

**FST 368-003: STUDIES IN FILM STYLES AND GENRES**  
**STYLE IN HOLLYWOOD CINEMA**  
**SYLLABUS AND POLICIES**

T/R 9:30-11:45 a.m. (135 min)

Professor Todd Berliner

Fall 2017

**“The artist ... cannot transcribe what he sees; he can only translate it into the terms of his medium.”**

— Art historian E. H. Gombrich

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

When we investigate the pleasures of Hollywood cinema, we normally focus on story. But we must also be able to account for the pleasures afforded by a film’s cinematography, editing technique, sound design, settings, lighting, performance, costumes, or various other properties that we normally group under the umbrella of “style.” This class studies the aesthetics of Hollywood style. We examine Hollywood’s stylistic norms, techniques, and functions, as well as some noteworthy stylistic deviations. We will read about film style, study clips, and watch Hollywood movies from various periods, including some outstanding stylistic achievements.

The course fulfills the writing competency requirement in the Film Studies major and partially satisfies University Studies IV: Building Competencies/Writing Intensive. There are writing assignments almost every week. Students learn to formulate written arguments, support their arguments with logic and evidence, conduct research, and revise their work. We will spend class time improving students’ writing skills.

Throughout, we will study movies *as* movies—as experiences for spectators—and we will never stray far from our central question and the only question about cinema that I care 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 during class time. I’ve found they encourage students to multi-task, rather than attend to the activities of the course, and distract other students.

Copies of the movies we are studying are available through Randall Library on DVD, Blu Ray, or streaming. The course has potentially upsetting material and trauma triggers; see me well in advance of the screenings in question if you have concerns. Randall Library subscribes to two movie streaming services: [kanopy](#) and [Swank](#).

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES**

The Writing Assignments handout describes each writing assignment. Consult the schedule below for due dates.

I will calculate your final grades according to the following percentages:

- 25% Reading Summaries (I will drop your 4 lowest scores)
- 25% Style Paper
- 25% Style Paper (revised)
- 25% Class Participation—based on attendance, punctuality, preparation for class, and participation in discussions and workshops, all of which are required to gain essential information. More than four absences will cause you to fail class participation. Two tardies (or early exits) equals an 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).

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR FILM STUDIES WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES**

- WI 1. Demonstrate an ability to produce written texts that reflect a knowledge and understanding of disciplinary conventions in terms of audience expectations, genre conventions, and/or citation practices.
  - Students write critical essays about the cinema in which they analyze moving images and sounds, interpret information, evaluate research and historical data, cite sources, and/or perform other activities appropriate to the discipline of film studies.
- WI 2. Demonstrate the ability to employ an iterative writing process that includes invention, drafting, and revision in response to instructor feedback to complete a major writing project or series of written assignments.
  - Students submit at least 3500 words of graded writing, divided among two or more assignments, with instructor feedback in between each assignment.
  - Students respond to instructor feedback by revising their written work and demonstrating mastery or significant improvement in the format, organization, grammar, style, and disciplinary conventions of their writing.

## **OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACTING ME**

I will hold office hours on Thursday, 3:30-4:45 p.m., or by appointment, in King Hall 106D. I am typically available for appointments on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

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

## **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 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 sources, whether it is a book, website, 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 and Research Resources**

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](mailto: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. Your tuition and taxes pay for these services; you might as well use them.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities should supply me with a letter from the Office of Disability Services (962-7555) that details any necessary accommodations.

### **Violence and Harassment**

UNCW does not tolerate violent or harassing behavior. If you experience violence or harassment, 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

The readings may be downloaded from the Blackboard Learn 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.

**1. Berliner.HollywoodStyle.pdf**

Todd Berliner, “Hollywood Style,” in *Hollywood Aesthetic: Pleasure in American Cinema* (New York: Oxford UP, 2017), 85-113.

**2. Bordwell.ClassicalHollywoodstyle.pdf**

David Bordwell, 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.

**3. Carroll.art&expression.pdf**

Noël Carroll, “Art and Expression,” in *Philosophy of Art: A Contemporary Introduction* (London & New York: Routledge, 1999) 58-106.

