MST 225 WEB Film Appreciation FALL 2015

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If you want to put a face to my name and learn more about Jeffrey Adams, go the Department of Media Studies homepage. My Faculty Profile contains a photo and short bio.

Co-Instructor: Michael Woods Email: m_woods2@uncg.edu

Please note: Students with last names beginning A-J are assigned to Prof. Adams. Students with last names beginning K-Z are assigned to Mr. Woods.

All questions and issues concerning the course should be emailed to your designated instructor (Adams or Woods). On-campus office hours are by appointment only. Most matters can be handled via email.

In an on-campus classroom course, students typically spend about four hours a week in the classroom and study at least another four hours a week outside of class, so for this online course plan on devoting at least 8 hours each week to viewing, reading, thinking, and writing. The course is front-loaded, which means there is more reading and course content in the first several Units, then somewhat less in the following Units as we progress toward the end. There are several online quizzes due in the beginning weeks of the semester.

Read the Course Syllabus carefully and refer to the Course Schedule often. Be mindful of due dates. All written assignments (Forum Discussions, quizzes, and the sequence analysis) are due by the dates specified in the Course Schedule. Late submissions, if accepted, are subject to grade penalty. It is the student's responsibility to complete assignments according to the timeline set in the Course Schedule.

Course Overview
MST 225 WEB is a fully online course of study. As a general introduction to the broad field of film studies, it introduces students to the study of film as an art form and provides an overview of the historical development of cinema as art form, as an industry, and as a culture. In addition, MST 225 WEB teaches basic concepts and terminology for cinematic techniques, styles, and analytical approaches. It also highlights the achievement of selected prominent filmmakers and the traditions and the contexts in which these filmmakers have produced their works, as well as offering points of
interpretive departure for significant individual films and insights into the social and historical contexts in which they are made.

**Course Objectives**

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand basic film production terminology and analytical terminology.
- Understand how to evaluate a film as an art form using analytical and interpretive approaches provided in the course.
- Break down a film sequence for analysis and demonstrate understanding of specified technical aspects and how they are used to create setting, character, and story.
- Understand the importance of the film director and the characteristics of the auteur.
- Discuss the selected films using appropriate terms and interpretive approaches.
- Write informed essays analyzing films with criteria set up in this course.

**The Required Textbook** is Richard Barsam and Dave Monahan, *Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film* 4th Edition (Norton, 2012). Order it new or used from Amazon.com or purchase new or used (or rent) from the UNCG Bookstore. 

**On Using the Textbook:** We will cover selected chapters and sections in *Looking at Movies* (hereafter referred to as Barsam), but not the entire book. Read assigned chapters and sections with emphasis on key points (indicated in the Study Guides). The textbook is also very useful as a general reference work. When new ideas and terms come up in Study Guides, in readings or elsewhere, more information and explanation can often be found in the textbook. It contains a useful Glossary and suggestions for further reading and viewing. Take advantage of the many things it has to offer. The DVD tutorials that come with a brand new copy are nice but not necessary or required for the course.

**Required Viewing:** In addition to the required textbook and readings, there is a significant amount of required viewing (entire films and some selected segments). Students must rent or purchase films required for the course. Students taking MST 225 online must view all required films listed in the course schedule.

The following are required films:

**Citizen Kane** (Orson Welles, 1941)

**M** (Fritz Lang, 1931)

**Double Indemnity** (Billy Wilder, 1944)

**Taxi Driver** (Martin Scorsese, 1976)

**The Searchers** (John Ford, 1956)

**Metropolis** (Fritz Lang, 1927)

**Blade Runner: The Final Cut** (Ridley Scott, 2007) or **Director’s Cut** (1992)

**Alien** (Ridley Scott, 1979)

**Apocalypse Now** (Francis F. Coppola, 1979)

**Aguirre: The Wrath of God** (Werner Herzog, 1972)
Grizzly Man (Werner Herzog, 2008)
The Big Lebowski (Coen Bros., 1998)
The Big Sleep (Howard Hawks, 1946)

The following films can be accessed through CANVAS for online streaming: Citizen Kane (Welles, 1941); Double Indemnity (Wilder, 1944); The Searchers (Ford, 1956); Taxi Driver (Scorsese, 1976); Grizzly Man (Herzog, 2008) and The Big Lebowski (Coen Bros, 1998).

Other films required for the course can be obtained by various means. One option is subscribing to Netflix (http://www.netflix.com) for the duration of this course. Many films studied in this course are available through Netflix. However, please note: Netflix may not always be able to deliver DVDs on short notice, so obtaining the films on schedule requires some forethought. Also, Netflix has only a limited number of DVDs available for each film. If they receive many requests for a specific title all at the same, they may not be able to deliver a DVD quickly enough to keep you on the course schedule. If you subscribe to Netflix, but are unable to acquire films on schedule, I cannot make special accommodations.

