

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

Film Studies (FILM) 301.28 L01

Topic in National Cinema

Political Cinema

Winter 2019

Jan. 14, 2019 - April 11, 2019

(excluding Feb. 19, 21)

Screenings (Labs): Tuesday 3:30 – 6:15

Lectures: Thursday 3:30 – 5:20

Instructor: Dr. Matthew Croombs
Office: SS 216
Office Phone: TBD
E-Mail: Matthew.croombs@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L
Office Hours: Thursdays 5:30 – 6:30

Course Description

In an age characterized by the rise of unchecked corporate control, the expansion of the prison-industrial complex, populism, and the proliferation of dramatic protests and social movements, the question of the political has come back into focus as one of Film Studies' central concerns. This course will provide students with a broad overview of some of the key debates, aesthetic tendencies, and issues that have defined the history of political film. We will proceed thematically, orienting our weekly screenings, lectures, and discussions around three broad themes: Cinema and Decolonization, Cinema and the State Apparatus, and Identity, Sexuality, and Transgression. The initial unit of the class will explore how cinema acted as a key tool in the decolonization movements that spread throughout the Global South in the 1960s, while also considering the various forms of "internal colonization" that continue to shape the governance of Western societies. Subsequently, we will take up the question of how film worked as both an explicit vehicle of state propaganda and ideological coercion, as well as an agent against forms of state repression. In our final unit, we will explore the complex intersection between film aesthetics and questions of sexuality, examining how film has worked to liberate perception from patriarchal norms of representation.

Objectives of the Course

Following the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify key periods and tendencies in the history of political film.

2. Establish a firm command over the debates that have defined the relationship between film aesthetics and politics, including questions of race, class, and sex.
3. Make connections between recent political issues and themes and problems of the past.
4. Enhance their skills at collaborative work and oral presentations.
5. Perform critical analyses and write well-crafted arguments about visual culture.

Textbooks and Readings

All assigned readings for the course will be uploaded to D2L.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops should be used for note-taking purposes only. Cell phones should be turned off during screenings and lectures to avoid deductions from your participation grade.

Viewing Requirements

Students are required to attend all screenings. If you miss one, it is your responsibility to view the film(s) at the Media Library (3rd floor, TFDL) as soon as you are able. Certain titles (though not all) may be available to view online. These resources are not a substitute for the scheduled screenings, but may prove helpful for review purposes.

Assignments and Evaluation

10%	Participation	weekly
10%	2 Cinema Politica Response Pages	All term
20%	Short Essay	Feb. 5
20%	Group Presentation	Beginning Feb. 5
40%	Final Assignment: Curatorial Program	April 9

Participation (10%)

Since this class involves both challenging films and ideas, attendance, class participation, and completion of the readings are absolutely necessary. Lecture content will usually move beyond the week's assigned readings, so students will need to have read the required materials by the Thursday lecture in order for the class experience to remain meaningful.

Cinema Politica Response Pages (2 x 5% each = 10%)

On the last Wednesday of every month, Cinema Politica will hold a screening in the Gallery Hall of the Taylor Family Digital Library. Students are required to attend two of these screenings throughout the course of the term, and upload your responses to D2L before the following Tuesday's class. These responses may be informal, and should provide you with the opportunity to process your thoughts about the films and their relationship to ideas discussed in class. This assignment is graded on a pass/fail basis, and does not require citations.

Short Essay (20%)

Students will submit a short essay on February 5th (4 pages long), which can address any of the readings covered up until that date. Students should provide a cogent and brief précis of their chosen reading followed by a critical analysis. Critical analyses might include situating the reading in relation to other arguments surveyed in the course, relating the reading to a film screened in class, or following a particular strand of the reading's argument in order to pursue it further. Ultimately, the response paper is an opportunity for students to work their thoughts into written form, and to develop their writing skills before the major research paper.

Group Presentation (20%)

Starting from February 5th until the end of term, students will work in groups of four to five on a 20-minute presentation. The presentation will cover a given week's theme, focusing on a film **not** discussed in class. In allotting an equal amount of presentation time to each member of the group, the presentation should provide a brief précis of the film, and then describe how this work can broaden our understanding of the week's theme. Students must consult with the instructor about their given choice of film at least one week before their presentation date. Sign ups will begin on January 22nd.

Curatorial Assignment (40%)

The final assignment will involve curating a selection of political films. An assignment sheet on the final paper will be given out February 27th. The assignment will be 6-8 pages, double-spaced, and is due on Tuesday, April 9th at the beginning of class.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

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 marked final exams in SS 320. 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/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

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.

Student Accommodations and Deferrals:

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) or for 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, please see the following:

- Section N.1 of the *University Calendar*:
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/n-1.html>
- FAQs for Students at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Note that 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 that of another assignment or test.

