Syllabus: Film and Culture

Instructor: Dr. Inga Meier
Semester: Fall 2020
Email: meieri@sfasu.edu
Course Number: 2366.001 + 2066.020
Office Hours: Mondays 11:00 am – 12:30 pm
Wednesdays 11:00 am – 12:30 pm
Fridays 10:45 am - 12:45 pm
Office hours are also available by appointment.
Office hours will be over zoom. If somebody arrives before you, you may have to wait in the “waiting room,” just as you would if somebody were already in my physical office prior to your arrival.
Zoom links for each of the three days are listed in the “Office Hours” section of the “Getting Started” module.
Office Location: McKibben 404
Mailbox: McKibben 404 (M-F, 8 am-5 pm)

I will be available to answer emails roughly 12:00 – 5:00 pm daily. However, if I have a meeting, another class, or office hours there will be a delay of a couple of hours. If you email me after 5:00 pm, it is likely that I may not be able to respond until the next day.

Preferably, use the SFA address listed above to send emails related to the course. Please include “THR 163” somewhere in the subject line. Because it is difficult to monitor multiple email accounts at once, if you email me through D2L, there is a strong chance that I will not see the email for several days, and I will refer you back to my SFA email.

Please Note: The syllabus may change at the discretion of the instructor. Notification of changes will be made through Brightspace.

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.).
Course Goals

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:

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)
- gain an understanding of critical commentary about film from a multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary 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)

Course Materials


The book is available at the campus Barnes and Noble in the student center. 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. Also, please note that the book is NOT required, though I do believe that you will find it useful.

Required Technology:

As this course is a film course, you will be expected to view a films each week. While you are free to use the streaming platform of your choice, all films are available for rental on Amazon. You need not have a prime membership to rent films on Amazon.

\(^1\) Due to the fact that there are significant differences amongst editions, I strongly recommend against buying a previous edition.
This course will be delivered through the university’s Learning Management System (LMS), Brightspace. Each student is required to have access to a computer with internet capabilities in order to access the course. Each student is also required to have a working, university (sfasu.edu) email account.

As a student of Stephen F. Austin State University, you have free access to this course’s Brightspace site. You will need to access the course regularly throughout the semester. Assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Brightspace, unless otherwise instructed. All other submitted files must be in Word format.

**Technical Support**

If at any point during the course you experience technical difficulties in Brightspace, please let your instructor know immediately.

You will also need to contact the SFASU Brightspace Support Team by email (d2l@sfasu.edu) or phone (936.468.1919) for technical help.

**Class Attendance and Excused Absence: Policy 6.7**

Regular, punctual attendance, documented participation, and, if indicated in the syllabus, submission of completed assignments are expected at all classes, laboratories, and other activities for which the student is registered. Based on university policy, failure of students to adhere to these requirements shall influence the course grade, financial assistance, and/or enrollment status. The instructor shall maintain an accurate record of each student’s attendance and participation as well as note this information in required reports and in determining final grades. Students may be excused from attendance for reasons such as health, family emergencies, or student participation in approved university-sponsored events. However, students are responsible for notifying their instructors in advance, when possible, for excusable absences. Whether absences are excused or unexcused, a student is still responsible for all course content and assignments. Students with accepted excuses may be permitted to make up work for up to three weeks of absences during a semester or one week of a summer term, depending on the nature of the missed work. Make-up work must be completed as soon as possible after returning from an absence.

**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 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.

**Diversity + 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. Some of these materials may be offensive by contemporary standards. Their inclusion should be not be interpreted as condoning discriminatory behaviors, and is intended to be engaged critically within the political and social contexts of the time in which the material was produced. Further, the expression of discriminatory remarks by students within the classroom or within submitted assignments will not be tolerated and may constitute disruptive behavior under the student code of conduct. Further, the expression of discriminatory views or language by students within the classroom or within submitted assignments can, at the discretion of the instructor, result in punitive measures, ranging from failure of a specific assignment to failure of the class and/or disciplinary action.

**Religious Holidays**

The university calendar observes Christian holidays. However, I know that it is possible that you practice a different faith. Should this be the case, and should the observation of that faith require you to practice holidays other than those accommodated by the university calendar, I ask that you let me know by the end of the second full week of class, so that we can adjust your attendance requirements accordingly.
Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Policy 6.1 and 6.6

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/.

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