SYLLABUS – FILM AND CULTURE

Instructor: Dr. Inga Meier
Email: meieri@sfasu.edu
Office Hours: T, TH 12:30pm-2:30pm, W 4:00-5:00 pm, + By Appointment
Office Location: GFA 222
Mailbox: GFA 212B

Semester: Fall 2019
Course Number: 163.001 + 163L.020
Meeting Time: M, W 3:00 pm-3:50 pm, M 6:45 pm-8:45 pm
Meeting Room: GFA 300

I. Course Description

This course provides an introductory survey of film as a distinct art form that has the ability to reflect, critique, reshape, and impact society and culture. In the first half of the course, we will consider how film narrative is formulated (as opposed to other forms of art – e.g. photography, theatre, the novel) and explore the major formal elements of film: mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound design. In the second half of the course, we will expand this terminology to critically examine and analyze film, across a variety of genres, in its relationship to various aspects of society and culture (violence, race, class, gender and sexuality, etc.).

II. Course Objectives

Core Objectives:

- Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- Teamwork: to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared goal or purpose.
- Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students who successfully complete this course will:

- gain an understanding of a variety of cinematic works as products of specific cultures, times, and places. (Obj. #1, 4)

1 You may refer to me as “Inga,” “Dr. Meier,” or “Ms. Meier.” Please do not refer to me as “Prof,” “Professor Inga,” or “Doctor Inga.” If you insist on doing so, I ask that you follow this awkward wording with an acceptable title (e.g. “Yellow-Haired Warrior” or “Mother of Dragons”).
2 Emails are NOT an instantaneous form of communication. In other words, please do not send me an email 20 minutes before class and then approach me in class, asking if I received your email. On average, expect a 24-hour turnaround time, which may be longer on weekends and holidays. Also, emails sent through D2L will NOT be answered. Please use only the SFA address.
3 There is a sign up sheet for 15-minute slots on my door. If you wish to meet with me, please sign up. As long as you sign up in advance, you need not email me to inform me that you will be coming to office hours. If you are not available during office hours due to co-curricular conflicts, you may make an appointment outside of regular office hours, which we can set up after class or over email. In other words, please don’t tell me, “I didn’t meet with you because I had class during your office hours.”
• gain an understanding of critical commentary about film from a multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary perspective. (Obj. #1)
• develop their abilities to analyze, write about, and discuss cinema as a cultural artifact, both informally and through formal group presentation. (Obj. #1, 2, 3)
• learn basic concepts regarding the relationship between film and culture, including: concepts of national and regional identity; the relationship between film “text” and audiences of differing perspectives and backgrounds; and the relationship between film and other forms of cultural production such as history, literature, music, art, and theatre. (Obj. #1, 3, 4)

III. Text + Materials

• *Film Art: An Introduction (Twelfth Edition)* by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson
  ISBN 978-1260565669 / 1260565661

The book is available at the campus **Barnes and Noble** in the student center. It has NOT been ordered through other bookstores. You may procure the book however you choose (campus bookstore, online, textbook rental, locally owned bookstores, sharing with a friend, etc.). However, it is your responsibility to have completed the required reading by the due date.

IV. Class Procedures and Policies

**School of Theatre Attendance Policy:** A career in the fine arts demands dedication and discipline; preparation for this career (or any career, for that matter) requires conscientious development of effective work habits. To this end, regular and punctual attendance is expected for all classes, laboratories and other activities for which a student is registered or assigned.

Further:
• It is University policy to excuse students from class attendance for certain reasons related to health, family emergencies, or student participation in approved university-sponsored events. Excused absences from theatre classes will only be granted upon presentation of written documentation from the teacher, sponsor, or physician involved upon the first day of the student’s return. In the case of absences caused by university-sponsored events, inclusion in the university's public listing of such absences will constitute an official excuse. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor that he/she has scheduled the planned official absence, in advance when possible.
• Students missing classes, other than university-sponsored trips, may contact the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) and request that an absence notification be sent to the instructor(s). The notification is not an excuse, and is not evaluated by OSRR. The notification is only provided as a courtesy to the student and the student's instructor(s). Students remain responsible for providing documentation in a timely manner to the instructor for each absence. The instructor determines whether such documentation is satisfactory.
• In the case of missed classes, you will be held responsible for the successful completion of assigned work and/or projects. It is your responsibility to seek out the materials and

---

4 Due to the fact that there are significant differences amongst editions, I strongly recommend against buying a previous edition.
information you missed, including lecture notes, screenings, and announcements. “I didn’t know” will not be considered an excuse.