**4. FST368.Hollywoodstyle.writingassignments.doc**

**5. FST368.Hollywoodstyle.syllabus.doc**

**6. Keating.noirlighting.pdf**

Patrick Keating, “Film Noir and the Limits of Classicism,” in *Hollywood Lighting from the Silent Era to Film Noir* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), 201-221.

**7. Keating.technicolor.pdf**

Patrick Keating, “The Promises and Problems of Technicolor,” in *Hollywood Lighting from the Silent Era to Film Noir* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), 244-264.

**8. MLAStyleGuide2.pdf**

A reference guide for formatting your papers and bibliographies.

**9. Naremore.Hepburn.pdf**

James Naremore, “Katharine Hepburn in *Holiday*,” in *Acting in the Cinema* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) 174-192.

**10. Naremore.touchofevil.pdf**

James Naremore, “Touch of Evil” in *The Magic World of Orson Welles* (New York: Oxford UP, 1978) 146-171.

**11. Prince.poeticsofviolence.pdf**

Stephen Prince, “The Poetics of Screen Violence” in *Classical Film Violence: Designing and Regulating Brutality in Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1968* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2003), 205-251.

**12. Scorsese.Temptation.pdf**

“*The Last Temptation of Christ*” in *Scorsese on Scorsese*, ed. David Thompson and Ian Christie (London: Faber and Faber, 1989) 116-145 and 211-217.

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SCHEDULE

T/R 9:30-11:45 a.m. (135 min)

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Notes:

- Study the readings before the class meeting for which they are listed.
- Bring the week’s readings with you to class.
- Readings can be downloaded from the Blackboard website for this course at <https://learn.uncw.edu/>.

PART I

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD STYLE

“The enemy of art is the absence of limitations.”

— Director Orson Welles

UNIT 1 STYLE WITHIN LIMITS

“Mozart could compose with astonishing facility partly because the set of constraints he inherited... the so-called Classic style, was specially coherent, stable, and well established. As a result Mozart had to make relatively few deliberate choices among alternatives.”

— Composer and philosopher Leonard Mayer

1 Aug 17 Thur Screening: My Darling Clementine (1946, 97 min.)

2 22 Tue Screening: Clueless (1995, 97 min)

Reading: 1) FST368.Hollywoodstyle.syllabus.pdf
2) FST368.Hollywoodstyle.writingassignments.pdf
3) Sample Reading Summaries (on Blackboard)

23 Wed Last day to add or drop

24 Thur Reading: Berliner.HollywoodStyle.pdf

Due in class: Reading Summary 1

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PART II

HOLLYWOOD STYLE: AESTHETIC FUNCTIONS

“We must ultimately be able to account for the most basic fact of aesthetic experience, the fact that delight lies somewhere between boredom and confusion. If monotony makes it difficult to attend, a surfeit of novelty will overload the system and cause us to give up: we are not tempted to analyse the crazy pavement.”

—Art historian E. H. Gombrich

UNIT 2 CLARITY

“If we can’t get artistry and clarity, let’s forget the artistry.”

— Producer David O. Selznick, memo on the cinematography for Gone with the Wind.

3 Aug 29 Tue Screening: Make Way for Tomorrow (1937, 92 min.)

31 Thur Reading: Bordwell.ClassicalHollywoodstyle.pdf, “5. Space in the Classical Film” (50-59)

Due in class: Reading Summary 2

**UNIT 3 EXPRESSIVENESS**

**“I put everything I knew and felt into that film and I thought it would be the end of my career. It was what I call a kamikaze way of making movies: pour everything in, then forget all about it and go find another way of life.”**

— Director Martin Scorsese on making *Raging Bull*

**4 Sep** 5 Tue **Screening:** *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988, 163 min)  
7 Thur **Screening:** *The Last Temptation of Christ* (continued)  
**Reading:** Carroll.art&expression.pdf (pp. 59-86 and 104-105 only)  
**Due in class:** Reading Summary 3.

