

**Western Illinois University**  
**SPRING 2017**  
**ENG/BC 290 "Introduction to Film" (sec 02)**  
**MEETING TIMES/DAYS:**  
**M/W 9:00-9:50 (lecture/discussion, 220 Simpkins)**  
**M 10:00-11:50 (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 12:00-1:00; T 9:00-10:00; W 2:00-4:00**

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**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, cultural studies theories, and National Cinemas. The class involves screenings, lectures, discussion, in class-activities/quizzes, three papers, a final paper and group presentations.

**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.

**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 as on the schedule.**

**Assignments and grading:** Paper 1 (50 pts.); Paper 2 (100 pts.); Paper 3 (150 pts.); Group Presentation (200 pts.); Final Paper (200 pts.); Reading Quizzes and In-class Activities (200 pts.); Attendance (100 pts.)

**Grading Scale:**

966-934= 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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**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/in-class activities (Netflix; Amazon).

**Deadlines:** The course schedule includes the deadlines for every assignment. Deadlines are not negotiable, and late work will not be accepted. If you feel you will have a problem with a deadline be sure to speak with me as far in advance as possible.

**Participation and conduct:** The success of this course depends not only on individual assignments, but also on the class working together. We all need to respect each other and be opened to challenging discussions.

**Attendance:**

Regular attendance 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.**

**Coming to class without the required text and workshop drafts will be considered an absence.**

**Problems:** If you experience any difficulties or frustrations with any aspect of the course, I urge you to speak with me either during office hours or by appointment.

**Agreement:** By remaining in this section of ENG/BC 290, you agree to accept the policies articulated in this syllabus

**NO MAKE UP OF IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES or QUIZZES 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.

NOTE: letters from parents/relatives WILL NOT be accepted. It is always up to me to decide whether or not the documentation provided is acceptable and the decision will be made after a carefully review of the request. In any case, the student needs to contact me immediately if he/she misses an in-class activity or quiz. This policy will be applied to attendance as well.

**NOTE:** i. 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) provided in discussions/film screenings; ii. No incompletes will be given in this course

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**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:

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- 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/>)

In the case a student is found plagiarizing, he/she will receive a zero for that assignment and an academic misconduct will be filed according to the University Policies.

PLEASE READ:

- Web address for student rights and responsibilities:  
<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>
- Web address for Academic Integrity Policy:  
<http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

*\* University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: [http://www.wiu.edu/equal\\_opportunity\\_and\\_access/request\\_form/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php). If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.*

*\* Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, [disability@wiu.edu](mailto:disability@wiu.edu) or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.*

### **IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES:**

**CELL PHONE: IN THIS CLASS YOU ARE REQUIRED TO TURN OFF OR SILENCE YOUR PHONE. I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE OFF POINTS EACH TIME I SEE STUDENTS CHECKING THEIR MOBILE OR TEXTING. I ALSO RESERVE THE RIGHT TO ASK TO LEAVE IF STUDENTS DO NOT RESPECT THIS POLICY (AND THAT WOULD COUNT AS AN ABSENCE).**

**FOOD: NO FOOD IS ALLOWED AT SCREENINGS/DISCUSSIONS**

### **Additional Information:**

i. **University Writing Center:** For free, one-on-one consultation with trained undergraduate and graduate tutors, visit the University Writing Center at both the Macomb and Quad Cities campus. We work with writers from any discipline, at any academic level, and at any point in the writing process. Whether you need help decoding your assignment, brainstorming a topic, developing stronger points, incorporating research properly, organizing paragraphs, or receiving any other feedback, our tutors are here to help you. 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). Or, call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to always bring a copy of your assignment.

ii. To get important factual information **about films** (characters' name, cast, awards), check [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com). 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.

iii. **WIU Film Club.** JOIN THE FILM CLUB! MEET ON MONDAYS @ 6:00 pm in 220 SIMPKINS. Every semester, the Film Club shows a selection of films (national and international) and offers thought-provoking discussions on a wide range of issues and topics! ALL Students are welcome to attend the screenings/meetings. Further information about the students' organization will be given the first week of class.

