

MST 225-02: FILM APPRECIATION (Spring 2023)

Instructor: Eric Juth

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Office hours: By appointment only; appointments must be made 24 hours in advance.

Class: Wednesday, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Location: Petty Building 150

Midterm exam: 02/22/2023

Final exam: 05/03/2023

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Analysis of selected, significant motion pictures of the world's cinema, from the silent period to the present.

In this course students will view, analyze, and discuss films representing a range of styles, exemplifying different production philosophies and emerging from diverse cultural, social, and historical contexts. This course is not an overview of the history of cinema but instead focuses on comprehending the formal aspects of film and on the experience of viewing movies as works of art.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Critical Thinking in the Humanities and Fine Arts Competency:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze claims, arguments, and information pertaining to relevant cultural artifacts.
2. Construct coherent, evidence-based arguments and/or analyses pertaining to relevant cultural artifacts.

MST 225 Course-Specific Competencies:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Accurately describe the technical and aesthetic elements of film, using appropriate terminological and conceptual vocabularies.
2. Evaluate and interpret films as forms of intellectual and aesthetic expression.
3. Identify and assess social and political themes conveyed in film.
4. Situate films in social and historical contexts as well as within the historical development of cinema as art form, and apply such knowledge to critical interpretations of film.
5. Synthesize various types of analysis and evaluation to form a more comprehensive understanding of film art and production.

GFA STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe and interpret art forms in relation to cultural values [LG1, 3]
- Identify the fundamental roles of artistic expression in personal or collective experience [LG5]

COMMUNICATION POLICY

I will make my best effort to answer all questions related to the course within 36 hours of when the message was received. I will check emails related to the course between the hours of 10 am and 5 pm each weekday, and less frequently on the weekends. If I receive a number of the same or similar questions, I will respond to the entire class as a whole.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS



All of your required textbooks and reading assignments come in eBook form, which means that they can be accessed for free through the UNCG library or they will be provided to you by your instructor!

Film studies: An introduction by Ed Sikov, Publisher: Columbia University Press, 2009

eBook: <http://uncg.worldcat.org/oclc/760923798> (Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

Hard copy (not required):

<https://www.amazon.com/Film-Studies-Introduction-Culture/dp/0231142935> (Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

Introduction to Documentary (3rd ed.) by Bill Nichols, Publisher: Indiana University Press, 2017

eBook: <http://uncg.worldcat.org/oclc/966315012> (Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

Hard copy (not required): <http://a.co/5QuImDH> (Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

Additional texts provided by your instructor.

FILM SCREENINGS

The majority of the films assigned for this course can be streamed for free via Kanopy (<https://www.kanopy.com/>), which you can access by using your UNCG student account. The films that are not available on Kanopy can be streamed through Amazon, usually for a fee of between \$2.99 and \$5.99 per video (and sometimes for free if you are an Amazon Prime Member,) or other streaming services such as Netflix or Hulu. For each assigned film, a link will be provided (see “Course Overview” section below or the “Announcements” section on Canvas.) ***To reiterate, you will be responsible for paying the rental fee for some of movies we watch this semester.***

A note on the screenings: Some of the films may present material that is “challenging” or “difficult” to watch, either because of its subject matter, content, or even due to the film’s style. Prior to the screenings, I will do my best to provide a friendly notice regarding any content or scenes contained in the upcoming film that might be considered unsettling or triggering. These notices will also be posted next to the movie listing on the “Announcements” page.

Each of the films selected for this course has been critically recognized as important works of cinematic art and in many cases have challenged technical, aesthetic, and/or even cultural conventions, paving the way for new cinematic experiences. At the very least, each of these films, if viewed with an open mind and consideration, will serve to elucidate key concepts and techniques discussed in the assigned chapter that corresponds to the film. While I hope that you end up “liking” some or even most of the films that we watch during the semester, this concern is really beside the point. The purpose of this course is to enrich and deepen your understanding of film as an art form so that you become more sophisticated and careful consumers (and even producers) of film in particular, and visual media more generally.

Finally, I have no illusion that the selected films will at all times appeal to the individual sensibilities, tastes, and interests of each and every student. However, I have made my best attempt to select films that represent a variety of styles and genres, and that have been created by or tell the stories of people from various walks of life. **Of the thirteen films we will watch over the course of this semester (including the bonus films)**

eight are by male directors, seven are by female directors, and seven are by persons of color.

