

**FST 379 STUDIES IN FILM HISTORY: AMERICAN CINEMA OF THE 1970S
SYLLABUS AND POLICIES**

Professor Todd Berliner

Spring 2017

Screening: Wednesday 12:30-3:45 pm (195 min) in KI 101

Discussion Section 1: Monday 12:30-1:45 pm (75 min) in KI 104

Discussion Section 2: Monday 2:00-3:15 pm (75 min) in KI 104

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course introduces students to the history and aesthetics of American cinema of the 1970s, one of the most vibrant and influential periods in American film and a turning point in the history of Hollywood cinema's formal development. We will conduct an "historical poetics" of American cinema of the seventies, as we seek to understand the forms of filmmaking characteristic of the period and the conditions that allowed such forms to come into being.

We will study seventies movies *as* movies: artistic works engineered to arouse experiences for spectators. And, wherever we are, will never be far from our central question and the only question about the cinema that I spend much time thinking about: What is it about the movies people enjoy that makes people enjoy them?

CLASS MEETINGS, SCREENINGS, AND FILMS

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.

You may not use laptops or other electronics during class time.

Video copies of the movies we are studying are on reserve. The course has controversial and potentially upsetting material; see me if you have concerns.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

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

1. Quizzes (best eight scores) (30%)
2. Critical Reception Report (15%)
3. Final Paper (35%)
4. Class Participation (20%): Primarily attendance, punctuality, and preparedness for your individual conference with me, but also, to a lesser degree, participation in discussion. More than four absences will cause you to fail class participation. Two tardies 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).

Readings and Quizzes

The reading is at times dense and sizable. Read carefully and take notes. At the very beginning of at least seven class meetings, without warning, you will take a short quiz on the week's reading and lecture material. Quizzes are perfunctory, designed merely to make sure that you have done the reading, that you are understanding what you read, and that you are attending screenings. They are your opportunity to score points for diligence and dutifulness. Quizzes cannot be made up or taken late, so arrive to class on time. I can sometimes arrange for you to take a quiz early; you can do that once in the semester. If you miss a quiz, you get a zero on it. But, no matter how many quizzes I give, I will count only your best eight scores.

Optional Reading Summaries (Extra Credit)

You may write a brief summary of the readings each week, paraphrasing (putting in your own words) the main points of each assigned chapter or article so that I know you understand them. Summaries condense and distill the authors' main points, as though you were the author: State the author's *points* (arguments/conclusions), not just the topics of article. *Write your summaries so that the authors themselves would agree with what you have written.* Write separate summaries for each reading. Each summary should be no longer than 1½ pages. I will add up to 30 percentage points to your week's quiz grade (even if the added points bring your score over 100%), depending on the strength of your summary and the clarity of your writing. A reading summary is entirely optional, and, if there is no quiz, you get no points for writing one. Summaries are due at the very beginning of a meeting in which a reading is due.

Writing Assignments

The first writing assignment is a report on the critical reception of an American film of the period. During the second half of the semester, students will work on individual research projects. A separate handout (FST379assignments.pdf) has detailed instructions for the writing assignments, and the course schedule below indicates due dates.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course satisfies the Film History requirement in the Film Studies major and the University Studies Information Literacy requirement. In such courses, students learn to:

1. **IL1.** Develop an effective strategy to search for, identify, and retrieve information in order to fully address an information need. [Information Literacy; Inquiry; Critical Thinking]
 - Complete research assignments by identifying information needed, locating appropriate sources, and collating relevant material into evidence that supports satisfactory answers to questions in film history.
2. **IL2.** Analyze information in order to evaluate its currency, authority, accuracy, relevance, and purpose. [Information Literacy; Critical Thinking]
 - Conduct individual research projects using library and other resources that evaluate the reliability and accuracy of information in order to produce a historical or historiographic argument.
3. **IL3.** Synthesize and appropriately cite retrieved information in order to ensure information is utilized ethically and legally. [Global Citizenship; Information Literacy]
 - Collect data, documentation, and interpretative narratives regarding film history, and incorporate findings into research projects using proper citation and conscientious bibliographic practice.
4. **IL4.** Create a finished product (e.g. paper, presentation, data analysis, video, etc.) using retrieved information and reflect on the iterative processes used to find, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically and legally utilize information. [Critical Thinking; Thoughtful Expression; Information Literacy]
 - Write persuasive, cogent, and valid essays on topics in film history, informed and supported by critical, comprehensive, and responsible research methods.
 - Produce outlines, bibliographies, and/or oral presentations that demonstrate an understanding of the iterative processes required by scholarly research.