iv. **Extra Credits Opportunities:** throughout the semester, I will announce various films-related events for which students may earn "extra credits points." After attending the event, the student is required to write a two pages review (double-spaced) to earn UP TO 10 points (a maximum of 40 points/4 reviews for the whole semester).

v. **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.**

#### Films and Concepts:

1. *Introduction: The Expressiveness of Film Techniques*: screening of *Early Cinema*
2. *Mise-en-scene I: Citizen Kane* (1941, dir. Orson Welles, 119 m. US)
3. *Mise-en-scene II: Hugo* (2011, dir. Martin Scorsese, 128 m. US)
4. *Cinematography: Psycho* (1960, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 95 m. US)
5. *Editing: Man with the Movie Camera* (1929, dir. Dziga Vertov, 68 m. Soviet Union)
6. *Sound: Singing in the Rain* (1952, dir. Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, 106 m. US)
7. *Component of Fictional Films: Rebel without a cause* (1955, dir. Nicholas Ray, 110 m. US)
8. *Types of Fictional Films: Classic Hollywood Cinema: Bringing Up Baby* (1938, dir. Howard Hawks, 102 m. US)
9. *National Cinemas I: Italian Cinema: Shoeshine (Sciuscia'*, 1946, dir. Vittorio De Sica, 93 m. Italy)
10. *National Cinemas II: French New-Wave: Alphaville* (1965, dir. Jean-Luc Godard, 99 m. France/Italy)
11. *National Cinemas III: African Cinema: Black Girl (La noire de . . .*, 1960, dir. Ousmane Sembene. 60 m. Senegal)
12. *National Cinemas IV: Whale Rider* (2002, dir Niki Caro, 101 m. New Zealand/Germany)
13. *American Independent Cinemas: Reservoir Dogs* (1992, dir. Quentin Tarantino, 100 m. US)
14. *Documentary Films and Experimental films: Waiting for Mr. Guffman* (1996, dir. Christopher Guest, 84 m. US) and *La jetee* (Chris Marker, 1962. 28 m. France)
15. *Animation: Wall-E* (2008, dir. Andrew Stanton, 97 m. US)

**WEEK 1:**

01/18 (W): Course Introduction AND screenings of Early cinema by **Edwin Edison, *The Kiss* (1896) and *Serpentine Dances* (1895); and shorts by the Lumiere Brothers (1895);**  
 Reading for next M and W: read Introduction 1-10 and chapter 1 (Phillips)

**WEEK 2:**

01/23 (M): cont. screening of Early Cinema by **George Melies, *Trip to the Moon* (1902); by Edwin Porter, *The Great Train Robbery* (1903)** followed by discussion on the films/reading  
 01/23 (M): **Mise-en-scene: screening: *Citizen Kane* (1941, dir. Orson Welles, 119 m. US)**  
 01/25 (W): Quiz on chapter one and on the films screened. Discussion on the film and reading.  
 Readings for next Monday and Wednesday: re-read chapter 1 and read chapter 12

**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 3:**

01/30 (M): Mise-en-Scene II: discussion on chapter 1. **PAPER N. 1 DUE**  
 01/30 (M): **Screening: *Hugo* (2011, dir. Martin Scorsese, 128 m. US)**  
 Reading for Wednesday: re-read chapter 1 (Phillips)  
 02/01 (W): Discussion on the film/readings  
 Reading for next week: read chapter 2 (Phillips)

**WEEK 4:**

02/06 (M): **Cinematography:** discussion on readings, quiz on chapter 2.  
 02/06 (M): **Screening: *Psycho* (1960, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 95 m. US)**  
 02/08 (W): Discussions on readings, in class activity on the film.  
 Reading for next M: chapter 3 (Phillips)

**Terms and concepts:**

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

**WEEK 5:**

02/13 (M): CLASS CANCELED. LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY  
 02/13 (M): CLASS CANCELED  
 02/15 (W): **Editing.** Screening: ***Man with the Movie Camera* (1929, dir. Dziga Vertov, 68 m. Soviet Union)**  
 Reading for next M: read chapter 3 (on editing) and for Wed. read chapter 4