For information on deferrals, see the following sections in the *University Calendar*:

- Section G.7 Deferral of Term Work at
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>
- Section G.6 Deferral of Final Exam at
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. In this course, letter grades will be used for all assignments. The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

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%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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. If you need help with your writing, you may use the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

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>. Research and citation resources are also available on the website of the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/> If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at <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 (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints 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/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus 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.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings (on next page)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

January 15 **Introduction**

Screening: *Harlan County U.S.A.* (USA, Kopple, 1976)

Reading: Jacques Rancière, “The Distribution of the Sensible: Politics and Aesthetics,” in *The Politics of Aesthetics*, pp. 12-19.

PART 1: CINEMA AND DECOLONIZATION**January 22** **Third Cinema and Anti-Colonialism**

Screening: *The Battle of Algiers* (Italy/Algeria, Pontecorvo, 1966)

Reading: Robert Stam and Louise Spence, "Colonialism, racism and representation," *Screen*, 24.2 (1983): pp. 2-20.

Recommended: Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, “Toward a third cinema,” *Cinéaste* 4.3 (1970): 1-10.

January 29 **The L.A. Rebellion and Beyond**

Screening: *Bush Mama* (USA, Gerima, 1979)
Beyoncé: Lemonade (USA, Knowles-Carter, 2016)

Reading: Cynthia A. Young, “Shot in Watts,” in *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left*, pp. 209-244.

Recommended: Brittney Cooper, *Eloquent rage: a black feminist discovers her superpower* (excerpts).

February 5 **SHORT ESSAY DUE DATE****Canada and Settler Colonialism**

Screening: *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (Canada, Obomsawin, 1993)

Reading: Zuzana Pick, “This Land Is Ours’—Storytelling and History in *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*,” in *Candid Eyes: Essays on Canadian Documentaries*, pp. 181-196.

Recommended: Bruno Cornellier, "The Thing About Obomsawin's Indianness: Indigenous Reality and the Burden of Education at the National Film Board of Canada," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, 21.2 (2012): pp. 2-26.

PART 2: CINEMA AND THE STATE APPARATUS

February 12 Soviet Montage

Screening: *The Man with a Movie Camera* (Soviet Union, Vertov, 1929)

Reading: Seth Feldman, "Peace between Man and Machine: Dziga Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera*," in *Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video*, pp. 40-54.

Recommended: Dziga Vertov, "WE: Variant of a Manifesto," in *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, pp. 5-9.

February 19 READING WEEK - NO CLASSES HELD

February 26 Fascinating Fascism

Screening: *Triumph of the Will* (Germany, Riefenstahl, 1935)

Reading: Susan Sontag, "Fascinating fascism," in *Under the sign of Saturn*, pp. 73-105.

March 5 Political Modernism 1: The Ideological State Apparatus

Screening: *Deux ou Trois choses que je sais d'elle* (France, Godard, 1967)

Reading: Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Paul Narboni, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism," *Screen*, 12.1 (1971): pp. 27-38.

Recommended: Allen Thiher, "Postmodern Dilemmas: Godard's *Alphaville* and *Two or Three Things That I Know about Her*," *boundary*, 2.4 (1976): 947-965.

March 12 The Neoliberal World Order

Screening: *Hypernormalisation* (UK, Curtis, 2016)

Reading: Brett Nichols, "Adam Curtis's Compelling Logic: The Tortuous Corridor to the Hypernormal," *borderlands* 16.1 (2017): 1-24.

Wendy Brown, "Undoing Democracy: Neoliberalism's Remaking of the State and Subject," in *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, pp. 17-45.

PART 3: IDENTITY, SEXUALITY, TRANSGRESSION

March 19 Political Modernism 2: Radical Feminism

Screening: *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Commerce Quay, 1080 Brussels* (Belgium, Ackerman, 1975)

Reading: Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism 7th Ed.*, pp. 711-722.

Marion Schmid, *Chantal Akerman*, pp. 16-22, 32-50.

March 26 Japanese Avant-Garde Documentary

Screening: *Funeral Parade of Roses* (Japan, Matsumoto, 1969)

Reading: Michael Raine, "Introduction to Matsumoto Toshio: A theory of avant-garde documentary," *Cinema Journal* 51.4 (2012): pp. 144-154.

Mika Ko, "'Neo-documentarism' in *Funeral Parade of Roses*: the new realism of Matsumoto Toshio." *Screen* 52.3 (2011): pp. 376-390.

April 2 The Politics of Melodrama

Screening: *Carol* (USA, Haynes, 2015)

Reading: TBD

April 9

***FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE**

Conclusion

Screening:

All the President's Men (USA, Pakula, 1976)