Syllabus: Film and Culture

Instructor: Dr. Inga Meier
Semester: Fall 2023
Email: meieri@sfasu.edu (Please use only this email! I do not regularly check my D2L email.)
Course Number: DRAM 2366 + 2066
Class Meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00 – 1:50 pm (For specific dates, please see the “Course Calendar” in the “Getting Started” module on Brightspace)
Office Hours: Mondays, 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Tuesdays, 2:00 – 3:00 PM
Wednesdays, 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Thursdays, 2:00 – 3:00 PM
(Exceptions: Office hours will not be held during university holidays, dead week, or finals week. Additionally, during the first week of classes, office hours will only be held on Wednesday and Thursday.)

Please note: outside of office hours, there is a strong chance that I may be teaching another class, prepping, grading, or conducting other work. In other words, while I may be in my office, I may not be available to meet with you outside of the times listed above. That being said, if you would like to meet, but are unavailable during the times listed above, you can email me and I will do my best to accommodate you by scheduling an appointment. If you do come to office hours and somebody is in my office ahead of you, please wait outside of my office. If you enter my office, please wear a mask.

Office Location: Griffith 228

Some notes on communication:
If emailing, please use the SFA address listed above to send emails related to the course. Please include “Film and Culture” 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 do NOT use the D2L address. On average, I try to answer emails at least once a day. If you email me after 5:00 pm, it is likely that I may not be able to respond until the next day. If you email me on the weekend, I may not be able to respond until Monday. On average, I will do my best to respond within 24 hours, and sooner in cases of emergency.

A good rule of thumb is that if you have a question /concern that can be addressed in a couple of sentences, email is the most effective form of communication. For anything beyond that, office hours are the most effective form of communication.

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-scène, 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

By enrolling in DRAM 2366, you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Critical Thinking Skills requirement. This is a core objective that is required to be taught in this course per the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). This will be addressed both in your discussion questions and in your final paper. The objective is described as follows:

• Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.

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 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)

Course Materials

Recommended Text: Film Art: An Introduction (Eleventh Edition)\(^1\) by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, McGraw Hill (2017), ISBN 978-1-259-53495-9 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.). Also, please note that the book is NOT required, though I do believe that you will find it useful.

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\(^1\) Due to the fact that there are significant differences amongst editions, I strongly recommend against buying a previous edition.
**Required Technology:**

Some material for 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.

Additionally, you will be required to watch the weekly screenings on your own. Though you may access them however you wish, they are all available for streaming through Amazon. (Because the book is recommended, this is your only expense in terms of cou

**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.

**Attendance Policy**

- 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/they has/have 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 information you missed, including lecture notes, screenings, and announcements. “I didn’t know” will not be considered an excuse.
- A total of eight 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).
• Except in the case of previously discussed conflicts, arriving to class after attendance has been completed or leaving prior to the end of class will be considered 1/3 an absence (which counts towards the maximum allowed of 7) and will be deducted from your grade accordingly.
• If at any point in the semester, you wish to know where you are at in terms of attendance, please approach me during office hours, or email me. However, your attendance will also be listed in Brightspace (though the site does not allow a means to notate lates).
• **It is your responsibility to be aware of both the attendance policy and your attendance count.**

**Academic Integrity + Student Code of Conduct**

From the Student Code of Conduct:

2. Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

3. Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

4. Misrepresenting facts for academic advantage to the University or an agent of the University. This includes providing false grades or resumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual; and providing false or misleading information in an effort to injure another Student academically or financially.

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.

Additionally, as per the Student Code of Conduct, you may not engage in disruptive behavior, which is defined as “Any classroom behavior (regardless of course delivery method) that interferes with the Faculty member’s ability to conduct class, failure to conform to the Faculty member’s announced expectations for the class, or the ability of other Students to learn.” If you are found to be in violation of the student code of conduct, you may be subject to penalties.

You can read the full document here: https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/policies/10.4.pdf

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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