**5** 12 Tue **Reading:** Scorsese.Temptation.pdf (116-145 only)  
**Due in class:** Reading Summary 4 (summarize what you consider Scorsese’s main points)

**UNIT 4 DECORATION**

**“We should permit our eyes once in a while to stray from the picture to the frame and to wonder at its function.”**

— E. H. Gombrich

**Sep** 14 Thur **Screening:** *On the Town* (1949, 98 min.)

**6** 19 Tue **Reading:** Keating.technicolor.pdf  
**Due in class:** Reading Summary 5.  
21 Thur **Class cancelled for Jewish Holiday**

**UNIT 5 HARMONY**

**“Even though there may be structures that are ‘perceptible only to those who have created them,’ they nonetheless play an important role in the final aesthetic result.”**

— Film scholar Noël Burch

**7 Sep** 26 Tue **Screening:** *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (2009, 87 min.)

**UNIT 6 DISSONANCE**

**“A play should have barely been rescued from the mess it might just as easily have been.”**

— Playwright Tony Kushner

**Sep** 28 Thur **Screening:** *Touch of Evil* (1958, 114 min)

**8 Oct** 3 Tue **Reading:** Naremore.touchofevil.pdf  
**Due in class:** Reading Summary 6.

5 Thur **Fall Break!**

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**PART III  
PROSPECTUS WORKSHOPS**

**9 Oct** 9 Mon *Last day to withdraw*  
 10 Tue Attendance, timeliness, and participation in prospectus workshops are critical.  
**Due in class:** Prospectus and Working Bibliography (16 hard copies).

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12 Thur

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**10** 17 Tue

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**PART IV  
INDIVIDUAL STYLES AND GROUP VARIATIONS**

**“In Hollywood cinema, there are no subversive films, only subversive moments.”**  
— Film scholar David Bordwell

<b>UNIT 7</b>		<b>SERIES STYLE: FILM NOIR</b>
<b>Oct</b>	19 Thur	<b>Screening:</b> <i>T-Men</i> (1947, 92 min.)
<b>11</b>	24 Tue	<b>Reading:</b> Keating.noirlighting.pdf <b>Due in class:</b> Reading Summary 7
	26 Thur	<b>Screening:</b> <i>Night and the City</i> (1950, 101 min)
<b>12</b>	31 Tue	<b>Reading:</b> Prince.poeticsofviolence.pdf <b>Due in class:</b> Reading Summary 8
<b>Nov</b>	2 Thur	<b>Screening:</b> <i>In a Lonely Place</i> (1950, 94 min.)
	3 Fri	<b>Due by email by noon:</b> Style Paper. The title of your attachment should start with your last name (e.g. “yourlastname_paper1.doc”).
<b>13</b>	7 Tue	<b>Reading:</b> Bordwell.ClassicalHollywoodstyle.pdf, “7. The Bounds of Difference” (70-83) <b>Due in class:</b> Reading Summary 9

**UNIT 8**      **ACTORIAL STYLE: KATHARINE HEPBURN**

**Nov** 9 Thur    **Screening:** *Holiday* (1938, 95 min.)

**14**    14 Tue    **Screening:** *The African Queen* (1951, 105 min.)

16 Thur    **Reading:** Naremore.Hepburn.pdf

**Due in class:** Reading Summary 10

**UNIT 9**      **DIRECTORIAL STYLE: WOODY ALLEN**

**15 Nov** 21 Tue    **Screening:** *Stardust Memories* (1980, 89 min.)

23 Thur    *Thanksgiving Break!*

**16**    28 Tues    **Screening:** *Broadway Danny Rose* (1984, 84 min.)

29 Wed    **Due by email 5:00 pm today:** Your reworked thesis

30 Thur    **Workshop:** Thesis Workshops

**Dec**    4 Mon      **Due by email by noon:** Style Paper (revised). The title of your attachment should start with your last name (e.g. “yourlastname\_finalpaper.doc”)

6 Wed    11:30-2:30. Final Exam Time (no exam, no reading, just screening and discussion).