OFFICE HOURS, EMAIL, AND CONTACTING ME

I will hold office hours on Mondays 9:45-11:15 in King Hall 106D. I can make appointments to meet on most Mondays, Wednesdays, or Fridays.

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 causing or allowing your reader to believe that another person’s words 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 and Research Resources

Randall library’s webpage devoted to film studies resources: <http://library.uncw.edu/subjects/film-studies>.

The Writing Center provides one-on-one consultations <http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/writing/center.html>, 962-7857, ulc@uncw.edu,). 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 should supply me with a letter from the Office of Disability Services (962-7555) that details any necessary class accommodations. If you require accommodation for test taking, please make sure I have the referral letter in the first week of class.

Violence and Harassment

UNCW does not tolerate violent or harassing behavior. If you experience violence or harassment, contact the police at 911 (in an 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>.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Todd Berliner, *Hollywood Incoherent: Narration in Seventies Cinema*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010. The publisher’s website (www.utexas.edu/utpress/books/berhol.html) offers a 33% discount. The book is also available on Kindle (amazon.com) and Nook (barnesandnoble.com).
- David Cook, *Lost Illusions: American Cinema in the Shadow of Watergate and Vietnam, 1970-1979*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Blackboard. The following documents may be downloaded from the Blackboard Learn website at <https://learn.uncw.edu/>. Log into the course and click “Course Content.” Contact TAC (962-4357) for help.
 - **FST379assignments.pdf**. A handout describing the writing assignments for the semester.
 - **FST379syllabus.pdf**. Syllabus, Course Policies, and Course Schedule (this handout).
 - **MLAStyleGuide2.pdf**. A reference guide for formatting your papers.
 - **Sample papers**. Exemplary work by students in previous courses.

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SCHEDULE

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Notes:

- Study the readings before the class meetings for which they are listed but *after* the Wednesday screenings; many readings assume that you have already seen the movie.
- Bring the week's readings with you to class.
- You can download readings with ".pdf" at the end of their titles from the Blackboard website for this course (<https://learn.uncw.edu/>). Log into to the course and click "Course Content."
- On two occasions, I ask you to see a film outside of class; if you've seen the film in its entirety already, you needn't watch it again.
- **Supplements:** I have listed some additional films pertaining to the topic of the week; they're not required, but they are related. These films might also help you with your research projects.

WEEKS 1-3: AN INTRODUCTION TO SEVENTIES CINEMA: NICHE FILMS AND BLOCKBUSTERS

1 Jan 9 Mon Introduction

Lecture: "The American Film Industry in the Seventies: Industry Changes"

11 Wed **Screening:** *The King of Marvin Gardens* (1972, 103 min., Bob Rafelson)

Lecture: "The American Film Industry in the Seventies: Storytelling Practices"

Reading: 1) FST379syllabus.pdf (this handout)

2) FST379assignments.pdf

Supplements: *Five Easy Pieces* (1970), *The Last Picture Show* (1971), *Get Carter* (1971), *Harold and Maude* (1971), *Drive, He Said* (1972).

