

SYLLABUS AND POLICIES
FST 496-001 SENIOR SEMINAR IN FILM STUDIES
AESTHETICS OF HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

Professor Todd Berliner
Monday/Wednesday 9-11:15 am (135 min.) in LH 246

Spring 2019

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 Hollywood offers its audiences. We will study some of Hollywood's most enduring movies, and a few beloved oddities, in an effort to figure out what makes them aesthetically pleasurable. We will read literature in film studies, aesthetics, and psychology to provide a framework for understanding Hollywood's aesthetic appeal.

The course satisfies the writing competency, oral competency, and critical studies capstone requirements in the Film Studies major, as well as the writing intensive, critical reasoning, and capstone requirements in University Studies. Each student will make an oral presentation and perform substantial writing and research. We will spend class time improving your writing, presentation, and critical reasoning skills.

Throughout the course, we will concentrate on the movies *as* movies—artistic works engineered to excite experiences for spectators. 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

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

- 15% Oral Presentation
- 20% 7 of 10 Reading Summaries (I drop your 3 lowest scores)
- 20% Aesthetic Analysis Paper
- 25% Aesthetic Analysis Paper (revised)
- 20% Class participation. This category includes attendance, punctuality, preparedness for class and workshops, and thoughtful participation in class discussions and workshops. More than five 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).

Type and double space everything you hand in. On Canvas 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 on the sign-up sheet next to my office door (King 106D): first come—first pick of topics/dates. If you miss your scheduled presentation, I'll schedule you for another of my choosing and deduct 15% from your presentation grade.

PROSPECTUS AND WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

We will critique each student's prospectus. Sign up for your critique on the sheet outside my office door.

OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

I will hold office hours on Wednesdays 3:30-4:45 pm, 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.

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. I report plagiarism 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/ELECTRONIC FILES

The electronic files may be downloaded from Canvas. Contact TAC (962-4357) if you need help with Canvas. Randall library has the books from which many of the electronic reserves are taken.

Readings

1. Berliner.HollywoodStyle.pdf

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

2. Bordwell.ClassicalHollywoodNarration.pdf

David Bordwell, “Classical Hollywood Cinema: Narrational Principles and Procedures” in Philip Rosen, ed. *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology* (New York: Columbia UP, 1986) 17-34.

3. Carroll.ideology.pdf

Noël Carroll, “Mass Art and Ideology” in *A Philosophy of Mass Art* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1998), 360-412.

4. Carroll.powerofmovies.pdf

Noël Carroll, “The Power of Movies” in Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, ed., *Aesthetics and the*

Philosophy of Art: The Analytic Tradition (Malden, MA and Oxford, England: Blackwell, 2004), 485-497.

5. Keating.emotionalcurves.pdf

Patrick Keating, "Emotional Curves and Linear Narratives" in *The Velvet Light Trap* 58 (Fall 2006): 4-15.

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. Levinson.pleasure.pdf

Jerrold Levinson, "Pleasure and the Value of Works of Art" in *The Pleasures of Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays* (New York: Cornell UP, 1996), 11-26.

8. Reber.processing.pdf

Rolf Reber, 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.

9. Smith.engaging.pdf

Murray Smith, "Engaging Characters" in *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* (Oxford, England: Oxford UP, 1995), 73-109.

10. Thompson.GroundhogDay.pdf

Kristin Thompson, "Groundhog Day" in *Storytelling in the New Hollywood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999), 131-154.

Handouts

1. Berliner.Writing.Instruction.pdf

Instructions for improving your writing.

2. FST496presentations.pdf

Directions for your oral presentations.

3. FST496syllabus.pdf

Syllabus, Course Policies, Course Schedule, and References for Electronic Readings.

4. FST496WritingAssignments.pdf

A handout describing all of the writing assignments for the semester.