COURSE METHODOLOGY

This course includes online components and also meets in person.

For the **online component**, students will watch the weekly assigned film and complete a short quiz that corresponds to it. **These tasks must be completed before our in person class session.** Prior to the screening, students will be provided with a short reference guide for each film; these should be read prior to watching the corresponding film. Additional links to reviews, articles, and interviews are also included in the reference guide.

The **quizzes**, which are to be completed on Canvas, are designed to make sure that the student has carefully watched the assigned film. Quizzes are due Wednesday before the start of each in-person meeting will remain open until the Friday.

During our **in person meetings** we will begin by covering the key terms, ideas and concepts covered in the assigned chapter(s). This overview will be followed by a discussion about the movie we watched. During the latter discussion we will apply the concepts, and terminology from the corresponding chapter to the film, but we will also attempt to cover other relevant contexts including historical, social, cultural, technological and/or aesthetic. Time will be afforded at the end of each class for additional questions and/or comments.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Class Participation = 25%

Quizzes = 25%

Midterm = 25%

Final = 25%

GRADING SCALE

A = 93-100 B+ = 87-89 C+ = 77-79 D+ = 67-69 F = < 59

A- = 90-92 B = 83-86 C = 73-76 D = 63-66

B- = 80-82

C- = 70-72

D- = 60-62

GRADING POLICY

Quizzes: The quizzes are designed ONLY to show that the student has carefully watched the assigned film. The format is multiple-choice and will focus on conspicuous or obvious aspects of the film relating to its story, plot, or other apparent details. Moreover, the quizzes will contain a “fudge question” (who directed the film) to boost the overall grade, since even if the student watched the film carefully, they could still overlook a detail that the instructor thought was clear. At the end of the semester, the average quiz grades will be rounded up to the nearest half letter grade (for example, if your average quiz grade is 82.3% it will be rounded up to 85%, 96% to 100%, etc.) Quizzes turned in late will receive a 5% deduction/day.

Midterm & Final Exams: The midterm and final exams are designed to show that students understand core terms, concepts, and techniques relating to film as an artistic form -- they do not cover the content of the films viewed during class. The exams consist of multiple-choice questions, word bank, fill in the blank, and true/false questions. The exams will be open book but also *timed*. The final exam is cumulative.

Student participation is essential for this class to be a success and for its learning outcomes to be achieved. Student participation will be graded on a 5% scale and updated quarterly throughout the semester. Participation graded on classroom engagement, discussion questions, and personal responses. Classroom engagement will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- 100-90% = Student often engages in conversation during most classes and offers their response to the discussion questions. Student is focused on and demonstrates comprehension of the course materials, shares additional research or provides examples, regularly attends class, and is on time.
- 90-80% = Student regularly engages in conversation during most classes and offers their response to the discussion questions. Student is focused on course materials and content during class, regularly attends class, and is on time.
- 80-70% = Student periodically participates in conversation during most classes and offers their response to the discussion questions. Student is focused on course materials and content during class, but does not attend every class and/or is consistently late to class.
- 70-60% = Student shows up but rarely participates in conversation during most classes or offer their response to the discussion questions. Student is

not focused on course materials and content during class, and does not attend every class and/or is consistently late to class.

- 60%> = Student never participates in conversation during classes and/or is usually unprepared. Student is mostly distracted or otherwise preoccupied (is on their computer, cellphone, etc.) during class. Student does not attend every class and/or is consistently late to class.

Each week there will also be discussion questions that relate to the concepts covered in the text as well as a personal response section. Students should come to class prepared to address each of these sections as well. Additionally, students may submit their responses to the respective forum to receive credit.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend every class. Students are permitted up to **two unexcused absences, after which their overall class grade will be reduced by 5% for each additional absence.** If you anticipate missing a class due to illness or an extenuating circumstance, please notify me as soon as possible.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The UNCG Academic Integrity Policy can be found by visiting the following link:

<https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/the-pledge/> (Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

Students are expected to read this carefully and abide by UNCG Academic Integrity Policies during class and for all quizzes, exams, and assignments.