This is a fully online course. That means that enrolled students agree to take responsibility for acquiring the necessary materials on schedule. If you take this online course, you automatically assume that responsibility.

Therefore, consider buying some or all of the required films at the beginning of the course. Used DVDs are often quite inexpensive and the quality is as good as brand new. The most reliable places to purchase films online are Amazon (http://www.amazon.com) for quick orders or Half.com (http://www.half.com) for less expensive orders, but slower delivery. Buying required films ahead of time is the best way to avoid problems and strongly recommended. For those who live near campus, the required films are on reserve at Jackson Library. This is not an optimal viewing venue and should be a last resort. It is best to have your own copy of the films, which means renting or buying the films ahead of schedule so that you can watch them several times and review specific scenes and sequences for closer study.

Recommended or Optional Viewing: Some of the Study Guides make recommendations for additional viewing. Though not required for the course, these optional films will expand your knowledge of the topic and, if you include discussion of these extras in your forum postings and/or in your final exam essays, it can improve your course grade.

Supplemental Readings: In addition to the textbook, the course includes selected readings that provide critical interpretations of films and background on key concepts and featured filmmakers. These (required) readings should help students form a broader context for understanding the films viewed in the course and serve as models for critical thinking and writing about film. Key aspects of the supplemental readings will be tested
in the quizzes, and some knowledge of them should be demonstrated in Forum discussions and in the final exam essays.

**Bibliography of Supplemental Readings**


**Online Sources:** The Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) is a useful source for finding factual information and external film reviews to supplement your viewing in this course. Keep in mind that the database is made up of volunteer submissions and are thus occasionally inaccurate. For the films we will watch, however, this website is generally reliable. You should also conduct your own searches on the web for additional information concerning individual filmmakers treated in the course (e.g., Orson Welles, Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, Francis Ford Coppola, Werner Herzog, Ridley Scott, John Ford, Martin Scorsese, and the Coen Brothers) and any other aspect of film related to your studies. *Wikipedia* is generally useful for these purposes. Where the Course Schedule indicates *Wikipedia* that means you can use that information as a starting point, but you can also search for additional Internet and print sources.

**Study Guides:** Each Unit is accompanied by Study Guides that provide a general overview of films we study, points of emphasis for textbook readings, and information on other related topics. *The Study Guides should be your starting point for each film and for each textbook chapter.*

**Discussion Forums:** Students will participate in online discussions of the films we view and related topics. *The Study Guides provide topics for the Discussion Forums.* Write a submission on one topic per Unit. If you can think of an interesting topic not included in the Study Guides, you can also write on that. But please, *alternative topics must be substantive and useful.* It’s best to check with me if you want to suggest an alternative Forum topic. The Discussions Forums are *required as “participation”* in the course. Due dates are listed in the Course Schedule. Further explanation of Forum participation can be found in the *Study Guide – Introduction to Forum Discussions.*
Quizzes: There will be three quizzes on assigned textbook chapters and supplemental readings. Due dates are listed in the course schedule.

Opening Sequence Analysis: In Unit 9 students will write an analysis of the various technical aspects of a film sequence and explain how these cinematic techniques are used to convey themes and ideas that inform that segment and the film as a whole. Guidelines for this assignment can be found in the Study Guide: Guidelines for Opening Sequence – Apocalypse Now.

Final Exam: The final exam will be in essay format. A set of topics will be provided. Test topics will be similar to (perhaps the same as) Forum Topics.

The Final Grade for the course is based on the following:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in Forums</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz Average</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Sequence Analysis</td>
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<td>Final Essay Exam</td>
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A Note on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is intellectual fraud. By using someone else’s original thoughts and/or words and presenting them as your own, you are committing an academic crime and are subject to substantial grade penalties or dismissal from the course. Don’t do it! Chances are you will get caught. In the world of digital academia, it is now very easy to detect plagiarism. When writing an assignment for this course – Forum submissions, sequence analysis, or final exam – be careful to give the source for any writing you include that it not your own. Mostly, your writings for this course should be your own thoughts in your own words. But if you do cite secondary sources – textbook, supplemental readings, web sites – (and there is nothing wrong with that), designate quoted or paraphrased passages and provide the source(s).
COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit 1  Dates: * 8/17 – 8/26 *

**Auteurism, Orson Welles, Film Narrative, Editing**

*View* *Citizen Kane* (Welles, 1941)

*Read*: Introduction to Study Guides + Intro to Forum Discussions  
*Read*: Study Guides for *Citizen Kane*, Narrative, Editing (Production – optional)  
*Read*: McBride, “Citizen Kane”  
*Read*: on auteurism (Wikipedia) + an overview of Orson Welles (Wikipedia)  
*Write*: Forum submissions on *Citizen Kane* by 8/26

