

SYLLABUS AND POLICIES
FST 496 SENIOR SEMINAR IN FILM STUDIES
AESTHETIC PLEASURE IN HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

Professor Todd Berliner
Monday/Wednesday 1-3:15 pm (135 min.) in LH 246

Fall 2016

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Hollywood makes the most widely successful pleasure-giving artworks the world has ever known. Many people are passionate about Hollywood movies, their engagement active and exhilarated. This course studies the aesthetic pleasure that mainstream cinema offers its audiences. We will study some of Hollywood's most enduring movies, and a few beloved Hollywood oddities, in an effort to figure out what makes them pleasurable. We will also read pertinent literature in film studies, aesthetics, and psychology to provide a framework for understanding Hollywood's aesthetic appeal.

The course satisfies both the oral and writing competency requirements in the Film Studies major: Each student will make an oral presentation and perform substantial writing and research. There are writing assignments almost every week, and we will spend class time improving your writing and presentation skills.

We will concentrate on the movies *as* movies—artistic works engineered to excite experiences for spectators—and, wherever we are, we will never be far from our central question and the only question about the cinema that I think much about: What is it about the movies people enjoy that makes people enjoy them?

CLASS MEETINGS AND FILMS

Class meets twice each week. You should plan to attend all of every class, even screenings of movies you have already seen, even if you rented the same movie the night before. Don't ask if it's okay to come late or leave early; it isn't. Video copies of the movies we are studying are on reserve in the library.

You may not use laptops or other electronics during class without my permission.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Consult the Writing Assignments and Oral Presentation handouts for descriptions of each assignment. Consult the schedule below for due dates. I will calculate your final grades according to the following percentages:

- 15% Oral Presentation
- 20% 12 Reading Summaries (I will drop your 4 lowest scores)
- 20% Aesthetic Analysis Paper (version 1)
- 25% Aesthetic Analysis Paper (final version)
- 20% Class participation (mostly attendance and punctuality, but also preparedness for class and thoughtful participation in class discussion and workshops. More than four absences will cause you to fail class participation. Two tardies equals and absence)

Grade scale (minimums): A (93.3), A- (90), B+ (86.7), B (83.3), B- (80), C+ (76.7), C (73.3), C- (70), D+ (66.7), D (63.3), D- (60).

Type and double space everything you hand in. On Blackboard you will find sample reading summaries, prospectuses, and papers—exemplary work written by students in previous courses.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Sign up to make a presentation to the class by the end of week 2. There is a sign-up sheet next to my office door (King 106D): first come—first pick of topics. If you miss your scheduled presentation, I'll schedule you for another of my choosing and deduct 10% from your presentation grade.

For presentations, the classroom has a DVD player, Blu-ray player, PC with a USB drive and PowerPoint, and projector. You may also connect your own laptop to the projector.

PROSPECTUS AND WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

Over the course of three class periods, we will critique each student's prospectus. By the end of week 2, sign up for your critique on the sheet outside my office door.

OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

I will hold office hours on Wednesdays 10-11:30 a.m., or by appointment, in King Hall 106D. I am typically available to make appointments on Mondays, Wednesdays, and sometimes Fridays.

My campus mailbox is located in the Film Studies Department office in King Hall. My office phone number is 910-962-3336. Email is the best way to reach me: berlinert@uncw.edu.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR FILM STUDIES CAPSTONE COURSES

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to carry out large-scale individualized projects on a topic related to Hollywood aesthetics, integrating their research, writing and oral communication skills.
2. Studying a variety of primary and secondary sources, students learn to gather information to help them develop cogent written arguments.
3. Studying both visual and written texts, students learn to evaluate, interpret, and critically analyze information.
4. Students learn to critically analyze the claims, arguments and theories of existing research, as well as to think critically about their own ideas and assumptions.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES

1. Locate appropriate sources of information to support written arguments.
2. Evaluate and use evidence to generalize, explain, and interpret content.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical use and citation of the ideas of others used as supporting material in written work.
4. Demonstrate the ability to write critically, using the conventions of the discipline covered in the course.
5. Analyze and evaluate the claims, arguments, and theories presented in course materials using appropriate methods (such as logical analysis and the identification of fallacies).

UNCW STUDENT ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

All students are subject to the UNCW Student Academic Honor Code, which says, "UNCW students are committed to honesty and truthfulness in academic inquiry and in the pursuit of knowledge."

Plagiarism is a form of academic corruption in which you cause or allow your reader to believe that another person's words, work, or ideas are yours. If you plagiarize, I will give you an F in the course and report you to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. Always cite your sources, whether it is a book, a website, an article, another student, one of your other professors, or the source of any ideas that are not common knowledge and that didn't originate in your own brain.