The midterm and final exams are to be taken individually by students, not in groups. If it is discovered that a student or students assisted each other on the exams in any way it will result in automatic failure of the exam for all students involved and each student will be referred to UNCG's code review board.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism will not be tolerated - any suspected acts of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. **If any student is found to be plagiarizing in any of their response answers it will result in an**

automatic failure of the entire course. An example of plagiarism is copying and pasting the words of another author from another website, not attributing those words to that author, and then acting as if those words were your own. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, visit the following webpage and carefully review its content:

<https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/violations-and-sanctions/plagiarism/> (Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

DISABILITY SERVICES

If you are a student who may need additional assistance for this course, please contact me at the beginning of the semester so that we can work together to facilitate your learning experience.

UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) in 215 Elliott University Center, 334-5440, oars.uncg.edu.

TECH SUPPORT

Because this course is 100% online, technical issues may arise. To resolve computer-related issues, connectivity issues, or issues with Canvas, please contact: 6-TECH at 256-TECH (8324) or 6-tech@uncg.edu

COVID POLICIES & RESOURCES

See COVID policies and resources below Course Overview.

COURSE OVERVIEW

***Please note, although unlikely, screenings are subject to change throughout the semester – advanced notice will be given.**

WEEK 1 (01/11)

Focus: Course overview and expectations

- How to access Kanopy
- Accessing materials and quizzes on Canvas

Focus: The “viewing experience”

- Why studying film matters
- Some key terms

Assignment

REVIEW: Slides 01, MST 225 Intro

READ: Syllabus

READ: **Introduction: “Representation and Reality” AND Ch. 1: “Mise en Scene: Within the Image”** in *Film Studies: An Introduction* by Ed Sikov, 2009

WATCH: *Moonlight*, Barry Jenkins, 2016

Kanopy: <https://www.kanopy.com/product/moonlight>

[Links to an external site.](#)

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Moonlight-Mahershala-Ali/dp/B01MU9CMGJ>

[Links to an external site.](#)

WEEK 2 (01/18)

Focus: Mise-en-Scene

- Elements of mise-en-scene

Assignment

READ: **Ch. 2: “Mise en Scene: Movement” and Ch. 3: “Mise en Scene: Cinematography”** in *Film Studies: An Introduction* by Ed Sikov, 2009

WATCH: *La Haine*, Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995

Kanopy: <https://uncg.kanopystreaming.com/video/la-haine>

[Links to an external site.](#)

Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/Haine-English-Subtitled-Vincent-Cassel/dp/B00A5IX9XW>

[Links to an external site.](#)

WEEK 3 (01/25)

Focus: Mise-en-Scene: framing and cinematography

- Composition
- Subject-camera distance
- Camera angles
- Types of movement
- Focal length

Assignment

WATCH: ***Psycho***, Alfred Hitchcock, 1960

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Psycho-Anthony-Perkins/dp/B000I9YLWG>

[Links to an external site.](#)

WEEK 4 (02/01)

Focus: Editing 101

- Continuity editing
 - The 180 ° rule
 - Shot/reverse-shot pattern
- Disjunctive Editing
- Montage

Assignment

READ: **Ch.6 “Narrative Structure”** ” in *Film Studies: An Introduction* by Ed Sikov, 2009

Ch. 7: “From Screenplay to Film” in *Film Studies: An Introduction* by Ed Sikov, 2009

WATCH: ***Children of Men***, Alfonso Cuarón, 2007

Amazon: <http://a.co/d/dKTVGa5>

WEEK 5 (02/08)

Focus: Narrative structure and screenplays

- Narrative structure
- Story and plot
- Characters, desire, conflict
- Scenes and sequences
- The three-act structure

Assignment

READ: **Ch. 5: “Sound”**

WATCH: ***The Sound of Metal***, Darius Marder, 2019

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Sound-Metal-Riz-Ahmed/dp/B08KZCFW1C>

[Links to an external site.](#)

WEEK 6 (02/15)

Focus: Sound

- Categories of film sound

Midterm Review

WATCH (BONUS FILM): ***Nomadland***, Chloe Zao, 2021

Hulu: <https://tinyurl.com/nmdlnd2021>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Nomadland-Frances-McDormand/dp/B091RDSTBX>

[Links to an external site.](#)

WEEK 7 (02/22)

MIDTERM

Assignment

READ: Ch. 8 “ Filmmakers” AND Ch. 9: “Performance” in *Film Studies: An Introduction* by Ed Sikov, 2009

WATCH: *Modern Times*, Charlie Chaplin, 1936

Kanopy: <https://uncg.kanopy.com/video/modern-times>

[Links to an external site.](#)

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Modern-Times-Charlie-Chaplin/dp/B004DARF6A/>

[Links to an external site.](#)

WEEK 8 (03/01)

Focus: Creative attribution and Performance

- Auteur theory
- Studio system
- Acting styles
- Stars and character actors
- Type and stereotype

Assignment

READ: Ch.10 “Genre” in *Film Studies: An Introduction* by Ed Sikov, 2009

WATCH: *A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night*, Ana Lily Amirpour, 2014

Kanopy: <https://uncg.kanopy.com/video/girl-walks-home-alone-night>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/Walks-Alone-Night-English-Subtitled/dp/B00TTRBGIK/>

WEEK 09 (03/08)

SPRING BREAK!!!!!!!!!!

