

THEORIES OF NATIONAL CINEMAS - FILM 3373G

Fall 2015

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Office hours: Thursday 12.30 to 2.30

TIMETABLE

Screening	Thursday 9.30 to 12.30 (3B02)
Lecture/tutorial	Monday 9.30 to 11.30 (3B02)

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

The course will provide students with a critical interrogation of the concept of "national cinema". Informed by theories of nation developed within the social sciences by scholars such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, among others, the course troubles notions of nation as an organic, homogeneous, unitary entity before shifting into a study of different case studies in terms of their cinematic representations of nation, and the political economies that facilitate the production of national cinemas. Readings of the 'national' will be underpinned by understandings of class, gender and race. Films from different historical backgrounds and geographical contexts will be examined in relation to debates about what constitutes a national cinema.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE / LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Critically understand notions of nation, nationalism and national cinema.
- Incorporate different theoretical frameworks to the previously mentioned notions and integrate them to the analysis of different film texts.
- Relate canonical readings on national cinema with more contemporary conceptual approaches.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The readings for this course will be available in the Theories of National Cinemas Film Studies 3373G Course Pack and / or will be posted and made available online through the course's OWL site.

ASSESSMENT

1. Attendance: 5%

Students are required to attend all sessions. Attendance will be taken at every class (screenings and lecture/tutorials). More than three unjustified absences will seriously affect the attendance mark (automatically reducing it to 50% or below, if the absences persist) and students may not be allowed to take the final exam.

Students **should not sleep** during the screenings or during the lectures and/or tutorials. If a student is caught sleeping, the instructor retains the right to ask him/her to leave the room and it will be counted as an absence.

If you are absent from a screening or a lecture / tutorial, you need to provide supporting documentation to your Academic Counselor.

For more information please visit the Student Services website:

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>

2. Participation: 10%

Students are expected and encouraged to participate in class discussions and debates, which will be carried out in a respectful and dialogical manner. They will be based on each week's assigned readings and screenings.

Participation marks will be given on the basis of a) active engagement in seminar discussions, b) critical responses to the required readings, c) quizzes on the readings, the films watched in class and the material presented in the lectures.

Make sure to come to class having read and thought about the weekly articles specified in this syllabus and with the relevant notes and material in hand.

Students are also encouraged to send to the instructor by email questions related to each week's screenings and readings. Some of these questions will be discussed during tutorials and this type of participation will count towards their participation mark.

3. Short Essay: 10%

To be submitted on Thursday, September 24th, at 9.30.

Title of essay: Approaching ideas of nation, nationalism and identity.

Each student has to choose / find a news article, song, object, item, etc. that (creatively) relates to the notions of nation, nationalism, identity, etc. introduced in the first two weeks of the course. (If you decide to go for a song, please type the lyrics separately.)

The chosen news article, song, object, item, recipe, etc. should be described and explained in a 800 word short essay in which it should be related to the theoretical notion/s discussed in class.

Arguments should be strengthened and built around ideas presented by Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm (readings for week 1) and Andrew Higson (reading for week 2). Failure to work with these three authors will have a negative effect in your mark. Their ideas should be thoroughly referenced.

Word count and bibliography should be included at the end of the assignment.

4. Mid Term Exam: 15%

Date: Monday, October 26th , 9:30 to 11:30.

In the 2 hour exam, students will have to:

- Answer a series of questions related to the viewing of the films screened from week 1 to 6 (10% of the exam)
- Identify photograms (three) from films studied in class, explain their relevance and its significance (30%).
- Provide short answers to three specific questions about ideas presented in the lectures and/or in the course's readings (30%).
- Choose one topic from a list of three questions and write a short essay-like answer – between one and two pages long. Students are expected to elaborate on the films viewed and studied in relation to the bibliography and to the concepts discussed in the lectures (30%).

5. Presentation: 15%

Students will do their presentation individually or in pairs; they have to inform the instructor about how they will present during the first month of class (January).

Presentations will take place between Thursday November 19th and Monday November 23rd.

Each student / group will:

- a) Select a short film from the National Film Board (NFB) website deemed to be illustrative of the ideas on nation, identity and representation studied in this course. <https://www.nfb.ca/>
- b) Produce a double-sided handout to distribute in class. The handout will include:

- a. (Side 1) Title of the film, director, year
 - b. Photogram: the captured image has to be illustrative of the ideas that you will be presenting on.
 - c. Between 4 and 5 bullet points explaining why the choice of this particular film in relation to the ideas discussed in the course
 - d. (Optional) Other relevant information (production notes, exhibition, etc.).
 - e. (Side 2) Annotated bibliography: at least five different sources (they have to be either primary sources or scholarly ones; no more than three from the course's readings). (40%)
- c) Screen the film in class and do the presentation on the film. Screening and presentation time, combined, should last no less than 30 minutes and no more than 40. (60%)

6. Research Essay: 15%

To be submitted on Thursday, December 3, at 9.30.

One 2000 word review of the literature on one of the films studied throughout the course, privileging those books, chapters and/or articles that allude to the film's national context of production and to the key theoretical notions discussed throughout the course.

This research paper should demonstrate mastery of the technical vocabulary and analytic skills and the capacity to summarize the arguments from the bibliography.

A minimum of ten different sources should be included and referred to. Word count and bibliography should also be included at the end of the assignment

Further guidelines for this exercise will be presented in class and posted on OWL.

7. Final Exam: 30%

In the 3 hours exam, students will have to:

- Answer a series of ten questions related to the viewing of the films screened throughout the course (10%).
- Identify photograms (five) from films studied in class, explain why that particular image is relevant and what its significance is (30%).
- Provide short answers to four specific questions about ideas presented in the lectures and/or in the course's readings (30%).

