

**Western Illinois University – Spring 2015**  
**ENG/BC 290 Introduction to Film (sec 02)**

**MEETING TIMES/DAYS:**

**M/W 10:00-10:50 (lecture/discussion, 220 Simpkins)**

**M 2:00-4:00 (screening, 220 Simpkins)**

**Dr. Roberta Di Carmine**

**Associate Professor of Film & Director Interdisciplinary Film Minor**

**office: 219 Simpkins Hall; office phone: 309- 298-2192**

**office hours: M 11:00-1:00; T 2:00-3:00; W 2:00-3:00**

**email: R-Dicarmine@wiu.edu**

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to introduce students to the history, role, and cultural impact and aesthetic nature of film in the United States and in the international context. The main objectives of the course are: a. provide an overview of cinematic techniques and devices; b. offer an insight of the most significant movements, critical debates, directors and movie stars in the field of film studies. Readings and discussions will address a wide range of issues including spectatorship, the American star system, the Hollywood Classic Paradigm, genre criticism, feminist and cultural studies theories, and National Cinemas. The class involves screenings, lectures, discussions (and in class-activities), three film papers, a mid-term exam and a final exam. About the film papers: students will be able to revise their film papers once they have been returned and improve their grades if they like (revised papers will have to be re-submitted with revisions after the student meets with the instructor for an individual conference and according to the schedule on this syllabus).

**Prerequisite:**

None. The course is designed for all students in all majors but effective reading and writing skills are crucial for success in this course.

**Notice:**

Some of the films screened for this course may contain material some might find offensive or uncomfortable. Your enrollment in this course indicates your awareness of this and your willingness to approach these films in an adult, critical manner.

**Texts:**

1. *Film: An Introduction*, by William H. Phillips, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2009).

**The textbook used in this class is mandatory** and available at the University Bookstore. Students are NOT required to purchase the movies.

**Reading assignments MUST be completed before the discussion of each film.**

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**Film Screenings:**

If a student misses a film screening it is his/her responsibility to check with the library or find ways to watch the film before class discussion/exams (i.e. Netflix).

### Films and Concepts:

1. *Introduction: The Expressiveness of Film Techniques: The Kid* (1921, dir. Charles Chaplin, 68 m. US)
2. *Mise-en-scene: screening of Early Cinema and clips from a range of US films*
3. *Cinematography: Pan's Labyrinth (*El Laberinto del fauno*, 2006, dir. Guillermo del Toro. 118 m. Spain/Mexico/US)*
4. *Editing: Nosferatu* (1922, dir. F. W. Murnau. 81 m. Germany)
5. *Sound: Singin' in the Rain* (1952, dir. Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen. 106 m. US)
6. *Component of Fictional Films: Hugo* (2011, dir. Martin Scorsese. 128 m. US)
7. *Types of Fictional Films: Classic Hollywood Cinema: Some Like it Hot* (1959, dir. Billy Wilder. 120 m. US)
8. *National Cinemas I: Italian Cinema: La strada* (1958, dir. Federico Fellini. 108 m. Italy)
9. *National Cinemas II: French New-Wave: Jules and Jim* (1962, dir. Françoise Truffaut. 107 m. France)
10. *National Cinemas III: African Cinema: Black Girl (*La noire de. . .*, 1960, dir. Ousmane Sembene. 60 m. Senegal)*
11. *National Cinemas IV: Asian Cinema: Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000, dir. Ang Lee. 120 m. Taiwan/Hong Kong/US/China)
12. *American Independent Cinemas: Fargo* (1996, dir. Joel Cohen. 98 m. US)
13. *Documentary Films: Night and Fog (*Nuit et brouillard*, 1955, dir. Alain Resnais. 32 m. France); Experimental Films: *Un Chien Andalou* (An Andalusian Dog, 1928, dir. Louis Bunuel and Salvador Dalí)*
14. *Understanding Films Through Context: Do The Right Thing* (1989, dir. Spike Lee, 120 m. US)
15. *Animation: Wall-E* (2008, dir. Andrew Stanton, 97 m. US)

### Course Requirements and Evaluation

- mid-term exam (200 pts)
- 3 film papers (300)
- final exam (300 pts)
- participation and attendance (200 pts)

### Total points: 1000. Grading Scale:

1000-934= A  
 933-900=A-  
 899-867=B+  
 866-834= B  
 833-800= B-  
 799-767=C+  
 766-734=C  
 733-700=C-  
 699-667=D+  
 666-634=D  
 633-600=D-  
 below 600 pts= F

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**Writing and Exam Policies:**

a.- Students are asked to write 3 film papers. In these papers, students must use the critical/film language that are learning in the course and include specific examples from the film(s) to support the argument. Each paper must be 4 full double-spaced pages, typed, proof-read, spell-checked, and formatted (font: 12; side margins: 1 inch).