**Terms and Concepts:**

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

**WEEK 6:**

02/20 (M): **CONT. SCREENING followed by discussion. PAPER n. 2 DUE.** Discussion on the readings and in class activity on chapter 3  
 02/20 (M): **Sound.** Screening: ***Singing in the Rain* (1952, dir. Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen. 106 m. US)**  
 02/22 (W): discussion on the film/in class activity on chapter 4  
 Reading for next week: chapter 5 (Phillips)

**Terms and concepts:**

**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 7:**

02/27 (M): **Sources for Fictional Films and Components of Fictional Films** Let's write a screenplay! In class-activity

02/27 (M): ***Rebel without a cause* (1955, dir. Nicholas Ray, 110 m. US)**

03/01 (W): discussion on film/readings

Readings for next week: read chapter 7

**Terms and concepts:**

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

**WEEK 8:**

03/06 (M): **Types of Fictional Films: Classical Hollywood Cinema.**

03/06 (M): **Screening: *Bringing Up Baby* (1938, dir. Howard Hawks, 102 m. US)**

03/08 (W): discussion on the film/readings

Reading for after spring break: chapter 7 (Other Cinemas: "Italian Neorealism") (Phillips)

**Terms and concepts:**

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

**WEEK 9:**

**SPRING BREAK**

**WEEK 10:**

03/20 (M): Discussion on the readings/in class activities

03/20 (M): **National Cinemas I: Italian Cinema: *Shoeshine* (Sciuscia’, 1946, dir. Vittorio De Sica, 93 m. Italy)**

03/22 (W): **FILM PAPER N. 3.** Discussion on the film/reading.

Readings for next week: chapter 7 ("French New Wave")

**Terms and concepts:**

**Italian Neorealism; Vittorio De Sica, Cesare Zavattini**

**WEEK 11:**

03/27 (M): Discussion on the readings. In class activity. DISTRIBUTION GUIDELINES FOR GROUP PRESENTATIONS AND MEETING WITH THE FIRST GROUP.

03/27 (M): **National Cinemas II: French New-Wave: *Alphaville* (1965, dir. Jean-Luc Godard, 99 m. France/Italy)**

03/29 (W): discussion/lecture and in-class activity.

Reading for next week: to be assigned (TBA)

**Terms and Concepts:**

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

**WEEK 12:**

04/03 (M): Discussion on the readings and in class activity

04/03 (M): **National Cinemas III: African Cinema: *Black Girl* (La noire de . . ., 1960, dir. Ousmane Sembene. 60 m. Senegal)**

04/05 (W): **GROUP PRESENTATION N. 1**

Reading for next week: TBA

**Terms and concepts:**

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

**WEEK 13:**

04/10 (M): Discussion on the readings/in class activities

04/10 (M): **National Cinemas IV: New Zealand: *Whale Rider* (2002, dir Niki Caro, 101 m. New Zealand/Germany)**

04/12 (W): **GROUP PRESENTATION N. 2**

Read for next week: TBA

**Terms and Concepts:**

**National Cinemas and World Cinemas**

**WEEK 13:**

04/17 (M): Discussion on the readings/film

04/17 (M): **American Independent Cinemas: *Reservoir Dogs* (1992, dir. Quentin Tarantino, 100 m. US)**

04/19 (W): **GROUP PRESENTATION N. 3**

Reading for next week: TBA

**Terms and concepts:**

**Independent cinemas**

**WEEK 15:**

04/24 (M): **Experimental films:** screening of *La jetee* (Chris Marker, 1962. 28 m. France) followed by discussion on the readings/in class activity. Assignment for the final paper

04/24 (M): **Documentary Films: *Waiting for Mr. Guffman* (1996, dir. Christopher Guest, 84 m. US)**

04/26 (W): **GROUP PRESENTATION N. 4.**

DISTRIBUTION QUESTIONS FINAL PAPER

**Terms and Concepts:**

**Documentary (definition); mediated reality; Experimental films; ideology/ avant-garde cinema**

**WEEK 16:**

05/01 (M): Discussion on the film/readings.

05/01 (M): **Animation. Screening: *Wall-E* (2008, dir. Andrew Stanton, 97 m. US)**

05/03 (W): discussion on the film and final considerations

**WEEK 17:**

**Final Paper is due Wednesday May 10, at 8:00 am (in room 220 Simpkins)**



