

MST 225 - 03 (MONDAYS)
Spring 2023
Film Appreciation Syllabus
attributes: GFA
credits: 3.0

Instructor Info:

Wil Davis

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(the best way to contact me is by using the email address above)

Class Time / Location:

Mondays 6:30 - 8:15 PM

Petty Building 150

Course Description:

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

Course-Specific SLOs:

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. [SLO 1]
2. Evaluate and interpret films as forms of intellectual and aesthetic expression. [SLO 1]
3. Identify and assess social and political themes conveyed in film. [SLO 2]
4. Situate films in social and historical contexts as well as within the historical development of cinema as an art form, and apply such knowledge to critical interpretations of film. [SLO 2]
5. Synthesize various types of analysis and evaluation to form a more comprehensive understanding of film art and production. [SLO 1, 2]

GFA Student Learning Outcomes:

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

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

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.

Course Description (extended):

This section of Film Appreciation is a web-lecture hybrid class. Each week students will be expected to watch a feature length film *outside of class* **and** post to our Canvas discussion board (canvas.uncg.edu). Then on Monday nights we will meet for a lecture and discussion about the films we've watched.

This class will cover a roughly 130 year span of cinema history, starting with some of the first films ever made and ending with some modern masterpieces. We will study the formal elements of filmmaking (cinematography, editing, art direction, etc.) and the techniques involved therein. We will also analyze the thematic content, genre and artistic and social significance of the films we watch.

Students will *not* be required to purchase a textbook, but *will be* required to purchase or stream approx 12 feature films outside of class. All required films are available via iTunes, and some may be available via other streaming services. Supplemental readings will be provided online.

There will also be two short online tests and a slightly longer online final exam that, together, constitute the majority of your grade.

Recommended Textbook:

Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film. Edition 4. Barsam, Richard. Norton, W.W. & Company, Inc. 2012.

(Again, this textbook is *not* required)

Attendance Policy:

Regular attendance in this class is critically important for you to get a good grade, as the test questions come directly from the in-class lectures. You are allowed one unexcused absence. Each unexcused absence after that may result in a 3 point reduction of your total grade. An attendance sheet will be passed around at the beginning of each class. If you are sick or have a personal emergency and cannot come to class, just email me before class and let me know. (wilrdavis@gmail.com)

Statement on Academic Dishonesty:

All students are expected to know the UNCG Academic Honor Code and abide by it. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. If you cheat, you will at the very least fail the assignment.

Late Assignments:

All online tests, including the final exam, will automatically close the moment they are due. In the case of illness or family emergency we may agree on an extension. Please contact me ahead of time regarding an extension for any assignment.

Grading:

Assignment:	Points:	Due:
Online Discussion Posts	30 (10 x 3 points) - see Extra Credit	weekly
Online Test 1	20	2/20 @ 6:30pm
Online Test 2	20	3/27 @ 6:30pm
Online Final Exam	30	4/28 @ 10:00pm

Final course grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 100-93; A- = 92.9-90; B+ = 89.9-87; B = 86.9-83; B- = 82.9-80; C+ = 79.9-77; C = 76.9-73; C- = 72.9-70; D+ = 69.9-67; D = 66.9-63; D- = 62.9-60; F = 59.9 and lower.

Extra Credit:

There is a built-in extra credit opportunity in the online discussion portion of your grade. We will watch 12 films and there will be 12 online discussion posts, each worth 3 points. But you only need to do 10 of those posts to get full credit for the class. So if you do **more than 10** posts, they are for extra credit.

Midterm Grades:

I will post a midterm grade for you in UNCGenie by February 24th. That grade will not appear on your transcript or in your GPA calculations. Instead, it is intended to help you understand how you are doing in the course.

Schedule / Filmography:

The schedule below is tentative and subject to change; check Canvas for the most updated version.

Students are responsible for watching each film title in **bold** (below) outside of class in their entirety by the date listed next to them, as well as completing their corresponding Canvas discussion post.

All of the feature films required for this course are available on iTunes. They may also be available on other streaming services.

All films with a ** next to them are available for free on YouTube.

DATE: (Monday)	FILM:	YEAR:	DIRECTOR & DURATION:	FOCUS:
1/9	<i>Sallie Gardner at a Gallop**</i> , <i>Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory**</i> , <i>Nanook of the North**</i> excerpts (we will watch these in class)	1878-1922	Eadweard Muybridge, Lumiere Brothers, Robert Flaherty	Class intro, syllabus, Canvas, Film Beginnings Lecture... (You don't need to watch anything before our first class)
1/16	NO CLASS			<i>MLK Jr. Day</i>
1/23	Grizzly Man	2005	Werner Herzog 104 min	Documentary Fiction vs nonfiction, found footage film, psychological exploration
1/30	For All Mankind**	1989	Al Reinert 80 min	Fiction techniques in nonfiction, archive footage, poetic documentary, music
2/6	Taxi Driver	1976	Martin Scorsese 113 min	Film Noir / Neo Noir <i>Notes on Film Noir</i> by Schrader, generic hybrid
2/13	The Big Lebowski	1998	Coen Brothers 117 min	Comedy Neo noir, mistaken identity ASSIGN ONLINE TEST 1
2/20	The Royal Tenenbaums	2001	Wes Anderson 109 min	Network narrative Comedy, auteur theory, cinematography, art direction, ensemble cast Online Test 1 Due @ 6:30pm

2/27	Magnolia	1999	PT Anderson 189 min	Dramedy, ensemble cast, SFX
3/6	NO CLASS			<i>Spring Break</i>
3/13	2001: A Space Odyssey	1968	Stanley Kubrick 143 min	Science Fiction Alien life, AI, evolution, SFX
3/20	Alien <i>(not to be confused with its sequel, Aliens)</i>	1979	Ridley Scott 117 min	Sci-Fi / Horror, Feminism, generic hybrid, psychosexual analysis ASSIGN ONLINE TEST 2
3/27	Arrival	2016	Denis Villeneuve 116 min	Sci-fi / romance drama, non-linear editing, block time, free will Online Test 2 Due @ 6:30pm
4/3	The New World	2005	Terrence Malick 136 min	Period Piece Historical romance / drama, discontinuity editing, improvisation
4/10	12 Years a Slave	2013	Steve McQueen 134 min	Foreign Cinema Period piece, slavery, realism
4/17	House of Flying Daggers	2004	Zhang Yimou 119 min	<i>Final Class!</i> Wuxia, auteur theory ASSIGN FINAL EXAM
4/24	TBD			<i>Final Class</i>
4/28	FINAL EXAM (Online)			DUE Friday, April 28 at 10:00pm