NOTE: Students will be able to revise their papers once they have been returned and improve their grades if they like. The revised papers might be re-submitted with revisions after the student meets with the professor for an individual conference and according to the schedule on this syllabus. No exceptions! Before approaching these writing assignments, students need to read chapters 12 and 13 in Phillips's Film: An Introduction, for sample of papers/ quotes/paraphrasing/ citations. Don't hesitate to ask me if you need assistance or have any questions about the writing style. PAPERS SENT AS EMAIL ATTACHMENTS WON'T BE ACCEPTED.

b.- Mid-term exam on film terms, concepts, and readings.

c.- Final Exam on film terms, concepts, readings, and a sequence analysis on one film among those studied throughout the semester. No book/notes are allowed during in-class exams.

**Class Policies (participation and attendance):**

-Since discussions revolve around the reading(s) and lecture, **active participation** is based on a careful reading of both film and texts as well as understanding of how the two relate to the main points of the lecture. Keep in mind that the contribution you offer to discussion counts toward your participation grade. Also, in class activities (film reviews, screening reports, sequence analysis, quizzes) will be given regularly at both discussion and screening periods and they count towards your participation grade (100 pts).

**A disruptive behavior will substantially hurt your final grade. Also, consistent late arrival or early departure DOES affect your final grade. Besides, arriving late is impolite. Be respectful in class, disagreements are inevitable in discussions but they should always be conducted in a civil manner (participation grade: 80 pts)**

-Regular attendance and participation is REQUIRED. Attendance will be taken regularly in class periods *and screenings*. **You are allowed 4 unexcused absences.**

**0-4 absences=100 pts; 5-8 absences= 50 pts; 9-11 absences= 10 pts; 12-+ absences= 0 pts**

Illness, emergencies, and religious obligations that fall on days of regularly scheduled classes may be excusable upon consultation with the instructor and require documentation from a university official or other authority. Letters from parents or relatives won't be accepted.

***Note: It is always up to the instructor to decide whether or not the documentation is appropriate and acceptable.***

**Additional Course Policies:**

**LATE WORK: LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** When a paper is due in class, students need to submit the hard copy of their paper, and if they fail to do so and decide to submit their papers later, their papers will be penalized 50 pts per hour.

**NO MAKE UP OF ACTIVITIES AND/OR EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN.** Only serious emergency situations will be considered and they include: absence related to hospitalization with proof of documentation from the doctor from the hospital; absence due to death of a family member with a documentation of funeral service attendance or official note from funeral home; absence due to universities activities, such as sport and students organizations, with an official note; absence due to religious obligations with documentation from university official. Letters from parents/relatives

WILL NOT be accepted. It is always up to the instructor to decide whether or not the documentation provided is acceptable and after a carefully review of the request. In any case, the student needs to contact the instructor immediately if he/she misses an in class exam. This policy will be applied to attendance as well. NOTE: In the case a student misses class for any reasons, it is always the student's responsibility to check with a classmate of any missed material (notes) in discussions/film screenings.

**No incomplete is given in this course.**

**Successful participation in this course requires that students complete all the requirements/assignments.**

**PLAGIARISM:** Students should be aware that plagiarism or cheating of any form will not be tolerated and that academic misconduct entails severe penalties. The most common form of academic misconduct is plagiarism. As stated on the website regarding Students' Rights and Responsibilities, "plagiarism is intentionally or knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism occurs whenever:

- One quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product without acknowledgment. This includes all information gleaned from any source, including the Internet; one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one's own words without acknowledgment; one uses facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials without acknowledgment; one fails to acknowledge with a citation any close and/or extended paraphrasing of another; one fails to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it is a few words, a sentence, or a paragraph.