- A total of 8 excused and/or unexcused absences will automatically result in a failing grade.
- Unexcused absences above 2 will result in a deduction of 10 points each off the participation grade (1% each off the final grade).
- Arriving to class after attendance has been completed or leaving prior to the end of class will be considered ½ an absence (which counts towards the maximum allowed of 7) and will be deducted from your grade accordingly. If you are consistently arriving from another class at the other end of campus, please inform me of this on the first day of class, so I can provide you with a 5-minute allowance.
- If at any point in the semester, you wish to know where you are at in terms of attendance, please approach me before or after class, during office hours, or email me.
- It is your responsibility to be aware of both the attendance policy and your attendance count.

V. Requirements

This is a university course, taken mostly by prospective film minors. While we will be utilizing the “lab” portion of this class to view films, these viewings will be framed by the critical context of the readings and lecture material. In other words, you will be expected to actively engage the films in the class discussions that follow. Part of the expectation of this course is that your writing level be appropriate to a university-level course in the humanities. If you are not confident in your writing ability, make arrangements now to take advantage of the university’s various writing assistance programs. Start with the Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC) on the first floor of Steen Library.

Discussion Questions: Each screening will be paired with discussion questions, which will be posted on D2L. It is your responsibility to respond to discussion questions following the guidelines on D2L by midnight the day after the screening. The purpose of this assignment is to ensure your close viewing of the films and some analysis prior to the in-class discussion. You will not be able to respond to the questions after the deadline, as the in-class discussion will have already taken place. I will have read your response prior to the in-class discussions. However, grading may take up to a week. There will be a total of 13 discussion questions. You will be responsible for 11 of these. On the hand, this ensures that you will not be penalized if you are sick one week. On the other, if you do choose to complete all 13, you will have the opportunity to earn extra credit. This will be the only extra credit opportunity offered this semester.

11 x 25 points each = 275 points total

Quizzes: There will a total of 7 online quizzes, covering the reading due. They will be due at 12:00 pm the day the reading is due. You are expected to complete the quiz on D2L prior to the deadline. Following the deadline, the quiz will no longer be accessible.

7 x 25 points each = 175 points total

Midterm: The exam will be held in class on Wednesday, October 16. It will consist of a variety of questions covering all terms and concepts discussed in the course, ranging across film viewings, lecture material, in-class discussion, and assigned readings. Typical question types may include: true / false, short answer, matching, multiple choice, term identification, and an essay.
**250 points**

**Film Adaptation Pitch:** You will submit a film adaptation pitch in which you demonstrate in writing your knowledge of the key elements of film (mise-en-scene, cinematography, sound, or editing), and you will apply these elements to a design concept for a film adaptation of *Titus Andronicus*, for which you will be provided a free ticket. You will submit the adaptation pitch of 3 – 4 pages at or before the start of class on Monday, December 2 at 3:00 pm. The paper must be submitted as a hard copy. Late analyses will be deducted 20 points for each day that they are late, 10 points if they are turned in the day they are due after the collection time. Performance dates for *Titus Andronicus* are Nov. 12-16 at 7:30 pm and Nov. 14 at 10 am.

**200 points**

**Participation / Effort:** You are expected to come to class prepared and to be fully engaged during class discussions. This means that you are both physically and mentally present. As long as you meet both of these conditions, you will receive the full 100 points. However, absences (as outlined under the attendance policy), disruptive behavior, or lack of engagement will lead to deductions.

**100 points**

**Please note:** What takes you X hours to write, takes me X x Y hours to grade. Therefore, if you hand me a 4-page paper, I can not have it for you a couple of hours later. However, I will make every reasonable effort to return your work to you in a timely manner. On average, given the size of the class, and depending on the size of the assignment, this will be 2-3 class periods from the day that you handed in the assignment.

**VI. General Education Core Curriculum Assessment**

SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives. Film and culture is a general education core curriculum course and fulfills the Critical Thinking general education core curriculum requirement.

