

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
FILM 331-01
Film Theory to 1950
W2021: January 11- April 15
(excluding Feb. 14-20 and April 2 + 5)

Screenings: non-synchronous
(Recommended: reserve Mondays for film viewing)
Lectures: Wednesdays, 3PM - 4:50PM
(Combined lecture + synchronous discussion every week)

IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR WINTER 2021:

This Winter 2021 course will be offered entirely online as part of the University's plan to ensure everyone's safety during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please read this outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous course sessions will be hosted on Zoom, a video-conferencing program. To access scheduled Zoom course sessions, go to D2L, click on the COMMUNICATION tab, and select Zoom 5 or 10 minutes before class is scheduled to begin.

If you will not be able to participate in scheduled synchronous class sessions owing to time differences, then you should arrange to take this course when it is offered in person in the future. Note that the time indicated on course outlines for all timed quizzes and exams in FILM courses includes 50% extra time to allow for technical difficulties.

Instructor:	Dr. Lee Carruthers
E-Mail:	lee.carruthers@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	See D2L course page
Office Hours:	Fridays, 2-4PM via Zoom: email to reserve a time

Course Description

This course surveys the first broad phase of theoretical writings on cinema, sometimes referred to as 'classical film theory.' As such, we will examine an extensive range of critical and theoretical commentary, engaging with fundamental questions about the film medium: what is the proper material, or 'essence' of cinema? What are its key methods and techniques? Is it an art equal to the other arts? What forms can cinema take, and what are the medium's possibilities? What can be considered the purpose or value of cinema? How do films affect individual viewers and culture at large? By taking this course, students will become familiar with the significant concepts and debates that constitute early film theory, while fulfilling the course objectives outlined below.

Course Format Information

This course features **online screenings** and **synchronous lecture and discussion sessions**. Access to the course films is provided via **films links** posted on the D2L course page. We will convene every **Wednesday from 3PM - 4:50PM** to discuss the assigned readings and films in real time; I will also present some framing lecture material during this session and direct you to short video clips posted on D2L. Please be advised that these sessions will **not** be recorded, so your attendance and participation is essential. If you miss one of the sessions, you will have access to a weekly handout that highlights the sections of reading that were discussed. While helpful, such handouts are not a substitute for working through the readings as a group during the synchronous class time.

Attendance and informed participation are essential components that will significantly determine your final grade. To succeed in the course, you must complete the assigned reading **before** the synchronous session every week, so as to make informed contributions to discussion. I also ask that you **turn on your video screen** during the lecture and discussion sessions to better facilitate these weekly conversations. Please see the section on **technology requirements** for online learning below: if you are not able to meet this basic expectation of the course, please contact me to discuss your situation ASAP. For students who are not comfortable speaking in online discussions, be sure to maximize other forms of class participation (the weekly screening notes, and via zoom chat, when permitted) to augment this part of your grade.

While the course is ongoing, I will keep you informed about any changes that arise, such as updates to film access info and readings, or amendments to the discussion time. Please note that it is your responsibility to **read all course emails** and updated course information. I will make every effort to deliver this information concisely and in a timely fashion.

Additional Information

As a course with a prerequisite, (FILM 201), this class assumes and requires your familiarity with basic film terms. For your reference, a 6-page *Glossary of Formal Terms* will be provided on the online course page. You are expected to use this vocabulary correctly in class discussion and in written assignments.

Objectives of the Course

This course has four overlapping aims:

1. To become familiar with the core issues of early film theory.
2. To become a sophisticated reader, engaging closely and critically with film-theoretical texts.
3. To discern relationships between the course readings and the weekly film screenings: what does each text reveal about the other?
4. To write clearly and authoritatively about films and film-theoretical issues, and thus to share in ongoing debates about the medium.

Textbooks and Readings

Purchase from the University Bookstore:

- *Critical Visions in Film Theory: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Edited by Timothy Corrigan, Patricia White with Meta Mazaj. (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2011). Designated as 'CVFT' on the course schedule.

Additional required readings are accessible via **D2L**, designated as such on the course schedule.

Reading Requirements

The reading materials for FILM 331 are often challenging and cannot be mastered quickly or superficially. Please set aside sufficient time to complete the readings every week and to reflect upon their content. If you find the texts a little difficult (and you will— theoretical writings are by nature 'tricky'), **highlight the specific words and/or passages in question and raise these issues in class**. These questions are an excellent way to participate in the weekly discussions: so long as you make an effort to complete the reading, all questions are welcome. Other students will have similar questions about the texts and will benefit from hearing yours. With consistent time and effort, completing the readings every week and engaging in discussion about them, the material will become quite accessible, facilitating your success in the course overall.

Note about readings available electronically through the University Library: first, please ensure that you are already **signed into** your library account. If the link directs you to the beginning of the book, locate the assigned pages in the table of contents, and either read them online or download for future reference. If you have trouble accessing these materials after following these steps, send me a note ASAP.

Learning Technologies and Requirements: Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

This is an online course. In order to complete online (or blended) courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technologies:

- 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);
- A microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone. If you have technical difficulties, contact the university's IT department. For more information, see

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Viewing Requirements + Screening Notes

Students are required to watch all films indicated on the course schedule. A link will be provided for each title: if you encounter any technical difficulties that are not resolved by signing out and then back into the system, let me know ASAP. Once you've watched the weekly film(s), there is another simple task to complete as follows:

After you've watched the film(s) each Monday, go to the course D2L page to submit a brief **screening note** (under the Discussion tab). There are instructions there to guide you, as well as a general question or prompt to discuss. Your screening note should be a paragraph or so in length; it should respond to the prompt thoughtfully and specifically, sharing your impressions of the weekly film. The thread will be closed at the end of each week (Friday at 8PM, unless specified otherwise), so it's best to post early. These submissions are straightforward to complete and will contribute positively to your course grade (see Assignments and Evaluation, below).

Assignments and Evaluation

Grades will be determined as follows:

Screening Notes + Participation in Synchronous Discussion	weekly	20%
Reading Summary Assignment Single-page summary of one or more of the readings from weeks 2, 3, 4	Week 4 (Feb. 3)	10%
Montage assignment Sequence analysis + short report (2 pages)	Week 8 (March 10)	30%
Final Essay A paper that engages the course readings and films to demonstrate a clear understanding of select film theories. 1500 words in length; complete instructions will be provided in Week 11.	Week 13 (April 14)	40%

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox (unless instructed otherwise in the assignment guidelines). Include your name and ID number on all assignments. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you 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 recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss 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. 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 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, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

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 & Grade Scale of the Dept. of Communication, Media and Film

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. 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, final grades are reported as letter grades. The Reading Summary, Montage assignment, and the Final Essay will also receive letter grades. Screening notes and participation will be calculated as a combined point score.

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, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including 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. All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C->

[42/index.html](#)) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright 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 deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <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, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

A full schedule of lecture topics, readings, and films will be made available when the term begins.