

Film Studies (FILM) 591 L01
The Cinema of Terrence Malick
Fall 2012
Lectures: Tuesdays, 15:00-16:45
Screenings (Labs): Thursdays, 14:00 - 16:45

Instructor: Dr. Lee Carruthers
Office Location: SS232
Office Phone: (403) 210-8858
E-Mail: Lee.Carruthers@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: See Blackboard course page
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12-2PM

Course Description

This course focuses on the films of Terrence Malick, analyzing the director's distinctive style and concerns as these tendencies illuminate wider issues of film aesthetics, film history, and film-philosophy. Surveying Malick's filmmaking practice from the 1970s to the present —with special emphasis upon the recent and critically acclaimed title, *The Tree of Life* (2011)— the course offers students the opportunity to view Malick's entire film corpus while situating his work within a compelling history of international film style. To this end, we will consider Malick's films in relation to classical and contemporary American cinema, the European art cinema, and in terms of avant-garde practice, screening titles from diverse directors such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Jean-Luc Godard, Alfred Hitchcock, Stanley Kubrick, Arthur Penn, Orson Welles, Stan Brakhage, and others.

Additional Information

This Senior Seminar assumes and requires your familiarity with basic film terms, as well as your consistent commitment to the intellectual tasks and challenges of the course. This means that you are required to use the precise **film-analytical vocabulary** developed in film coursework thus far. (For your ongoing reference, a 6-page *Glossary of Formal Terms* will be provided on Blackboard, under 'Course Documents.')

More substantially, this class demands your focused engagement with assigned **readings, screenings, and in-class discussion**. Be sure to set aside sufficient time to prepare for every class.

Objectives of the Course

This course has three main objectives:

1. Specifically, to examine a range of films by director Terrence Malick so as to discern the stylistic and thematic preoccupations evidenced across his work.
2. More generally, to enrich and extend our film-analytical and critical skills, allowing us to approach Malick's films as complex, aesthetic objects that belong to significant cultural contexts.
3. Finally, to reflect upon Malick's work as it illuminates something profound about the cinema—that is, as a medium that poses conceptual challenges and potentially reflects aesthetic, historical and philosophical dilemmas.

Viewing Requirements

The weekly screenings for this course are scheduled on **Thursdays from 2pm until 4:45pm**; please note that attendance at all screenings is **crucial**. As many of the course titles are longer films, please arrive *a few minutes early for every screening*. For repeat viewings and/or close analysis, the films are held at the Media Library (3rd floor, TFDL) and may be viewed there; additionally, some titles may be available at local video stores, such as Casablanca Video. These resources are not a substitute for the scheduled screenings, but may prove helpful for assignments.

Participation Requirements

Regular attendance and informed participation are essential components of this course that will determine your final grade. You are expected to come to class having completed the assigned readings, and thus prepared to discuss these materials specifically. Please note that a significant percentage of your grade is based on participation. If you do not make an informed contribution to in-class and online discussion on a weekly basis, you can expect to receive **zero** for participation: there is no other basis for this part of your grade.

Besides the weekly readings + screenings, there is a simple task to be completed every week, as follows:

After the Thursday screening, go to the Blackboard site to submit a **brief response to the film and/or weekly reading**. There will be a general question or prompt for you to discuss. Your response should be a paragraph or so in length; it should focus on a detail or raise a specific issue that **you plan to talk about in class**. These responses are mandatory and must be submitted every week before the weekly lecture. (A deadline for responses will be specified in class.) Finally, please be advised that posts that do not respond to the prompt in a specific or thoughtful manner will be discounted from consideration—and therefore will *not* help your participation grade.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are for note-taking only. Using a laptop for email or unauthorized browsing during class time will jeopardize your participation grade. Likewise, texting and cell phone use is not permitted during class time: turn off these devices when you arrive at the classroom to avoid embarrassment, annoyance, and irreversible participation grade penalties.

Textbooks and Readings:

Two required texts are available for purchase at the Campus Bookstore:

- Hannah Patterson (ed.), *Terrence Malick, Poetic Visions of America* (London: Wallflower Press, 2003). Designated on schedule as **TM**.
- Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, *L'avventura* (London: British Film Institute, 1997). Designated on schedule as **LA**.

The remaining required readings should be accessed **electronically via the University Library or another online source**. Library readings are designated as 'L' on the course schedule. To locate these readings, go to the library catalogue; enter the journal title (the title is *italicized*) to call up the publication; then, search for the correct year, issue number, author and article title. **All readings are required**, unless specified on the syllabus as 'Recommended.' Please note that the assigned reading is directly tied to the tasks of the course. *If you do not complete the reading every week it is unlikely that you will receive a passing grade.*

Assignments and Evaluation

Grades will be determined as follows:

Reading Quizzes (5 dates: 4 count for marks)*	weekly	20%
Blackboard posts & In-class discussion	weekly	20%
Midterm (short film text analysis, in-class)	Week 7, Oct. 23rd	20%
Final Paper (A library research paper including film-textual analysis, 2500 words in length, on one of the central films or issues of the course. Detailed instructions for the successful completion of this essay, as well as helpful tips, will be distributed by November 13, 2012.)	Week 13, Dec.6	40%

* The **Reading Quizzes**, listed above, are designed to confirm your familiarity with the weekly readings. As such, they will not be scheduled in advance but rather will happen on 5 separate occasions throughout the semester, usually during the lecture period. **Reading Quizzes cannot be re-scheduled or 'made-up'; if you miss a quiz, the marks are forfeited.** Only 4 out of 5 quizzes will count for marks, however: so, you can miss one, or discount one.

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: NO

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://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: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture: (Revised, effective September 2008)

	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 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/cfreb>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

A complete schedule of readings, screenings, and lecture topics will be made available when classes begin.