During the semester, you will receive an assignment associated with general education core curriculum assessment. When you complete the assignment you will upload the assignment to the “Core Curriculum – Critical Thinking” dropbox that you will find on your account in Brightspace by D2L. This dropbox is for core curriculum assessment only. You will need to submit the paper in hardcopy to me as well. If you have any questions, please see me or contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at (936) 468-1038 or assessment@sfasu.edu. The chart below indicates the core objectives addressed by this course, the assignment(s) that will be used to assess the objectives in this course and uploaded to the Critical Thinking Skills dropbox this semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Date Due in D2L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.</td>
<td>Film Adaptation Pitch</td>
<td>12/2/19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VII. Grading Policies

Grading Scale:

Final Grades are assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>900-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>800-899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>700-799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>600-699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>less than 600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54): Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

VIII. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

This class engages material covering a diverse range of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, and disability. While I encourage you to formulate and express your thoughts and opinions throughout the semester, discriminatory remarks will not be tolerated and may constitute disruptive behavior under the student code of conduct.

IX. Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student_academic_dishonesty.pdf.

You are expected to be in full compliance with both the SFA policy and the School of Theatre policy:

SFA policy: Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

School of Theatre policy: The School of Theatre expects students to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct. Misrepresenting someone else's work as your own or knowingly allowing
someone else to represent your work as his/hers constitutes academic dishonesty. Such behavior is antithetical to our work as scholars, as artists, and as members of a community founded on trust and mutual respect. It is an insult to faculty and an affront to honest students. Penalties for academic dishonesty may range from failure of a specific project to failure of the course, suspension from the production season for up to one year, and referral to university authorities for further action, which may include suspension or expulsion from the university.

Please Note: You are expected to be familiar with and able to demonstrate proper procedures for citations, following either MLA or Chicago Style guidelines, both of which are available online. Failure to cite sources (including in text) is a form of academic dishonesty and will be treated accordingly. Further, turning in an assignment that you have turned in elsewhere is considered self-plagiarism and will be considered a form of academic dishonesty. I will trust that you are invested in your own education and will not cheat. However, this trust should not be confused for a lack of vigilance on my part. If you are caught, I will consider it a violation of personal trust and will not hesitate to penalize you to the fullest extent possible. I guarantee that the penalty you may incur for a late assignment will be less than the penalty for academic dishonesty.

X. Student Code of Conduct

Acceptable Student Behavior: Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

Please note: Cell phone use during class is highly distracting, both to me, and the classmates seated behind you – especially during screenings. It is also rude. I can see you, even when you think you are staging a covert operation by placing the phone on your lap, and even if you are seated in the last row. I will not waste class time policing your cell phone habits. Please do not mistake this for the acceptability of such behavior. I will not waste time repeating material because you were busy checking Facebook the first time the material was covered. However, I will deduct points from your participation grade for cell phone use at the end of the semester.

XI. Concealed Carry

The law states that any institution of higher learning “… may not adopt any rule, regulation, or other provision prohibiting license holders from carrying handguns on the campus of the institution.” As such, I cannot ban lethal weapons in the classroom, since none of our department’s spaces have been approved for any kind of prohibition. However, I request that you use your best judgment and consider the importance of preserving a safe classroom environment for all students, in accordance with the student code of conduct, which remains in effect. If you are licensed to carry a handgun and choose to do so on campus, it is requested that you consider refraining from doing so in the classroom. Should you choose to carry, your weapon must be concealed and in your possession (on your body or secured in a backpack or other type of bag) at all times. Should your weapon be visible at any time, you may be referred to campus security and your grade may be affected.
XII. Additional Information

If you have a disability: To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities MUST contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Religious observance: If your observance of a religious holiday will prevent you from attending class, please contact me immediately so we can make appropriate arrangements.

XIII. Course Outline (Subject to Change!)\(^5\)

Please Note: This course outline is provided to help you schedule your readings and assignments. You will notice that some weeks have more assignments or readings than others. It is YOUR responsibility to manage your time accordingly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CLASS TOPIC</th>
<th>READING DUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WED, 8/28</td>
<td>Introduction and Syllabus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MON, 9/2</td>
<td>Discussion: Film Form, Narrative</td>
<td>FA, 50-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screening: <em>Stranger than Fiction</em> (Forster, 2006) (1:53)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUES, 9/3</td>
<td>*** <em>Stranger than Fiction</em> (Forster, 2006) Online Discussion #1 due at midnight!***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WED, 9/4</td>
<td>Discussion: <em>Stranger than Fiction</em> (Forster, 2006) Narrative Form</td>
<td>FA 72-111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*** QUIZ #1 DUE ONLINE***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MON, 9/9</td>
<td>Discussion: Mise-En-Scene</td>
<td>FA 112-158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screening: <em>The Shining</em> (Kubrick, 1980) (2:26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em><strong>QUIZ #2 DUE ONLINE</strong></em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUES, 9/10</td>
<td>*** <em>The Shining</em> (Kubrick, 1980) Online Discussion #2 due at midnight!***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WED, 9/11</td>
<td>Discussion: <em>The Shining</em> (Kubrick, 1980)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MON, 9/16</td>
<td>Discussion: Cinematography</td>
<td>FA, 159-215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em><strong>QUIZ #3 DUE ONLINE</strong></em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screening: <em>I, Tonya</em> (Ross, 1998) (2:04)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUES, 9/17</td>
<td>*** <em>I, Tonya</em> (Ross, 1998) Online Discussion #3 due at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^5\) Due to a variety of circumstances, the course outline may change. This may include changes to the screening titles and changes to dates on which certain topics are covered or reading is due. It is your responsibility to remain abreast of any changes to the course outline.
midnight!***