Unit 2  Dates: * 8/27 – 9/1 *

**Film Sound, Fritz Lang, Expressionism**

*View* *M* (Lang, 1931)

*Read*: Study Guides for *M* and Sound  
*Read*: Barsam Chapt. 9: Sound, pp. 387-429  
*Read*: German Expressionist Film + overview of Fritz Lang (Wikipedia)  
*Write*: Forum submissions on *M* by 9/1  
*Write*: Quiz 1 & Quiz 2 – due 9/4

Unit 3  Dates: * 9/2 – 9/10 *

**Mise-en-Scene, Classic Film Noir, Billy Wilder**

*View* *Double Indemnity* (Wilder, 1944)

*Read*: Study Guides for *Double Indemnity* and Mise-en-Scene  
*Read*: Barsam Chapt. 5: Mise-en-Scene pp. 171-222 + Barsam – film noir, 93-96  
*Read*: Paul Schrader, “Notes on Film Noir”  
*Read*: an overview of Billy Wilder (Wikipedia)  
*Write*: Forum submissions on *Double Indemnity* by 9/10  
*Write*: Quiz 3 – due 9/14
Unit 4  Dates:  *9/11 – 9/18 *

Neo-Noir, Martin Scorsese, Cinematography

View Taxi Driver (Scorsese, 1976)

Read: Study Guides for Taxi Driver and Cinematography
Read: Barsam Chapt. 6 Cinematography pp. 225-285
Read: Friedman, “Apocalypse and After: God’s Lonely Man”
Write: Forum submissions on Taxi Driver by 9/18

Unit 5  Dates:  * 9/19 – 9/25 *

The Western Genre, John Ford

View The Searchers (Ford, 1956)

Read: Study Guide for The Searchers
Read: Jim Kitses, “The Searchers”
Read: an overview of John Ford (Wikipedia)
Write: Forum submissions on The Searchers by 9/25

Unit 6  Dates:  * 9/26 – 10/2 *

Silent Film, Science Fiction

View Metropolis – Restored version (Lang, 1927)

Read: Study Guide for Metropolis
Read: Barsam – science fiction genre, pp. 96-99
Read: Rutsky, “Metropolis”
Write: Forum submissions on Metropolis by 10/2

Unit 7  Dates:  * 10/3 – 10/9 *

Science Fiction + Film Noir – Ridley Scott

View Blade Runner – Final Cut (R. Scott, 2007) or Director’s Cut (1992)

Read: Study Guide Blade Runner
Read: Schwartz, “Blade Runner”
Read: an overview of Ridley Scott (Wikipedia)
Write: Forum submissions on Blade Runner by 10/9
Unit 8 Dates: * 10/10 – 10/16 *

Science Fiction, Horror, and Psychology

View Alien (R. Scott, 1979)

Read: Study Guide on Alien
Write: Forum submissions on Alien by 10/16

Unit 9 Dates: * 10/17 – 10/23 *

Francis Ford Coppola, Opening Sequence Analysis

View Apocalypse Now (Coppola, 1979)
Optional Viewing: Hearts of Darkness. A Filmmaker’s Apocalypse (E. Coppola, 1991)

Read: Study Guides for Apocalypse Now
Read: an overview of Coppola (Wikipedia)
Read: Study Guide – “How to Read the Opening Sequence”
Write: Opening Sequence Analysis – Apocalypse Now — due 10/23

Forum submissions NOT required

Unit 10 Dates: * 10/23 – 10/30 *

Werner Herzog – Independent Auteur – Visionary Filmmaking

View Aguirre, The Wrath of God (Herzog, 1972)
Optional Viewing: My Best Fiend (Herzog, 1999) + Fitzcarraldo (Herzog, 1982)

Read: Study Guide for Herzog/Aguirre
Read: Brad Prager, “Aguirre”
Read: an overview of Werner Herzog (Wikipedia)
Write: Forum submissions on Herzog/Aguirre by 10/30

Unit 11 Dates: * 10/31 – 11/6 *

Werner Herzog – Documentary Film

View Grizzly Man (Herzog, 2005)

Read: Barsam, documentary film, pp. 70-75
Read: Study Guide for Grizzly Man
Write: Forum submissions on Grizzly Man by 11/6
Unit 12    Dates: *11/7 -- 11/20*

The Coen Brothers – Film Noir + Comedy

View   The Big Lebowski (Coen Bros. 1998)
The Big Sleep (Howard Hawks, 1946)

Read: Study Guide on The Big Lebowski
Write: Forum submissions on Big Lebowski by 11/20


FINAL EXAM DUE:  December 4 (by midnight)