Students in this course may not submit work that they have submitted or intend to submit for another course.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Writing Resources

The librarians in Randall will help you obtain materials for your papers. Randall library has a webpage devoted to film studies resources: <http://library.uncw.edu/subjects/film-studies>.

The Writing Center provides one-on-one consultations by trained writing tutors (962-7857, ulc@uncw.edu, <http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/writing/center.html>). You may make an appointment to see a tutor, drop in at the Writing Lab (DE 1003), or use their Online Writing & Learning (OWL) program that allows you to receive personal responses to your developing papers. Tuition and taxes pay for these services; you might as well use them.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities can supply me with a letter from the Office of Disability Services (962-7555) detailing necessary class accommodations.

Violence and Harassment

UNCW does not tolerate violence or harassment. If you experience either, contact the police at 911 (in cases of emergency) or UNCW CARE at 962-2273. Resources for individuals concerned with a violent or harassing situation can be located at <http://www.uncw.edu/wsrc/crisis.html>.

READINGS

All readings may be downloaded from the course's Blackboard website at <https://learn.uncw.edu/>. After logging into the course, click "Course Content." Contact TAC (962-4357) if you need help with Blackboard. Randall library has the books from which many of the electronic reserves are taken.

- **Bordwell.ClassicalHollywoodstyle.pdf**
Bordwell, David, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson. "The Classical Hollywood Style, 1917-1960." *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960*. New York: Columbia UP: 1985. 3-84.
- **Carroll.ideology.pdf**
Carroll, Noël. "Mass Art and Ideology." *A Philosophy of Mass Art*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1998. 360-412.
- **Carroll.powerofmovies.pdf**
Carroll, Noël. "The Power of Movies." *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: The Analytic Tradition*. Ed. Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen. Malden, MA and Oxford, England: Blackwell, 2004. 485-497.
- **Cumulative Sentences Handouts**
Handouts for Cumulative Sentences exercise
- **FST496presentations.pdf**
Directions for your oral presentations.
- **FST496syllabus.pdf**
Syllabus, Course Policies, Course Schedule, and References for Electronic Readings.
- **FST496WritingAssignments.pdf**
A handout describing all of the writing assignments for the semester.
- **Keating.emotionalcurves.pdf**
Keating, Patrick. "Emotional Curves and Linear Narratives." *The Velvet Light Trap* 58 (Fall 2006). 4-15.
- **Levinson.pleasure.pdf**
Levinson, Jerrold. "Pleasure and the Value of Works of Art." *The Pleasures of Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1996. 11-26.
- **MLAStyleGuide2.pdf**
A reference guide for formatting your papers and bibliographies.
- **Reber.processing.pdf**
Reber, Rolf, Norbert Schwarz, and Piotr Winkielman. "Processing Fluency and Aesthetic Pleasure: Is Beauty in the Perceiver's Processing Experience?" *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 8.4 (2004): 364-382.
- **Sample Student Papers.**
Exemplary reading summaries, prospectuses, outlines, and papers written by students in previous courses.
- **Scorsese.RagingBull.pdf**
Thompson, David and Ian Christie, ed. "Raging Bull." *Scorsese on Scorsese*. London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1996. 76-87.
- **Silvia.pastpleasure.pdf**
Silvia, Paul J. "Looking Past Pleasure: Anger, Confusion, Disgust, Pride, Surprise, and Other Unusual Aesthetic Emotions." *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 3.1 (2009): 48-51.
- **Smith.engaging.pdf**
Smith, Murray. "Engaging Characters." *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema*. Oxford, England: Oxford UP, 1995. 73-109.

COURSE SCHEDULE
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Notes:

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- Study readings before the class meeting for which they are listed.
- Print out and bring to class the week’s readings.
- “**Due in class**” items must be ready to turn in at the very beginning of class.

