

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

Film Studies (FILM) 301– Lecture 01

Topic in National Cinema: Iranian Cinema

FALL 2022: September 6 to December 7 (excluding Sept. 30, Oct. 10 & Nov. 7-13)

Fridays 12– 1:50 (Lecture)

Mondays 11:00 –1:45 (Lab)

In-person course.

Instructor:	Dr. Mohsen Nasrin
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Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	Monday 2:00-2:45 or by appointment

Course Description

Topics will explore various aspects of, or historical moments in, a particular nation's cinematic culture.

This course will examine key theoretical and historical aspects of Iranian cinema. Topics will include the study of Iranian film authors, realism in Iranian cinema, transnational cinema, and how these films question the status quo.

Course objectives

The course aims to familiarize students with the socio-historical and cultural context of Iranian Cinema and connecting the notion of national cinema with more general aspects of film theories.

Textbooks and Readings

Readings will be posted on D2L weekly.

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online courses only).

If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact IT support services. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

During class, students must turn off all cell phones, pagers, etc. Laptops may only be used for notetaking.

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Assignments and Evaluation:

1. Discussion Board Posts: (30%)
2. Film Introduction (as scheduled): (20%)
3. Film Analysis Essay (Oct. 19): (20%)
4. Creative Project (Dec. 5): (10%)
5. Final Exam (Registrar-scheduled): (20%)

1. Discussion Board Posts (30%)

Students are expected to be active participants in class. Part of this entails participating regularly on the D2L discussion boards, both creating original posts and responding to others' posts.

Original posts: Every four weeks, you will be required to create one substantive, original discussion post regarding to class screenings, readings or in-class discussions. Each original post should be at least two paragraphs (3-5 sentences/paragraph) and incorporate concepts from the reading and examples from screenings. For the original post, you may develop your own topic or you can use the prompt. The original posts will be due Saturdays by 11:59pm.

Response posts: Every two weeks you are required to respond to another student's post. The response posts should be two paragraphs (3-5 sentences/paragraph) in length and thoughtfully address the prompts by incorporating concepts from the reading and examples from screenings. Response posts are due Mondays at 11:59pm.

In sum, there should be at least **3 original posts** and **6 responses**.

To receive extra credit, you must contribute more frequently to the Discussion Boards than the minimum required and make quality contributions that advance the conversation, bring in original and relevant examples, and/or otherwise significantly contribute to the discourse. Engaging with course concepts at an advanced level (specifically by referring to the key points of the readings) is a good way to get extra points. As always, please be civil in your discussions.

2. Film Introduction: Presentation & Production Folder (20%)

Each Friday, a group will present on a film related to the week's topic. This project requires that you collaborate with group members (4-5 students/group) to create and present a 20-30 minute introduction to an Iranian film not already featured on the course outline. The presentation should analyze the film in relation to the reading and the topic of the week.

The foundation of the presentation is a Production Folder that each group will create (one document submitted for the entire group, due on the day of the presentation). The production folder consists of a written analysis of the chosen film from different angles - national, historical, auteurs, ideological and formal – with each group member responsible for writing one section. Each section should be 3-4 pages in length. The goal of the production folder and presentation is to evaluate the film as an aesthetic and cultural artifact.

Students will be assessed both individually and as a group:

- i. Individual assessment will focus on the student's written contribution to the Production Folder (ex. depth of analysis, integration of appropriate scholarly sources, and written quality) and presentation performance (10%)
- ii. Group assessment will focus on overall collaboration (including the ability of the group to work together, divide labour equitably, and problem-solve effectively), the overall quality of the presentation, and the cohesiveness of the Production Folder (including introductory and concluding elements) (10%)

Keep in mind that this assignment is collaborative. It is important that you individually construct well-argued, detailed, and relevant Production Folder and presentation elements – and that your partners do so as well. (The details of the assignment will be discussed further in class).

3. Film Analysis Essay (20%): due Oct. 19

Select an Iranian film that is not shown in class and analyze it in relation to one of the topics covered in class. A list of Iranian films available on reserve at the TFDL library will be provided. The essay should be **five to six pages** in length and double-spaced. Further instructions on the essay format will be provided later.

NOTE: You may not select the same topic (reading) for essay and class presentation.

Some tips on how to write a film essay:

Your essay should not be merely a "review" of the films. Comments like "the acting is great!" or "the cinematography is splendid!" are not quite appropriate. You must **analyze** the works. When analyzing films, ask yourself questions such as: "What effects do the cinematography, sound and editing have on the audience?"; "Do the characters symbolize something beyond their individual personality?"; "Is the filmmaker trying to convey a political or ideological message through her/his film?"; "How is the story structured (straightforward, linear structure with clear narrative progression or circular, elliptical story with complex relationships among characters), and how does this structure affect the spectator's response?". It is usually a good idea to read a few articles on the films you are analyzing so as to get a sense of the issues at stake in the works. The best place to start if you want to find articles on films and filmmakers is the FILM

LITERATURE INDEX, which gives bibliographical information on film-related publications from 1973 to the present.

4. Creative Project (10%)

Students will work in groups (of 4-5) to create a pamphlet for a film festival on Iranian Cinema. Class time will be given for group work, so students can discuss possible festival themes and topics and to generate a list of festival films amongst themselves. We will have in-class group discussions four times during the semester.

For this assignment, you need to refer to both films screened in class and those introduced by your classmates (see “Film Introduction” assignment). Your festival must feature 8 films - at least three of which from those screened in class and three from those introduced by your classmates as part of the “Film Introduction” assignment. You may add two external films.

