

Film Studies (FILM) 333-01
Film Theory after 1950
Fall 2013
Screenings (Labs): Mondays, 13:00 - 15:45
Lectures: Wednesdays, 13:00 - 14:50

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Location:
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Web Page: on Blackboard
Office Hours: Thursdays 14:00-16:00

Course Description

This course surveys significant theoretical writings on cinema produced from 1950 to the present. We will examine an extensive range of critical commentary, considering the ways film has been conceived as a narrative system; as a language; as technology/apparatus; as a vehicle of ideology; as a medium of resistance; and finally, as an occasion to reflect upon historical and philosophical issues. In taking this course, students will become familiar with the significant concepts and debates of academic film theory, while fulfilling the course aims named below.

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 is provided on Blackboard, under 'Course Documents.' **Students are expected to use this vocabulary correctly in class discussion and in your written assignments.**

Objectives of the Course

This course has four overlapping objectives:

1. To become familiar with the core issues of contemporary 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.

Internet and electronic communication device information

This course observes a **strict laptop and cell phone policy**. Laptops are for note-taking only: anyone found using their laptop for email, unauthorized browsing, etc. during class time will jeopardize their participation grade. Likewise, texting and cell phone use is not

permitted: turn off these devices when you arrive at the classroom to avoid embarrassment, annoyance, and irreversible grade penalties.

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 at local video stores, as well. These resources are not a substitute for the scheduled screenings, but may prove helpful for review purposes.

Reading Requirements

The reading materials of this course are challenging and cannot be mastered quickly or superficially. You will need to set aside sufficient time to complete the readings every week and to reflect upon their content. If you find the texts 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*. Other students will have similar questions, 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 more accessible. If your schedule doesn’t permit this kind of focused commitment, however, *FILM 333 is not for you*.

Participation Requirements

Attendance and informed participation are essential components of this course and will determine your final grade. To succeed in the course, you must complete the assigned reading *before* class every week, so as to make informed contributions to discussion. There is also a simple task to be completed on a weekly basis, as follows:

After the Monday screening, go to the Blackboard site to submit a **brief response to the film + weekly reading**. There will be a general question or prompt there for you to work with: in order to receive marks, your post must address the prompt specifically and substantially. About a paragraph or so in length, your response should make a **clear connection between the film and the course readings**. Please note that cursory, vague, or irrelevant commentary will **not** be credited.

Textbooks and Readings

At 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** should be accessed via Blackboard, and are designated as ‘**B**’ on the schedule.

Assignments and Evaluation

Grades will be determined as follows:

| | | |
|---|------------------------|-----|
| Blackboard + In-class discussion | weekly | 15% |
| Reading Quiz (on readings week 3 + 4) | Week 4, Oct. 2 | 15% |
| Midterm (short answer test) | Week 8, Oct. 30 | 30% |
| Final Exam (Multiple choice: all course materials) | scheduled by Registrar | 40% |

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 tutor or 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: YES

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

A detailed schedule of dates, film screenings, and assigned readings will be made available once the course begins.

