University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

FILM 409 (L01): Special Topics in Film Studies:

FILM IN THE DIGITAL AGE

FALL 2021: September 7 to December 9 (excluding Sept. 30 and Nov. 7-13)

Lecture: Th 3:30 – 5:20pm, synchronous
Lab: asynchronous

Lectures will be held synchronously on Zoom; screenings will be asynchronous

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IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY

Asynchronous & Synchronous Course Components: Please read this outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate in person or online at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous sessions hosted on Zoom can be accessed on D2L by clicking on the Communications tab and selecting Zoom.

Note: If you will not be able to participate in synchronous in-class or online class sessions owing to time differences or geographical location, then consult with the instructor to see if accommodation is possible or arrange to take this course in a future term.

Instructor:	Ryan Pierson
Email:	Ryan.pierson@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	T & Th 2:00 – 3:00 pm via Zoom

Course Description
This course explores issues related to the ongoing digitization of film. Since the 1970s, movies have become increasingly dependent on computers in their production, distribution, and exhibition. This course engages in some of the questions that arise when a celluloid-based art becomes based in information. In particular, the course familiarizes students with issues of medium-specificity, the changing poetics of digitally-driven images, and digital compositing in a historical context.

Additional Information
The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course
This course will focus on developing three major skills. First, observing and analyzing formal elements of film; second, reading high-level historical and theoretical film scholarship; third, writing and speaking about film, developing an original argument.

Textbooks and Readings

Shane Denson and Julia Leyda, eds. Post-Cinema: Theorizing 21st-Century Film. Available online through open access: https://reframe.sussex.ac.uk/post-cinema/

All other readings will be posted on D2L.

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete online (or blended) 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.

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

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

Discussion boards, ongoing: 25%

Starting in week 2, you will be asked to write a response to the week's readings and post it to D2L. These responses must be posted by 8 a.m. Thursday. There is no minimum or maximum length; the only requirement is that you engage with at least one of the readings assigned that week. These responses will help inform our discussion, and you are free to use your response as the basis for your participation.

Discussion questions, ongoing: 15%

Each student will sign up for a week in which they will present (possibly with a partner) 2-3 discussion questions for the week. These questions should, as a whole, cover the film and the readings. They should prompt the class to examine the readings and film in detail. Please send your questions to the instructor by 10 a.m. the day of discussion.

Participation, ongoing: 15%

As this is a small class group, participation will be essential for class discussion. You will be expected to take active part in each week's discussion, ready to discuss the week's reading and film in detail. Come to class with at least one comment or question on the week's material.

Project proposal, (Nov. 4): 15%

At the midpoint of the term, students will submit a proposal for the topic and approach of their final essay (Three pages, including bibliography). The proposal should include a brief

description of your major research questions or arguments, and roughly how you plan on executing them. It should also have a formatted bibliography.

Final project, (Dec. 15): 30%
Your major assignment for the course will be an essay (8-10 pages) that further explores some topic from the course.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No
If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will attempt to schedule the final exam in the evening, but 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.

Submission of Assignments
Please submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox (unless otherwise noted). 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 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 all assignments.

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%

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

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/desire2learn/home/students. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

<p align="center">**Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings**</p>

Week 1, Sept 7 & 9: introductions
Shane Denson & Julia Leyda, "Introduction"
    Screen: *Ex Machina* (Garland, 2014)

Week 2, Sept 14 & 16: digital image
Lev Manovich, "What Is Digital Cinema?"
    Screen: *Mother!* (Aronofsky, 2017)

Week 3, Sept 21 & 23: control societies
Gilles Deleuze, "Control Societies"
Jonathan Crary, "Capital Effects" (D2L)
    Screen: *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982)

Digital Film Language

Week 4, Sept 28: Visual Design
Leon Gurevitch, "Cinema Designed: Visual Effects Software and the Emergence of the Engineered Spectacle"
    Screen: *Blade Runner 2049* (Villeneuve, 2017)
Sept 30: Holiday, no class

Week 5, Oct 5 & 7: Editing
Steven Shaviro, "Post-Continuity"
    Screen: *John Wick: Chapter 2* (Stahelski, 2017)

Week 6, Oct 12 & 14: The Virtual Camera
D.N. Rodowick, "The Digital Event" (D2L)
    Screen: *Russian Ark* (Sokurov, 2002)

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Digital Life

Week 7, Oct 19 & 21: Networks
Patrick Jagoda, "Network Aesthetics" (D2L)
    Screen: *The Big Short* (McKay, 2015)

Week 8, Oct 26 & 28: Serialization
Felix Brinker, "On the Political Economy of the Contemporary (Superhero) Blockbuster Series"
    Screen: *Avengers: Endgame* (Russos, 2019)

Week 9, Nov 2 & 4: Contagion
Mikki Kressbach, "The Microscopic Image and Interpretation, or, How to See an Outbreak"
    Screen: *Contagion* (Soderbergh, 2011)
PROPOSALS DUE NOVEMBER 4

Week of Nov 9 & 11: FALL BREAK

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Speculations

Week 10, Nov 16 & 18: Afrofuturism I: Utopias
Kodwo Eshun, "Further Considerations on Afrofuturism" (D2L)
      Screen: *Black Panther* (Coogler, 2017)

Week 11, Nov 23 & 25: Afrofuturism II: Dystopias
Leshu Torchin, "Alienated Labor's Hybrid Subjects"
      Screen: *Sorry to Bother You* (Riley, 2018)

Week 12, Nov 30 & Dec 2: Apocalypse
Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Visualizing the Anthropocene" (D2L)
Kali Simmons, "Reorientations; or, an Indigenous Feminist Reflection on the Anthropocene"
(D2L)
      Screen: works by Will Wilson and Amanda Strong

Week 13, Dec 7: final thoughts

FINAL PROJECTS DUE DECEMBER 15