Sample Student Papers

Exemplary reading summaries, prospectuses, and papers written by students in previous courses.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOS)

SLOS FOR FILM STUDIES CRITICAL STUDIES CAPSTONE COURSES

- CAP 1. Students will integrate key facets of their education over the course of their university experience.
 - Demonstrate the ability to carry out large-scale individualized projects on topics related to the history and/or aesthetics of cinema, integrating their research, writing, and oral communication skills and culminating in a substantial research project that integrates key facets of their film studies education.

SLOS FOR FILM STUDIES CRITICAL REASONING COURSES

- CR 1. Portray and evaluate researched or derived information or mathematical data accurately and appropriately, and to convert or translate information or data into different, but appropriate forms. [Inquiry, Information Literacy]
 - Use and critique information acquired through research in order to discuss, present on, and write critically about film-studies topics.
 - Evaluate and use evidence to generalize, explain, and interpret information.
- CR 2. Synthesize viewpoints, quantitative data, or interpretations of experts and stakeholders. [Foundational Knowledge, Inquiry, Information Literacy]
 - Synthesize the viewpoints and interpretations of film scholars, filmmakers, and/or film commentators in order to understand and interrogate the ideas and assumptions of film studies experts and stakeholders.
- CR 3. Analyze systematically the relevance and limitations of their own methods, perspectives, or quantitative data. [Inquiry, Critical Thinking]
 - Demonstrate an understanding of one's own research methodologies, examining the relevance and limitations of one's methods, perspectives, and evidence.
- CR 4. Articulate complex, logical, and informed (by researched or derived information and/or quantitative analysis) inferences and/or conclusions. [Critical Thinking, Thoughtful Expression]
 - Write and present cogent, well-reasoned, and well researched arguments that articulate complex ideas about topics in film.
 - Write precise, discipline-appropriate prose that demonstrates a command of complex issues and reasoning skills within a cogent piece of academic writing.

SLOS 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE
FST 496-001 SENIOR SEMINAR IN FILM STUDIES
AESTHETIC PLEASURE IN HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

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 Monday/Wednesday 9-11:15 am (135 min.) in LH 246

Spring 2019

Notes:

- Study readings *before* the class meeting for which they are listed. Readings are on Canvas.
- Screenings take place in class.
- Bring to every class meeting the following documents:
 - 1) Instructions for Writing Papers (Berliner.Writing.Instruction.pdf)
 - 2) Course Syllabus (FST496syllabus.pdf)
 - 3) Writing Assignments (FST496WritingAssignments.pdf)
 - 4) Oral Presentations (FST496presentations.pdf)
 - 5) Any reading due that day
- “*Due in class*” items must be ready to turn in at the very beginning of class.

UNIT 1 HOLLYWOOD AND AESTHETIC PLEASURE

1 Jan	14 Mon	Screening: <i>And Then There Were None</i> (1945, 97 min., Rene Clair)
2	16 Wed	Screening: <i>Steamboat Bill, Jr.</i> (1928, 70 min., Charles Reisner, Buster Keaton) Reading due: A) FST496syllabus.pdf B) FST496WritingAssignments.pdf (p. 1, “Reading Summaries”) C) FST496presentations.pdf D) Sample Reading Summaries E) Writing.Instructions.pdf (just skim this document to see what’s in it)
	18 Fri	Due: Students must sign up for their oral presentations by today. The sign-up sheet is outside my office door, King 106D.
	21 Mon	<i>MLK Holiday</i>
3	23 Wed	Reading due: Carroll.powerofmovies.pdf Due in class: Reading Summary 1 <i>Last day to add/drop a class</i> Oral Presentation (Carroll): _____
4	28 Mon	Screening: <i>Michael Clayton</i> (2007, 119 min., Tony Gilroy)
5	30 Wed	Reading due: reber.processing.pdf Due in class: Reading Summary 2 Oral Presentation (Reber): _____
6 Feb	4 Mon	Screening: <i>The Elephant Man</i> (1980, 124 min., David Lynch)
7	6 Wed	Reading due: Levinson.pleasure.pdf Due in class: Reading Summary 3 Oral Presentation (Levinson): _____

