

**WIU- SPRING 2017-**  
**GH 101 “Film and Popular Culture”**  
M/W 1:00-1:50 and screenings M 2:00-3:50  
(Simpkins 220)

Dr. Roberta Di Carmine, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor Film Studies  
Faculty Advisor Interdisciplinary Film Minor & Film Club Faculty Advisor  
Office hours: M 12-1; T 9-10; W 2-4  
Office: 219 Simpkins  
Email: r-dicarmine@wiu.edu

Films provide a venue where to be entertained or escape from reality, they can give us something to think about or relate to. Since its very beginning, with the screening of the silent period, films have been a popular art form entertaining audiences worldwide. In this course, we will survey the ways films entertained and changed popular culture. Not only are films cultural products that tell us about the people who made them, but they also inform us of the cultural beliefs of the time in which they were created. They were and still are an extraordinary force that produces meanings and ideas influencing the culture of the time. In the first half of the course, we will learn how to read films and interpret them as cultural products, keeping in mind how circumstances and historical events have shaped these cultural products and how they have affected the public reception. In the second half of the semester, we will address issues related to representations, such as: what does representation have to do with culture? What is its connection with popular culture? As popular culture is about meanings and ideas that we all share, language is what we use to make sense of what we see and experience. Through films, meanings are created and exchanged and language is central to popular culture, regarded as the key to understand how people respond to social, cultural and historical phenomena. Ultimately, through the analysis of films and close reading of essays, film reviews and articles, we will become critical readers as well as observers of the popular culture of the past and the one we encounter every day. This is an intensive writing course therefore we will approach several forms of writing styles including screening reports, film reviews, short film papers and a final research paper.

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

**Text and Additional Readings:**

The primary text for this course is: *Film: An Introduction*, by William H. Phillips, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2009). **Reserve Readings:** Throughout the semester we will have reserve readings, marked on the calendar as (RR). See my emails for the links. You must bring a **printed** copy of the reserve reading to class on the day it is due to be counted present.

**Assignments and grading:** Paper 1 (50 pts.); Paper 2 (100 pts.); Paper 3 (150 pts.); Annotated Bibliography (100 pts.); Final Research Project (300 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

U (unsatisfactory grade)

F (if you are not making a good faith effort, you should earn an F (failing) grade)

**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**

**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 your instructor 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 texts 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 GH101, you agree to accept the policies articulated in this syllabus.

**No make-up of in-class activities**

## **No incompletes will be given in this course**

**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/>)

In the case a student is found plagiarizing, he/she will receive an F 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.*

\* **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.

#### **Additional Information:**

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.

#### **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.

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

#### **Films to be screened:**

##### **Shorts, Early Cinema**

*Citizen Kane* (1941, dir. Orson Welles, 119 m. US)

*Hugo* (2011, dir. Martin Scorsese, 128 m. US)

*Psycho* (1960, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 95 m. US)

*Man with the Movie Camera* (1929, dir. Dziga Vertov, 68 m. Soviet Union)

*Singing in the Rain* (1952, dir. Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, 106 m. US)

*Rebel without a cause* (1955, dir. Nicholas Ray, 110 m. US)

*Smoke Signals* (1998, dir. Chris Eyre, 89 m. US)

*The Dirty Dozen* (1967, dir. Robert Aldrich, 150 m. US)  
*Reservoir Dogs* (1992, dir. Quentin Tarantino, 100 m. US)  
*La Haine* (Hatred, 1995, dir. Mathieu Kassovitz 98 m. France)  
*Do The Right Thing* (1989, dir. Spike Lee, 125 m. US)  
*Wall-E* (2008, dir. Andrew Stanton, 98 m. US)  
*Whale Rider* (2002, dir. Niki Caro, 101 m. New Zealand/Germany)  
*Waiting for Mr. Guffman* (1996, dir. Christopher Guest, 84 m. US)

#### Tentative Schedule\*

\*The course 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

01/18 (W): Course Introduction. **The expressiveness of film techniques.** screening of Early Cinema: short films by Edwin Edison: *The Kiss* (1896) and by the Lumiere Brothers'

Reading for next M: introduction and chapter 1 (Phillips, p. 1-60)

