. Full marks will be given to students who regularly demonstrate through their participation in class discussions an engagement with the course readings and screenings.</i>	10%
Blog Posts (250-300 words) <i>During the first cycle, one group a week will be responsible for posting short blog posts that engage with the class lectures, readings, and screenings. These assignments will be due between September 19 and October 10.</i>	10%
Paper Proposals (250-500 words) <i>During the second cycle, students will develop a proposal for their course paper. Students are required to submit a 250 word abstract outlining the argument they expect to make in that assignment. In addition, students should submit an annotated bibliography of at least three sources. These assignments will be due between October 17 and November 7.</i>	15%
Short Paper (750-1000 words) <i>During the third cycle, students are required to write a short essay that serves as the first draft for their final paper. These essays are due between November 14 and December 5,</i>	20%
Critical Feedback <i>Each week, one group will be responsible for providing feedback on the posts in the form of blog comments. These comments should be formulated in the spirit of thoughtful and constructive editorial feedback. Each group will perform this role three times during the term.</i>	10%
Discourse Analysis <i>Each week, one group will be responsible for locating other web resources (film criticism, news stories, etc.) and linking them to the main course website. These links should connect our course readings and film screenings with existing and/or current discourse on Burton. Each group will perform this role three times during the term.</i>	5%
Final Paper (2000-2500 words) <i>In lieu of a final examination, students are required to write a research paper investigating a topic of the student's choosing, per my approval. Papers are due on the last day of the term (December 7), and should be submitted via the course website.</i>	30%

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

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every

attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of one-third of a letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Quizzes and examinations will not be rescheduled except in the case of medical emergencies. Students without proper medical documentation will not be permitted to make up missed quizzes or examinations.

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://www.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:

(Revised, effective September 2008)

	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>

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students are welcome to use laptops and other electronic notetaking devices in this course. That being said, the classroom is a space for learning, and I expect that students' behaviour will reflect a shared appreciation for the importance of an open and high-level discourse within the classroom. Towards that end, the use of laptops should be strictly limited to the purposes of taking notes. **Laptops (and all other electronic devices) are expressly prohibited during course screenings.** Likewise, mobile phones and other devices are prohibited at all times. Failure to respect these rules may result in a revocation of your privileges to use devices in the classroom.

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.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

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/cfieb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Will be posted on Blackboard.