WEEK 10 (03/15)

Focus: Genre

- Conventions, repetition, variation
- Cycles of genre

Assignment

READ: **Culture and American Film Ch. 1 (abridged)**” from *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at The Movies* by Harry M Beshoff and Sean Griffin, 2009

WATCH: *The Watermelon Woman*, Cheryl Dunye, 1996

Kanopy: <https://uncg.kanopy.com/video/watermelon-woman>

[Links to an external site.](#)

Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/Watermelon-Woman-Cheryl-Dunye/dp/B00DDH0LJC>

[Links to an external site.](#)

WEEK 11 (03/22)

IN CLASS SCREENING: *They Live*, John Carpenter, 1988

WEEK 12 (03/29)

Focus: Representation & Ideology in American Film

Assignment

READ: **Ch.1: “How Can We Define Documentary Film”** in *Introduction to Documentary* (3rd Edition) by Bill Nichols 2017

WATCH: *I Am Not Your Negro*, Raoul Peck, 2017

Netflix: <https://www.netflix.com/title/80144402>

[Links to an external site.](#)

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/I-Am-Not-Your-Negro/dp/B01MR52U7T/>

[Links to an external site.](#)

WEEK 13 (04/05)

NO CLASS

WEEK 14 (04/12)

Focus: Documentary film

- Defining documentary film
- Documentary film conventions

Assignment

Ch. 6: “How Can We Differentiate Among Documentary Models and Modes?” in *Introduction to Documentary* (3rd Edition) by Bill Nichols 2017

Ch.7: “How Can We Describe the Observational, Participatory, and Performative Modes of Documentary Film?” in *Introduction to Documentary* (3rd Edition) by Bill Nichols 2017

WATCH: *Time*, Garrett Bradley, 2020

Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B08J7DDGJY/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

[Links to an external site.](#)

WEEK 15 (04/19)

Focus: Documentary Modes

- Observational
- Participatory
- Performative
- Expository
- Poetic
- Reflexive

Assignment

READ: **Ch. 3 “What Gives Documentary Films a Voice of Their Own?”** in *Introduction to Documentary* (3rd Edition) by Bill Nichols 2017

WATCH: **Waste Land**, Lucy Walker, 2010

Kanopy: <https://uncg-kanopystreaming-com.libproxy.uncg.edu/video/waste-land-0>

[Links to an external site.](#)

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Waste-Land-Vik-Muniz/dp/B004QM882A/>

[Links to an external site.](#)

WEEK 16 (04/26)

Focus: Voice and POV in documentary

Categories of voice

Documentary film and the rhetorical tradition

- Invention
- Arrangement
- Style
- Memory
- Delivery

Assignment:

STUDY FOR FINAL EXAM

WATCH (BONUS QUIZ): **Coded Bias**, Shalini Kantayya, 2020

PBS: <https://www.pbs.org/video/coded-bias-dysgui/>

[Links to an external site.](#)

Netflix: <https://www.netflix.com/title/81328723>

[Links to an external site.](#)

WEEK 17 (05/03)

FINAL EXAM

COVID POLICIES & RESOURCES

Required UNCG syllabus language

Approved by Faculty Senate on July 29, 2021

As we return for fall 2021, the campus community must recognize and address continuing concerns about physical and emotional safety, especially as we will have many more students, faculty, and staff on campus than in the last academic year. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Following face-covering guidelines](#)
- [Links to an external site.](#)
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- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene when possible
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.

Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

To make it easier for students to hear their instructor and/or read lips and if conditions permit, instructors who are fully vaccinated and who can maintain at least six feet of distance from students may remove their masks while actively teaching if they choose,

but will wear a mask at all other times while in the classroom, including during the periods before and after class

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow the basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and other requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or

the student may also contact OARS (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health

Services, will review requests for accommodations.