Reading for next W: additional reading (RR, on Orson Welles)

#### WEEK 2

01/23 (M): cont. screening early cinema: George Melies' *Trip to the Moon* (1902); Edwin Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) followed by discussion on chapter 1

01/23 (M): **Mise-en-scene.** *Citizen Kane* (1941, dir. Orson Welles, 119 m. US)

Reading for W: additional reading (RR, on Orson Welles)

01/25 (W): quiz on the reading followed by discussion

#### Terms and Concepts:

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

#### WEEK 3

01/30 (M): discussion on the film/reading (continue chapter 1 -Mise-en-scene)

01/30 (M): **Mise-en-Scene II: *Hugo* (2011, dir. Martin Scorsese. 128 m. US)**

Reading for W: re-read chapter 1

02/01 (W): Discussion on the reading. In class activity on the film

Readings for next M and W: read chapter 2 (Cinematography, 61-112)

#### WEEK 4

02/06 (M): **Paper n. 1 Workshop -draft due**

02/06 (M): **Cinematography.** Screening: *Psycho* (1960, dir. Alfred Hitchcock. 95 m. US)

02/08 (W): **PAPER N. 1 DUE.** Discussion on the film and Quiz on the reading

Reading for next W: read chapter 3 (Editing, 113-156)

#### 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 W chapter 4 (Sound, 157-199)

**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 on editing and Vertov's film and quiz on the reading

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 chapter on sound, clips and in class activity.

Reading for next W: additional reading on Ray's film (from film journal "Jump Cut")

**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 7**

02/27 (M): Discussion on sound

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

03/01 (W): Quiz on the reading followed by discussion

Reading for next W: RR on identity and masculinity

**WEEK 8**

03/06 (M): **Paper n.2 Workshop –Draft due**

03/06 (M): Screening: *The Dirty Dozen* (1967, dir. Robert Aldrich, 150 m. US)

03/08 (W): **PAPER N. 2 DUE. Discussion on the film**

Readings for after the break: RR discussion on the film and reading (on *Smoke Signals*)

**WEEK 9**

**SPRING BREAK**

**WEEK 10**

03/20 (M): discussion on representations of ethnicity in films

03/20 (M): *Smoke Signals* (1998, dir. Chris Eyre. 89 m. US)

03/22 (W): discussion on the film and reading, quiz on the reading

### **WEEK 11**

03/27 (M): discussion on the film and readings

03/27 (M): Screening: *Reservoir Dogs* (1980, dir. Quentin Tarantino 129 m. US)

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

Reading for next week: RR (on representations of class and race in cinema)

### **WEEK 12**

04/03 (M): **Paper n.3 Workshop –Draft due**

04/03 (M): Screening: *La Haine* (Hatred, 1995, dir. Mathieu Kassovitz 98 m. France)

04/05 (W): **PAPER N. 3 DUE**. Discussion on the readings

Reading for next week: RR (on identity, ethnicity and race)

### **WEEK 13**

04/10 (M): discussion on the film and reading

04/10 (M): Screening: *Do The Right Thing* (1989, dir. Spike Lee, 125 m. US)

04/12 (W): In-class activity.

Reading for next week: RR (on animation and technology)

### **WEEK 14**

04/17 (M): discussion on the film and reading

04/17 (M): Screening: *Wall-E* (2008, dir. Andrew Stanton, 98 m. US)

04/19 (W): Discussion on the film.

Reading for next week: additional RR on *Whale Rider*

### **WEEK 15**

04/24 (M): Discussion on the film and reading. **Annotated bibliography due.**

04/24 (M): Screening: *Whale Rider* (2002, dir. Niki Caro. 101 m. New Zealand/Germany)

04/26 (W): Discussion, in class activity

Reading for next week: work on your final research paper!

### **WEEK 16**

05/01 (M): **Research Paper workshop –draft due**

05/01 (M): Screening: *Waiting for Mr. Guffman* (1996, dir. Christopher Guest, 84 m. US)

05/03 (W): discussion and students evaluation

### **WEEK 17**

**Final Research Paper is due Wednesday May 10 @ 1:00 pm (in room 220 Simpkins)**