

Film Studies FILM 591 L01
Senior Seminar in Film Studies
Cinematic Time
Winter 2014
Screenings: Tuesdays, 12:00 - 14:50
Lectures: Thursdays, 12:00 - 13:50

Instructor: Dr. Lee Carruthers
Office
Location: SS232
Office Phone: (403) 210-8858
E-Mail: lee.carruthers@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: See course page on Blackboard
Office Hours: Thursdays 2-4PM

Course Description

This course explores the phenomenon of cinematic time, considered as a fundamental issue for filmic ontology; as a conditioning feature of film viewing experience; and as a significant opportunity to reflect upon the aesthetic forms and meanings of diverse filmic texts. The course performs a wide survey of filmmaking practices, moving from the silent era to the present, through Hollywood and global cinemas, and across the terrain of popular, acclaimed, and avant-garde works. In particular, we will place special emphasis upon recent trends of the contemporary art cinema (so called 'slow cinema' and its alternatives), endeavoring to contextualize such currents historically in light of longer traditions, viewing expectations, and critical practices. To this end, the course will screen and analyze works by filmmakers such as Robert Bresson, Hollis Frampton, Paul Greengrass, Howard Hawks, Benjamin Heisenberg, Jia Zhangke, Doug Liman, Terrence Malick, Jean-Pierre Melville, Alain Resnais, Steven Soderbergh, Andrei Tarkovsky, Bela Tarr, Jacques Tati, Tsai Ming-liang, and others, in an effort to understand the distinctive experiences of time that cinema generates for viewers.

Additional Information

This Senior Seminar assumes and requires your familiarity with basic film terms, as well as your consistent commitment to the intellectual tasks and challenges of the course. This means that you are required to use the precise film-analytical vocabulary developed in film coursework thus far. (For your ongoing reference, a 6-page Glossary of Formal Terms will be provided on Blackboard, under 'Course Documents.')

More substantially, this class demands your focused engagement with assigned readings, screenings, and in-class discussion. Be sure to set aside sufficient time to prepare for every class.

Objectives of the Course

This course has three main objectives:

1. Specifically, to examine the temporal forms and character of a range of films, uncovering the ways that cinematic time conditions viewing experience.
2. More generally, to enrich and extend our film-analytical, critical and interpretive skills, discerning the films' formal and thematic complexities.
3. Finally, to reflect upon cinematic time as a deep concept that potentially illuminates aesthetic, historical and philosophical dilemmas.

Viewing Requirements

The weekly screenings for this course are scheduled on **Tuesdays, 12:00 - 14:50; supplemental screenings may also occur during the lecture time.** Please note that attendance at *all* screenings is expected. As many of the course titles are longer films, please arrive a few minutes early for every screening. For repeat viewings and/or close analysis, the films are held at the Media Library (3rd floor, TFDL) and may be viewed there; additionally, some titles may be available at local video stores, such as Casablanca Video. These resources are not a substitute for the scheduled screenings, but may prove helpful for assignments.

Participation Requirements

Regular attendance and informed participation are essential components of this course that will determine your final grade. You are expected to come to class having completed the assigned readings, and thus prepared to discuss these materials specifically. Please note that a significant percentage of your grade is based on participation. If you do not make an informed contribution to in-class and online discussion on a weekly basis, you can expect to receive **zero** for participation: there is no other basis for this part of your grade. Besides the weekly readings + screenings, there is a simple task to be completed every week, as follows:

Every week, go to the Blackboard site to submit a **brief response to the film and/or weekly reading.** There will be a general question or prompt for you to discuss. Your response should be a paragraph or so in length; it should focus on a detail or raise a specific issue that you plan to talk about in class. These responses are required and must be submitted weekly before the deadline (Sunday at 10PM, unless specified otherwise). Finally, please be advised that posts that do not respond to the prompt in a specific and thoughtful manner will not accrue marks.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are for note-taking only. Using a laptop for email or unauthorized browsing during classtime will jeopardize your participation grade. Likewise, texting and cell

phone use is not permitted during class time: turn off these devices when you arrive at the classroom to avoid embarrassment, annoyance, and irreversible participation grade penalties.

Textbooks and Readings:

There is no single textbook for this course: readings from diverse sources will be made available on Blackboard when classes begin. Please note that the assigned reading is directly tied to the tasks of the course. If you do not complete the reading every week it is unlikely that you will succeed in FILM 591.

Assignments and Evaluation

Grades will be determined as follows:

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-----|
| Reading Quizzes (5 dates: 4 count for marks)* | weekly | 20% |
| Blackboard posts & In-class discussion | weekly | 20% |
| Midterm (short film + critical analysis, in-class) | Week 7, Feb. 27 th | 20% |
| Final Essay | Week 13, Apr. 10 th | 40% |

(A paper that deploys the available scholarly literature and performs film-textual analysis, 2500 words in length, on one of the central films or issues of the course. Detailed instructions for the successful completion of this essay will be distributed in Week 9, by March 13th.)

* The **Reading Quizzes**, listed above, are designed to confirm your familiarity with the weekly readings. As such, they will not be scheduled in advance but rather will happen on 5 separate occasions throughout the semester, usually during the lecture period. **Reading Quizzes cannot be re-scheduled or 'made-up'; if you miss a quiz, the marks are forfeited.** Only 4 out of 5 quizzes will count for marks, however: so, you can miss one, or discount one.

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: submit your essays directly to your instructor. 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 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 Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) 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

Will be available on Blackboard when the course commences in January.

Our first meeting will be January 9th 2014.