Typical examples: Submitting, as one's own, the work of another writer or commercial writing service; knowingly buying or otherwise acquiring and submitting, as one's own work, any research paper or other writing assignment; submitting, as one's own, work in which portions were produced by someone acting as tutor or editor; collaborating with others on papers or projects without authorization of the instructor. In addition to oral or written work, plagiarism may also involve using, without permission and/or acknowledgment, computer programs or files, research designs, ideas and images, charts and graphs, photographs, creative works, and other types of information that belong to another. Because expectations about academic assignments vary among disciplines and instructors, students should consult with their instructors about any special requirements related to citation." (<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student/>)

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**Penalties for plagiarism: In case a student's paper is found violating these rules, the paper/exam will be a graded as a "zero" and an academic integrity incident report will be filed according to the Academic Integrity Policies of Western Illinois University.**

**\*\*\*WIU Film Studies Club\*\*\***

**The Film Studies Club shows a selection of films (national and international) and offers thought-provoking discussions on a wide range of issues and topics. Students are highly encouraged to attend these screenings. Further information about the students' organization will be given the first week of class. The FILM STUDIES CLUB President and Treasurer are: Dan Pourroy ([dj-pourroy@wiu.edu](mailto:dj-pourroy@wiu.edu)) and Thomas Franklin ([t-franklin2@wiu.edu](mailto:t-franklin2@wiu.edu)) and check the Film Club on Facebook or on [http://www.wiu.edu/cas/english\\_and\\_journalism/filmclub.php](http://www.wiu.edu/cas/english_and_journalism/filmclub.php)**

**Extra credits:** throughout the semester, I will announce various film related events and films screenings which allow students to earn extra credits points. In such cases, the student must attend the event and write a two-pages critical review (double-spaced). A max of 40 points for the semester (max 10 pts each review) will be given. The review must be submitted the week after the event.

**PLEASE NOTE: The University Writing Center is available to assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The one-on-one assistance available at the Writing Center is valuable for generating ideas, talking about global-level issues such as organization, and even working through grammatical problems. The University Writing Center is located in Simpkins Hall, call for an appointment (298-3512) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment. Writing centers on Macomb Campus: Malpass Library, Tanner Hall, Bayliss Hall, Simpkins Hall. Contact the University Writing Center for more information, e-mail [mwcenter@wiu.edu](mailto:mwcenter@wiu.edu)**

**Special Accommodation and Disabilities:**

“In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor’s attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512 for additional services.”

**Additional Information:** to get important factual information about films (characters’ name, cast, awards), check [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com). Be careful though with the “on-line interviews” and other material you find online. Remember, plagiarism is a very serious matter. It is also essential to take notes during the screenings. Therefore it is highly recommended to buy a penlight, a ballpoint pen with an illuminated tip, to facilitate writing in the dark.

ABOUT Wikipedia: In their writing assignments, students may consult, if they wish, wikipedia for information on the film/director but I highly discourage to refer to Wikipedia as the only critical source. Students can get bibliographical information there if they like but they must always consult the source (if mentioned) to verify its validity. Students must always refer first to the textbook of this course for any information about the film/director and if they wish to do more research they can check academic journals on films and popular culture. I will be happy to provide a list of these journals if needed.

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**NOTE: IN THIS CLASS YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO TEXT-MESSAGE OR CHECK YOUR PHONE. SILENCE YOUR PHONE AS SOON AS YOU ENTER THE CLASSROOM. I WILL PENALIZE STUDENTS WHO DON’T RESPECT THIS RULE BY TAKING OFF POINTS. AND, IF NECESSARY, I WILL ASK THEM TO LEAVE THE CLASSROOM. ALSO, NO FOOD IS ALLOWED AT FILM SCREENINGS/DISCUSSIONS. I WILL PENALIZE STUDENTS WHO DON’T FOLLOW THESE POLICIES.**

**Tips to do well in this course:**

**\*In addition to attending film screenings and discussions, students must read the assigned material each week.**

**\*Students are required to take notes during film screenings and class discussions/lectures/group presentations.**

**\*It is highly recommended to buy a penlight, a ballpoint pen with an illuminated tip, to facilitate writing in the dark.**

**\*Learn the cinematic terms right away. Be sure to check the glossary at the end of the course textbook (Film: An Introduction, p. 667) for any definition or ask the instructor about any terms that give you trouble.**

**\*Use film terminology in your writing assignments and presentation/comments. The success of this class depends on your ability to use the film vocabulary properly**

### **Tentative Schedule \***

**\* This syllabus provides a general plan for the course but some changes may be necessary. Students will be informed in class of any changes to the assigned schedule.**

#### **WEEK 1:**

01/21 (W): Course Introduction AND screening of clips from Erin *Brokovich* (2002, dir. Steven Soderbergh), *Memento* (2000, dir. Christopher Nolan), *Blade Runner* (1982, dir. Ridley Scott).