Grading for this assignment is in two components:

- i. Group Notes (5%): four times through semester (dates TBD)
At each in-class group planning meeting, you must ensure that detailed notes are taken that clearly communicate the topics of discussion, debates, decisions made, and progress made on your film festival pamphlet content and design. The submitted notes must be typed and submitted to the D2L Dropbox as one file (Word or PDF) by 11:59pm the day of class.
- ii. Final Pamphlet & Rationale (5%): due Dec. 5th
The final pamphlet may be formatted as *either* a multi-page pamphlet *or* a 18” x 24” poster – your group is free to be creative in the design and layout of the festival details within those parameters. The final submission must include a separate, clearly written rationale (approx. 300 words) that explains the festival theme, the selection of films, and how the pamphlet design effectively draws interest to your festival.

More details provided in class.

5. Final Exam (20%) Date: TBA (Registrar-scheduled)

The final exam will include film clips (based on themes and scenes discussed in class). For this reason, your attendance and active participation throughout this course is essential for passing the final exam.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is no guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

Note: You must complete all assignments and exams or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments in class or by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 5% or a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require a medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses 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 and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating

the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, letter grades will be used for the essay assignment and the final exam, while percentage grades will be used for discussion posts, the creative project, and presentations.

NOTE: With regards to the Essay Assignment and the Final Exam, any grade under 50% will be calculated as 0% when calculating final grades.

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%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

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.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed, or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). Students who use material protected by copy-right in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

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, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see

<https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferral of term work, see

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk. For resources on D2L, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Unit 1: A Historical Approach

Sep 9: Introduction: What is National Cinema?

Screening: (Short Films)

*Group activities for the term will be assigned.

Reading: Willemen, Paul. "The National Revisited" in Vitali, Valentina and Willemen, Paul. *Theorising National Cinema*, British Film Institute. 2006. 29-43.

Sep 12-16: Historical Distance

Screening: *Chicken with Plums* (Marjan Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud, 2011)

Kennedy-Karpat, Colleen. "Self-adaptation and Transnationality in Marjane Satrapi's *Poulet aux prunes*." in the *Journal of Literature on Screen Studies*, 2015, Vol.8 (1), p.68-88.

Sep 19-23: Filmfarsi

Screening : *Death in The Rain* (Samuel Khachikian, 1975)

Reading: Khoshbakht, Ehsan. "Tehran noir: Samuel Khachikian and the rise and fall of Iranian genre films" In *BFI*. Updated 2017

Sep 26: Pre-revolutionary Art Cinema

Screening: *The Postman* (Dariush Mehrjui, 1972)

Reading: Jahed, Parviz. *The New Wave Cinema in Iran: A Critical Study*. 2021

*No class on Friday the 30th for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Oct 3-7: War and its Aftermath

Screening: *Bashu, the Little Stranger* (Bahram Beizai, 1986)

Reading: Lovatt, Phillipa, "Breathing bodies: sounding subjectivity in the war film" *Music, Sound and the Moving Image*, Volume 10, Issue 2, 2016.

Unit 2: Realist Tendencies of Iranian Cinema

Oct 14: Social Realism

Screening: *Offside* (Jafar Panahi, 2006)

Reading: Nagib, Lucia. "Realist cinema as World Cinema 1" in *The Routledge Companion to World Cinema*. Routledge. 2018. Chapter 25.

*The screening will be moved on Friday.

OCT 17-21: Minor Cinema

Screening: *Turtles Can Fly* (Bahman Ghobadi, 2004)

Reading: Erfani, Farhang. "Bahman Ghobadi's *Turtles can Fly* and Marginal Politics" in *Iranian Cinema and Philosophy*.

OCT 24-28: Kid's cinema

Screening: *Where is the Friend's Home?* (Abbas Kiarostami, 1987)

Reading: Mulvey, Laura. "Abbas Kiarostami: Cinema of Uncertainty. Cinema of Delay"

OCT 31-4: Intellectual Drama

Screening: *About Eli* (2009)

Rugo, Danielle. "Asghar Farhadi Acknowledging Hybrid Traditions: Iran, Hollywood and Transnational Cinema" in *Third Text*. Volume 30, Issue 3-4. 2016.

Nov 6-12 (Reading Week)

Unit 3: (Post) National Cinema

Nov 14-18: (R)eimaging the Past

Screening: *Under the Shadow* (Babak Anvari, 2016)

Reading: Sayyar, Sara Anahita. *Discovering Cultural Identity Through Film: A Rhetorical Exploration of Women in Persian Cinema*, M.A diss. University of Arkansas. 2019. 62-74.

Nov 21-25-: Literary Adaptation

Screening: *The Salesman* (Asghar Farhadi, 2016)

Reading: Rezaie, Naghmeh. "Miller in Farhadi's Terms" in *Cross-cultural adaptations in national and international cinemas: the case of Iranian films*. A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware, 2021. 45-51

Nov 28-Dec 2: Third Cinema

Screening: *Santoori* (Darioush Mehrjui, 2007)

Reading: Pister, Patricia. "Arresting the Flux of Images and Sounds: Free Indirect Discourse and the Dialectics of Political Cinema" in Buchanan, Ian. *Deleuze and the Contemporary World*. Edinburg University Press. 2006. 174-193.

Dec 5: Post National Cinema

***A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (Ana Lilly Amirpour, 2014)**

Reading: Abdi, Shadee ; Calafell, Bernadette Marie. "Queer utopias and a (Feminist) Iranian vampire: a critical analysis of resistive monstrosity in *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* " in *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 08 August 2017, Vol.34(4), p.358-370