UNIT 1 HOLLYWOOD AND AESTHETIC PLEASURE

Aug	17 Wed	Screening: <i>Bigger Than Life</i> (1956, 95 min., Nicholas Ray)
	22 Mon	Reading: A) Carroll.powerofmovies.pdf B) FST496syllabus.pdf (Blackboard) C) FST496WritingAssignments.pdf (p. 1) (Blackboard) D) FST496presentations.pdf (Blackboard) Due in class: Reading Summary 1 (reading A)
	24 Wed	Screening: <i>Michael Clayton</i> (2007, 119 min., Tony Gilroy) <i>Last day to add/drop a class</i>
	26 Fri	Due: Students must sign up for their oral presentations and prospectus critiques by today. The sign-up sheets are outside my office door, King 106D.
	29 Mon	Reading: reber.processing.pdf Due in class: Reading Summary 2 Oral Presentation (Reber): _____
	31 Wed	Screening: <i>The Elephant Man</i> (1980, 124 min., David Lynch)
Sep	5 Mon	<i>Labor Day Holiday!</i>
	7 Wed	Reading: A) Levinson.pleasure.pdf B) Silvia.pastpleasure.pdf Due in class: Reading Summaries 3 and 4 (readings A and B—separate summaries) Oral Presentation (Levinson): _____ Oral Presentation (Silvia): _____

UNIT 2 NARRATIVE

Sep	12 Mon	Screening: <i>Grand Hotel</i> (1932, 112 min., Edmund Goulding)
	14 Wed	Reading: Bordwell.ClassicalHollywoodstyle.pdf, “2. Story causality and motivation” (12-23) Due in class: Reading Summary 5 Oral Presentation (Bordwell): _____

- 19 Mon **Screening:** *Groundhog Day* (1993, 101 min., Harold Ramis)
- 21 Wed **Reading:** A) Bordwell.ClassicalHollywoodstyle.pdf, “3. Classical narration” (24-41)
 B) FST496WritingAssignments.pdf (pp. 2-4)
 C) Sample prospectuses (Blackboard)
Due in class: Reading Summary 6 (reading A)
Oral Presentation (Bordwell): _____
- 26 Mon **Screening:** *Broadway Danny Rose* (1984, 84 min., Woody Allen)
- 28 Wed **Reading:** Bordwell.ClassicalHollywoodstyle.pdf, “7. The bounds of difference” (70-84)
Due in class: Reading Summary 7
Oral Presentation (Bordwell): _____

UNIT 3 STYLE

- Oct 3 Mon **Screening:** *Raging Bull* (1980, 129 min, Martin Scorsese).
- 5 Wed **Reading:** Scorsese.RagingBull.pdf
Due in class: Reading Summary 8 (summarize Scorsese’s main points)
Oral Presentation (Scorsese): _____
- 10 Mon **Screening:** *Clueless* (1995, 97 min., Amy Heckerling)
- 12 Wed *Class Cancelled for Jewish Holiday*
- 17 Mon **Reading:** Bordwell.ClassicalHollywoodstyle.pdf, “5. Space in the classical film” (50-59)
Due in class: Reading Summary 9
Oral Presentation (Bordwell): _____

UNIT 4 PROSPECTUS WORKSHOPS

- Oct 19 Wed Attendance, timeliness, and participation at these three meetings are critical.
Due in class: Prospectus and Working Bibliography (16 hard copies).
Workshop: In-class critiques of student prospectuses and bibliographies.

- 24 Mon _____

- 26 Wed _____

UNIT 5 IDEOLOGY

Oct 31 Mon **Screening:** *Starship Troopers* (1997, 129 min., Paul Verhoeven)

Nov 2 Wed **Reading:** Carroll.ideology.pdf
Due in class: Reading Summary 10
Oral Presentation (Carroll): _____
Workshop: How to Develop a Strong Thesis

7 Mon **Screening:** *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948, 126 min., John Huston)

9 Wed **Reading:** Smith.engaging.pdf
Due in class: Reading Summary 11
Oral Presentation (Smith): _____
Workshop: How to Organize a Paper

14 Mon **Screening:** *Rope* (1948, 80 min., Alfred Hitchcock)

15 Tues **Due by email by noon:** Aesthetic Analysis Paper (version 1): Abstract, Paper, and Works Cited. The title of your attachment should start with your last name (e.g. “yourlastname_paper1.doc”).

UNIT 6 GENRE

Nov 16 Wed **Screening:** *Say Anything* (1989, 100 min., Cameron Crowe)

21 Mon **Reading:** Keating.emotionalcurves.pdf
Due in class: Reading Summary 12
Oral Presentation (Keating): _____

23-25 *Thanksgiving Break!*

28 Mon **Screening:** *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974, 92 min., Brian De Palma)

30 Wed **Due by email 9:30 am today:** Your reworked thesis
Workshop: Thesis Workshops
Film Studies Department Exit Exam

Dec 5 11:30am-2:30pm. Final exam time. **Research Paper Presentations:**

Wed 7 **Due by email by noon:** Aesthetic Analysis Paper (final version): Abstract, Paper, and Works Cited. The title of your attachment starts with your last name (e.g. “yourlastname_finalpaper.doc”)