Beginning screenings of Early cinema by **Edwin Edison**, **The Kiss (1896)** and **Serpentine Dances (1895)**; by the **Lumiere Brothers**, **Swimming in the Sea (1895)**; by **George Melies**, **Trip to the Moon (1902)**; by **Edwin Porter**, **The Great Train Robbery (1903)**

Readings for next week: chapter 1 (Phillips)

#### **Terms and concepts:**

**Mise-en-scene; types and functions of setting; action, reaction, appearance; composition and the use of space; the shots; the angles**

#### **WEEK 2:**

01/26 (M): cont. screening of Early Cinema followed by discussion on the films/reading

01/26 (M): **Screening: The Kid (1921, dir. Charlie Chaplin, 60 m. US)**

01/28 (TH): Discussion on the film/reading.

Readings for next M/W: chapter 2 (Phillips)

#### **Terms and concepts:**

**Mise-en-scene and cinematography**

#### **WEEK 3:**

02/02 (M): **Cinematography:** discussion on the readings

02/02 (M): **Screening: Pan's Labyrinth (El Laberinto del fauno, 2006, dir. Guillermo del Toro. 118 m. Spain/Mexico/US)**

Reading for Wednesday: chapters 1 and 2 (Phillips)

02/04 (W): discussion on the film/readings

Reading for next week: chapter 3 (Phillips); chapter 12 (Phillips, on how to write film papers)

#### **Terms and concepts:**

**Cinematography: film stock; lighting; the camera (distance, perspective, angles, point of view shots)**

**WEEK 4:**

02/09 (M): **Editing:** discussion on readings and films.

02/09 (M): **Screening: Nosferatu (1922, dir. F. W. Murnau. 81 m. Germany)**

02/11 (W): Discussions on readings and films.

Reading for next week: chapter 4 (Phillips)

**Terms and Concepts:**

**Continuity editing vs. intellectual montage; Russian Montage and Sergei Eisenstein; eyeline match; match on action; graphic match**

**WEEK 5:**

02/16 (M): **PAPER n. 1 due. Discussion on the readings**

02/16 (M): **Sound.** Screening: **Singin' in the Rain (dir. Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, 1952. 106 m. US).** Reading for TH: chapter 4

02/18 (W): discussion on the film/in-class activity. Return papers to students. Students who want to submit the revised paper can meet with the professor for an individual conference. Revised papers (with the old paper) are due next MONDAY in class

Reading for next week: chapter 5 (Phillips)

**Terms and concepts:**

**The moving camera; components of the soundtrack; sound techniques; transition from silent to sound; types and functions of sound; diegetic and non- diegetic sounds; (post)synchronous sound; sound effects; sound continuity; musicals; Al Jolson and The Jazz Singer**

**WEEK 6:**

02/23 (M): **Sources for Fictional Films and Components of Fictional Films.** Discussion on the readings

02/23 (M): **Screening: Hugo (2011, dir. Martin Scorsese. 128 m. US)**

02/25 (W): discussion on the film/readings

Reading for next week: review chapters 1, 2 and 3 (Phillips)

**Terms and concepts:**

**Screenplays, shooting, scripts and storyboards; history and multiple sources**

**WEEK 7:**

03/02 (M): Let's write a screenplay! In class-activity

03/02 (M): Screening **Types of Fictional Films: Classical Hollywood Cinema.** Screening: **Some Like it Hot (1959, dir. Billy Wilder, 120 m. US)**

Reading for TH: chapter 6 (Phillips)

03/04 (W): discussion on film/readings

Readings for next week: review chapters 1-5 (Phillips) for exam

**Terms and concepts:**

**Classical film/Hollywood narrative; character types; stage and screen acting; the American Star System; styles of acting; casting; film genres**