16 Mon *MLK Holiday!*

17 Tue *Last day to add or drop.*

2 18 Wed **Screening:** *Jaws* (1975, 124 min., Steven Spielberg)

23 Mon **Reading:** 1) *Hollywood Incoherent*, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-24)

2) *Lost Illusions* (pp. 1-7, 25-51, 64-65, 141-143, 251-257)

Supplements: *Love Story* (1970), *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), *The Sting* (1973), *American Graffiti* (1973), *Earthquake* (1974), *The Towering Inferno* (1974), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), *Rocky* (1976), *King Kong* (1976), *Superman* (1978)

3 25 Wed **Screening:** *Mikey & Nicky* (1976, 119 min., Elaine May)

30 Mon **Reading:** 1) *Hollywood Incoherent*, Chapter 2 (pp. 25-52)

2) *Lost Illusions* (pp. 9-23)

Supplements: *Lenny* (1974), *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* (1974), *The Bad News Bears* (1976), *North Dallas Forty* (1979)

WEEK 4: BLOCKBUSTERS AND SEQUELS: *THE GODFATHER* MOVIES

- 4 31 Tue **Watch** *The Godfather* (1972, 175 min., Francis Ford Coppola) on your own by today.
- Feb 1 Wed **Screening:** *The Godfather, Part II* (1974, 200 min., Francis Ford Coppola). The movie will start precisely at 12:30 pm and end at 3:50 pm (you can leave during the end credits).
- 6 Mon **Reading:** 1) *Hollywood Incoherent*, Chapter 3 (pp. 53-89)
2) *Lost Illusions* (pp. 133-138, 182-188)
- Supplements:** *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *Badlands* (1973), *Magnum Force* (1973), *The Conversation* (1974), *The French Connection II* (1975), *Rocky II* (1979), *Apocalypse Now* (1979)

WEEKS 5-8: SEVENTIES GENRE FILMMAKING

Genre Breakers: The Whodunnit

- 5 Feb 8 Wed **Screening:** *The Last of Sheila* (1973, 120 min., Herbert Ross)
- 10 Fri **Due by email (MS Word attachment) by noon:** Critical Reception Report. The title of your attachment should start with your last name (e.g. "yourlastname_reception.doc").
- 13 Mon **Reading:** *Lost Illusions* (159-161, 205-209)
- Supplements:** *Little Big Man* (1970), *Sleuth* (1972), *The Return of the Pink Panther* (1975), *Blazing Saddles* (1974), *Murder on the Orient Express* (1974), *Ten Little Indians* (1974), *Murder by Death* (1976), *The Cheap Detective* (1978)

Genre Benders: The Police Detective Film

- 6 15 Wed **Screening:** *The French Connection* (1971, 104 min., William Friedkin)
- 20 Mon **Reading:** 1) *Lost Illusions* (pp. 103-108)
2) *Hollywood Incoherent*, Chapter 4 (pp. 90-117)
- Supplements:** *The Big Combo* (1955), *Madigan* (1968), *Bullitt* (1968), *Dirty Harry* (1971), *Sorcerer* (1977)
- Due:** If you want to write on your own paper topic for the final paper, come to my office hours by today prepared to present your topic (including a written description) and obtain my approval.
- Due:** Sign up for a 25-minute conference with Professor Berliner to discuss your paper. Sign-up sheets are outside my office door (KI 106D). Come to your conference prepared with written answers to the five questions indicated in the Writing Assignments handout.

Genre Blenders: The Musical (with the Horror, Gangster, and Nazi Film)

- 7 22 Wed **Screening (double feature):** *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974, 92 min., Brian De Palma) and *Bugsy Malone* (1976, 93 min., Alan Parker)
- 27 Mon **Reading:** *Lost Illusions* (51-57, 119-122, 147-153, 209-220)
- Supplements:** *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), *Funny Lady* (1975), *Nashville* (1975), *Grease* (1978), *The Wiz* (1978), *New York, New York* (1977).
- 8 Mar 1 Wed **Screening:** *Cabaret* (1972, 124 min., Bob Fosse)
- Supplements:** *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971), *The Little Prince* (1974), *A Star is Born* (1976), *All That Jazz* (1979), *Hair* (1979)

March 6-10 Spring Break!