WED, 9/18  Discussion: *I, Tonya* (Ross, 1998) (2:04)

MON, 9/23  Discussion: Editing
***QUIZ #4 DUE ONLINE***
Screening: *Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991) (1:58)

TUES, 9/24  ***Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991) Online Discussion #4
due at midnight!***

WED, 9/25  Discussion: *Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991)

MON, 9/30  Discussion: Sound
***QUIZ #5 DUE ONLINE***
Screening: *Singin’ in the Rain* (Donen, Kelly, 1952) (1:43)

TUES, 10/1  ***Singin’ in the Rain* (Donen, Kelly, 1952) Online Discussion
#5 due at midnight!***

WED, 10/2  Discussion: *Singin’ in the Rain* (Donen, Kelly, 1952) (1:43)

MON, 10/7  Discussion: Film Style and Film Form
***QUIZ #6 DUE ONLINE***
Screening: *Frida* (Taymor, 2002) (2:03)

TUES, 10/8  ***Frida* (Taymor, 2002) Online Discussion #6 due at
midnight!***

WED, 10/9  Discussion: *Frida* (Taymor, 2002)

MON, 10/14 Discussion: Genre
***QUIZ #7 DUE ONLINE***
Screening: *Get Out* (Peele, 2017) (1:44)

WED, 10/16  ***MIDTERM EXAM***

FRI, 10/18  ***Get Out* (Peele, 2017) Online Discussion #7 due at
midnight!***

MON, 10/21 Discussion: *Get Out* (Peele, 2017)
Screening: *Arrival* (Villeneuve, 2016) (1:58)

TUES, 10/22 ***Arrival* (Villeneuve, 2016) Online Discussion #8 due at
midnight!***

WED, 10/23  Discussion: *Arrival* (Villeneuve, 2016)

MON, 10/28 Discussion: Animation
Screening: *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (Persichetti,
Ramsey, and Rothman, 2018) (1:56)
TUES, 10/29  *** Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (Persichetti, Ramsey, and Rothman, 2018) Online Discussion #9 due at midnight!***

WED, 10/30  Discussion: Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (Persichetti, Ramsey, and Rothman, 2018) (1:56)

MON, 11/4  Discussion: Documentary Film  
Screening: Grizzly Man (Herzog, 2012) (1:43)

TUES, 11/5  *** Grizzly Man (Herzog, 2012) Online Discussion #10 due at midnight!***

WED, 11/6  ***NO CLASS***

MON, 11/11  Discussion: Grizzly Man (Herzog, 2012)  
Screening: Free Solo (Chin + Chai Vasarheyi, 2018) (1:40)

TUES, 11/12  *** Free Solo (Chin + Chai Vasarheyi, 2018) Online Discussion #11 due at midnight!***

WED, 11/13  Discussion: Free Solo (Chin + Chai Vasarheyi, 2018)

MON, 11/18  Discussion: Film + History  
Screening: Vice (McKay, 2013) (2:13)

TUES, 11/19  *** Vice (McKay, 2013) Online Discussion #12 due at midnight!***

WED, 11/20  Discussion: Vice (McKay, 2013)

MON, 11/25  *** THANKSGIVING BREAK ***

WED, 11/27  *** THANKSGIVING BREAK ***

MON, 12/2  Discussion: Summary  
Screening: Once Upon a Time in Hollywood (Tarantino, 2019) (2:40)  
*** FILM ADAPTATION PITCH DUE IN D2L SHELL AND HARD COPY BY THE START OF CLASS ***

TUES, 12/3  *** Once Upon a Time in Hollywood (Tarantino, 2019) Online Discussion #13 due at midnight! ***

WED, 12/4  Discussion: Once Upon a Time in Hollywood (Tarantino, 2019)