**WEEK 8:**

03/09 (M): **MID TERM EXAM**

03/09 (M): **National Cinemas I: Italian Cinema.** Screening: **La strada (1952, dir. Federico Fellini. 93 m. Italy)**

03/11 (W): discussion on the film/readings

Reading for after spring break week: chapter 7 (Phillips) and re-read chapter 12 (on how to write film papers)

**Terms and concepts:**

**Italian Neorealism; Federico Fellini; Cesare Zavattini**

**WEEK 9:  
SPRING BREAK**

**WEEK 10:**

03/23 (M): **FILM PAPER N. 2.** Discussion on the readings/in class activities

03/23 (M): **National Cinemas II: French New-Wave. Screening: Jules and Jim (1962, dir. Françoise Truffaut. 107 m. France)**

03/25 (W): discussion on the film and readings. Return papers to students. Students who want to submit the revised paper can meet with the professor for an individual conference. Revised papers (with the old paper) are due next MONDAY in class

Readings for next week: chapter 7 (Phillips)

**Terms and concepts:**

**French New-Wave; Truffaut and Godard; “Cahiers du cinema;” auteurism**

**WEEK 11:**

03/30 (M): **National Cinemas III.** Discussion on the readings. In class activity

03/30 (M): **Screening: Black Girl (*La noire de . . . .*, 1960, dir. Ousmane Sembene, 60 m. Senegal).** Return papers to students. Students who want to submit the revised paper can meet with the professor. Revised papers are due Friday by 10.00 am (IN MY MAILBOX, room 122 Simpkins).

04/01 (W): discussion/lecture and in-class activity.

Reading for next week: finish chapter 7 (Phillips);

**Terms and Concepts:**

**African Cinema, “Third Cinema,” racial representations, stereotypes in cinema**

**WEEK 12:**

04/06 (M): discussion on the readings

04/06 (M): **National Cinemas IV: Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon (2000, dir. Ang Lee. 120 m. Taiwan/Hong Kong/US/China)**

04/08 (W): discussion on the readings/film

Reading for next week: chapter 8 (Phillips)

**Terms and concepts:**

**Asian cinema**

**WEEK 13:**

04/13 (M): discussion on the readings/in class activities

04/13 (M): **New “Auteurs.” Screening: Fargo (1996, dir. Joel Cohen. 98 m. US)**

04/15 (W): discussion on the film/readings. Return papers to students. Students who want to submit the revised paper can meet with the professor for an individual conference. Revised papers (with the old paper) are due next MONDAY in class

Read for next week: review chapters 8 and (Phillips) and re-read chapters 1-6 (Corrigan)

**Terms and Concepts:**

**Auteurism, Independent cinema**



**WEEK 14:**

04/20 (M): Discussion on the readings/film

04/20 (M): **Documentary Films. Screening: Night and Fog (1955, dir. Alain Resnais, 32 m. France); Experimental filmmaking: Un chien andalou (*An Andalusian dog*, dir. Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali, 1929. 16 m. Spain/France**

04/22 (W): discussion and in-class activity. Additional screenings

Reading for next week: chapter 10 (Phillips)

**Terms and concepts:**

**Documentary (definition); mediated reality; Experimental films; surrealist cinema; Luis Bunuel; poetic narratives; ideology/ avant-garde cinema**

**WEEK 15:**

04/27 (M): **FILM PAPER N. 3 due.** Discussion on the readings/in class activity

04/27 (M): **Understanding Films Through Context. Screening: Do The Right Thing (1989, dir. Spike Lee, 120 m. US)**

04/29 (W): lecture and discussion. Students who want to submit the revised paper can meet with the professor for an individual conference. Revised papers are due NEXT MONDAY in class

Reading for next week: re-read chapters 1-6 (Phillips)

**Terms and Concepts:**

**The context of a film's making; social and political attitudes; artistic conventions; setting in which a film is seen; stereotypes in cinema**

**WEEK 16:**

05/04 (M): Discussion on the film/readings.

05/04 (M): **Animation. Screening: Wall-E (2008, dir. Andrew Stanton, 97 m. US)**

05/06 (W): Review for final exam. Students' evaluations

**Terms and Concepts:**

**Animation**

**WEEK 17:**

**Final Exam is on MONDAY May 11, at 10:00 am (in room 220 Simpkins)**