

Film Studies (FILM) 301 – L01
Topic in National Cinema
USA: Hollywood Blockbusters
Fall 2011
Mo 14:00-15:50 & We 14:00-16:50 PF 128

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 13:00-14:00, and by appointment

Course Description

An examination of key developments in the production, distribution and exhibition of large-scale, big-budget American movies, from *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) to *Avatar* (2009). Special attention will be devoted to the effects of industrial and technological change on film form and style, and a consideration of the relationship between American culture and mainstream commercial cinema.

Objectives of the Course

The objectives of this course are to explore the history of Hollywood filmmaking with an emphasis on the characteristics, history, and modes of distribution and exhibition that unite big-budget pictures, and to consider the cultural significance of these films. Students will also cultivate skills of formal and stylistic analysis that can be used in combination with other interpretive techniques later in their degrees. These same skills will also help students to be more discerning consumers of contemporary popular culture.

In order to achieve these objectives, it is imperative that students come to class **prepared**, having completed the assigned readings or other preparatory tasks and willing to discuss pertinent issues with both the instructor and their peers in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Mobile phones must be turned off during class. Students may use laptops or tablets for **note-taking purposes only**. Breaks will be provided, during which you can update your Facebook status, check your Twitter feed, or perform other vital functions.

Textbooks and Readings

Hall, Sheldon and Steve Neale. *Epics, Spectacles and Blockbusters: A Hollywood History*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2010.
Additional readings will be available on Blackboard [BB].

Assignments and Evaluation

- 20% Five pop quizzes, spread randomly over the semester, covering assigned readings.
- 15% In-class test on 10/12. Multiple-choice and short-answer questions covering lectures, readings and screenings from the first four weeks of class.
- 30% 3,000-word essay, due 12/7.
- 35% Final exam, held during the examination period. Multiple-choice, short-answer and essay

questions covering lectures, readings and screenings from the entire semester.

All work submitted for evaluation must be in proper MLA format, typewritten in a standard twelve-point font with 1" margins on all sides, paginated and stapled. No paper clips or folders, please. Your name and student number must appear on each page.

All assignments must be handed in at the start of class on the day on which they are due.

In cases of illness or bereavement, late assignments will only be accepted if accompanied by official documentation (e.g. a note from your physician). All other late assignments will be penalized according to the policy detailed below.

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: Yes.

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://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: www.efwr.ucalgary.ca

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

(Revised, effective September 2008)

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 (MacEwan Student Centre 4th floor, efwr.ucalgary.ca) 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.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

Available on Blackboard.