- 13 Mon **Workshop:** Library Instruction Session in RL 1022.
Due in class: Come to the Randall Library prepared to conduct research on your paper.
Last day to withdraw with a W

Exploitation Cinema: The Horror Film

- 9 15 Wed **Screening:** *The Exorcist* (1973, 121 min., William Friedkin)
 20 Mon **Reading:** 1) *Hollywood Incoherent*, Chapter 5 (pp. 118-145)
 2) *Lost Illusions* (pp. 220-238)
Supplements: *Psycho* (1960), *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Rosemary's Baby* (1968),
Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song (1971), *Shaft* (1971), *Superfly* (1972), *Blacula* (1972),
Blackenstein (1973), *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), *The Black Godfather* (1974),
Carrie (1976), *The Omen* (1976), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978), *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978).

WEEK 10: STARS AND AGENTS

- 10 22 Wed **Screening:** *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975, 130 min., Sidney Lumet)
 27 Mon **Reading:** *Lost Illusions* (pp. 337-353)
Workshop: How to Develop a Strong Thesis and Other Unsolicited Writing Advice
Supplements: *Patton* (1970), *The Last Detail* (1973), *Chinatown* (1974), *Shampoo* (1975),
The Missouri Breaks (1976), *All the President's Men* (1976)

WEEKS 11-15: AUTEURISM

Robert Altman

- 11 29 Wed **Screening:** *California Split* (1974, 108 min., Robert Altman)
 Apr 3 Mon **Reading:** *Lost Illusions* (pp. 67-72, 89-98, 355-380)
Supplements: *M*A*S*H* (1970), *Brewster McCloud* (1970), *McCabe & Mrs. Miller*
 (1971), *Images* (1972), *The Long Goodbye* (1973), *Thieves Like Us* (1974), *Nashville*
 (1975), *Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull's History Lesson* (1976), *3 Women*
 (1977), *A Wedding* (1978), *Quintet* (1979), *A Perfect Couple* (1979).

Martin Scorsese

- 12 5 Wed **Screening:** *Taxi Driver* (1976, 113 min., Martin Scorsese)
 10 Mon **Reading:** 1) *Lost Illusions* (pp. 144-147)
 2) *Hollywood Incoherent*, Chapter 6 (pp. 147-180)
 3) Sample Papers (Blackboard)
Supplements: *Boxcar Bertha* (1972), *Mean Streets* (1973), *Italianamerican* (1974), *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974), *New York, New York* (1977), *The Last Waltz* (1978).

Woody Allen

- 13 12 Wed **Screening (Double Feature):** *Annie Hall* (1977, 93 min., Woody Allen) and *Manhattan*
 (1979, 96 min., Woody Allen).
 17 Mon **Reading:** *Lost Illusions* (pp. 122-125, 156-157)
Supplements: *Bananas* (1971), *Everything You've Always Wanted to Know about Sex *But Were Afraid to Ask* (1972), *Sleeper* (1973), *Love and Death* (1975), *Interiors* (1978),
Stardust Memories (1980).

John Cassavetes

- 14** 19 Wed **Screening:** *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974, 147 min, John Cassavetes).
21 Fri **Due by email (MS Word attachment) by noon:** Abstract, Final Paper, and Works Cited.
The title of your attachment should start with your last name (e.g. "yourlastname_paper.doc").
24 Mon **Reading:** 1) *Lost Illusions* (pp. 128-130)
2) *Hollywood Incoherent*, Chapter 7 (pp. 181-215)
Supplements: *Faces* (1968), *Husbands* (1970), *Minnie and Moskowitz* (1971), *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* (1976).
- 15** 26 Wed **Screening:** *Opening Night* (1977, 144 min, John Cassavetes)

WEEK 16: SCIENCE FICTION AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

- May 2 Tue **Watch** *Star Wars* (1977, 121 min., George Lucas) on your own by today.
- 16** 3 Wed **3-6 pm. Final Exam Period.** Although we will have no final exam, we will have our last class meeting during our final exam time, and there is a reading due and maybe a quiz.
Screening: *Alien* (1979, 117 min., Ridley Scott)
Reading: 1) *Lost Illusions* (pp. 138-141, 238-251, 383-396)
2) *Hollywood Incoherent*, Conclusion (pp. 216-221)
Supplements: *THX-1138* (1971), *Westworld* (1973), *Soylent Green* (1973), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), *Superman* (1978), *Star Trek* (1979), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980).