UNIT 2 NARRATIVE

8 Feb 11 Mon **Screening:** *Sherlock Jr.* (1924, 45 min., Buster Keaton)
Broadway Danny Rose (1984, 84 min., Woody Allen)

9 13 Wed **Reading due:** Bordwell.ClassicalHollywoodNarration.pdf
Due in class: Reading Summary 4
Oral Presentation (Bordwell): _____

10 18 Mon **Screening:** *Groundhog Day* (1993, 101 min., Harold Ramis)

11 20 Wed **Reading due:** Thompson.GroundhogDay.pdf
Due in class: Reading Summary 5
Oral Presentation (Thompson): _____

UNIT 3 STYLE

12 Feb 25 Mon **Screening:** *Clueless* (1995, 97 min., Amy Heckerling)
Reading due: A) FST496WritingAssignments.pdf (pp. 2-3)
B) Sample prospectuses (Canvas)

26 Tue **Due:** Students must sign up for their prospectus critiques by today. The sign-up sheet is outside my office door, King 106D.

13 27 Wed **Reading due:** Berliner.HollywoodStyle.pdf
Due in class: Reading Summary 6

14 Mar 4 Mon **Screening:** *T-Men* (1947, 92 min., Anthony Mann)

15 6 Wed **Reading due:** Keating.noirlighting.pdf
Due in class: Reading Summary 7
Oral Presentation (Keating): _____

11-15 *Spring Break!*

UNIT 4 PROSPECTUS WORKSHOPS

16 Mar 18 Mon Attendance, timeliness, and participation at these meetings are critical.
Due in class: Prospectus and Working Bibliography (16 hard copies).
Workshop: In-class critiques of student prospectuses and bibliographies.

17 20 Wed _____

18 25 Mon _____

Writing Workshop: How to Develop a Strong Thesis and Organize a Paper

UNIT 5 IDEOLOGY / EMOTION

19 Mar 27 Wed **Screening:** *Starship Troopers* (1997, 129 min., Paul Verhoeven)
Reading due: FST496WritingAssignments.pdf (p. 4)

20 Apr 1 Mon **Reading due:** Carroll.ideology.pdf
Due in class: Reading Summary 8
Oral Presentation (Carroll): _____

2 Tue **Due by email by noon:** Your working thesis

21 3 Wed **Workshop:** Thesis Workshop 1

22 8 Mon **Screening:** *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956, 120 min., Alfred Hitchcock)

23 10 Wed **Reading due:** Smith.engaging.pdf
Due in class: Reading Summary 9
Oral Presentation (Smith): _____

11 Thu **Due by email by 11:59 pm:** Aesthetic Analysis Paper. The title of your attachment should start with your last name (e.g. “yourlastname_paper.doc”).

24 15 Mon **Screening:** *The Birds* (1963, 119 min., Alfred Hitchcock)

25 17 Wed **Reading due:** Keating.emotionalcurves.pdf
Due in class: Reading Summary 10
Oral Presentation (Keating): _____

UNIT 6 GENRE: THE WHODUNNIT

26 22 Mon **Screening:** *The Last of Sheila* (1973, 120 min., Herbert Ross)

27 24 Wed **Screening:** *Gosford Park* (2001, 137 min., Robert Altman). The movie will start precisely at 9am and class will end 2 minutes late.

28 29 Mon Whodunnit discussion
Film Studies Department Exit Exam

30 Tue **Due by email by noon:** Your reworked thesis

29 May 1 Wed **Workshop:** Thesis Workshop 2

30 6 Mon 8:00 —11:00 am. Final exam time (no exam, just presentations). **Research Paper Presentations:**

7 Tue **Due by email by 11:59 pm:** Aesthetic Analysis Paper (revised). The title of your attachment starts with your last name (e.g. “yourlastname_finalpaper.doc”)