- Choose one topic from a list of three questions and write a short essay-like answer – between one and two pages long. Students are expected to elaborate on the films viewed and studied in relation to the bibliography and to the concepts discussed in the lectures (30%).

PLEASE NOTE

Submission of essays and written assignments:

All essays and written assignments have to be submitted both through OWL and in print to the instructor. If you fail to submit your essay in either one format or the other by the due date and time, it will be considered a late submission and it will be marked accordingly. The essay you submit through OWL and the one that you hand in have to be identical.

*Make sure to comply to this requisite in order to avoid late submission penalties. *

All essays and written assignments will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism (Turnitin). For more information on plagiarism and plagiarism checking, please refer to the Senate Regulations at the end of this syllabus.

Late assignments:

With the exception of properly documented medical illnesses, emergencies or unexpected circumstances, late assignments will be penalized 3 points per day late (including weekends). All requests of extensions and/or accommodations must come through the office of the Dean – Academic Counseling.

Students have to keep a copy of every assignment they hand in.

Laptops, ipads and cell phones policy

Laptops are not to be used during screenings. You will need to take notes using paper and pens, so be sure to bring these materials to class. Exceptions may be granted in the case of students with special needs, but this will only come with official approval from the Dean's office.

If, during lecture/tutorials, laptops are used for random web surfing, social networking, game playing or any other activity the instructor deems outside of acceptable usage, your laptop will be banned from the class.

In addition, be sure to turn off cell phones and refrain from text messaging during class. This counts as disruptive behavior and will lower your final participation grade.

E-mail policy and etiquette

Generally, all emails will be responded to within 24-48 hours during weekdays (not including holidays). Emails will *usually* be addressed during regular work hours (9-5). The instructor may choose, at her discretion, to respond outside these hours, depending on availability. If you send an email at 11 pm, it is highly unlikely that you will get a response before 9:00am.

When sending an email to me, please make sure of the following:

- That it observes the basic rules of etiquette
 - o You have to include the proper salutation and sign-off
 - o You have to avoid abbreviations – an email is not a text message
- That it is clearly written
- That the tone is the appropriate one in an exchange between a professor and a student.

Failure to comply with these simple rules will affect your participation mark.

If you would like to learn more about email writing, there are some useful tips, clarifications and examples in the following website:

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/effective-e-mail-communication/>

Grading Criteria

A+ (90-100)

Argument: Clear development of a specific, challenging and original thesis. The writer has taken significant risks successfully; in the resulting piece, distinctive ideas and content have discovered their necessary distinctive form. Detailed reference to appropriate texts, with evidence of individual response. Ability not only to expound subject but to see it around–subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

Presentation, structure: Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. Almost no typographical errors.

Language Skills: Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex), with full range of punctuation (including semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses). Graceful style, neither pompous nor breezy, and few errors.

Research/scholarship: Evidence of effective, extensive and independent research, with proper documentation of sources. Quotations used appropriately and purposively.

A (80 to 89)

Argument: The writer has taken risks and most of them succeed. Clear development of a specific and challenging thesis, with proper paragraphs. Detailed reference to appropriate texts, with evidence of individual response. Ability not only to expound subject but to see it around-subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

Presentation, structure: Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. Almost no typographical errors.

Language Skills: Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex), with full range of punctuation (including semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses). Graceful style, neither pompous nor breezy, and few errors.

Research/scholarship: Evidence of effective and independent research, with proper documentation of sources. Quotations used appropriately and purposively.

B (70 to 79)

Argument: Clear development of a specific thesis, with proper paragraphs. Adequately detailed reference to texts. Ability to expound reasonably sophisticated ideas with clarity.

Presentation/structure: Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. A few typographical errors.

Language Skills: Sentence structure correct, with reasonable range of sentence types and full range of punctuation. Style not too wordy, with errors relatively few and minor.

Research Scholarship: Evidence of adequate research, with proper documentation of sources.

C (60 to 69)

Argument: Reasonably clear development of a thesis, with proper paragraphs. Basic ability to expound ideas, whose development might be rather thin. Effort to support points with references to the text. Tendency to replace analysis with descriptive retelling of plot.

Presentation/structure: Presentation showing lapses in tidiness and/or proofreading. Poor use of paragraphs.

Language Skills: Sentence structure correct, but perhaps overly simple, with tendency to avoid punctuation besides period and comma. Errors relatively few, but occasionally serious, with evident misunderstanding of some point of elementary grammar (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)

Research/Scholarship: reasonable effort at documentation, but rather thin.

D (50 to 59)

Argument: Difficulty with paragraphing or consecutive thought. Ideas inchoate but clouded by weak expression. Overgeneralization with inadequate support, or examples that run to lengthy paraphrase, with little or no analysis.

Presentation/structure: Very poor to non-existent use of paragraphs. Inadequate and inaccurate documentation. Multiple typographical errors.

Language Skills: Errors of grammar or diction frequent enough to interfere with understanding.

Research/Scholarship: Little serious effort to research the topic.

F (49 and down)

Argument: Ideas too simple for level of course. Argument completely incoherent. Erroneous content showing little or no understanding of subject.

Presentation/structure: Very sloppy proof-reading. Documentation virtually non-existent.

Language Skills: Writing frequently ungrammatical.

Research/Scholarship: Non-existent. Content largely “borrowed” from sources with non individual distillation, but no apparent attempt to deceive.

0 (Report to Department)

Plagiarism with intent to deceive

SENATE REGULATIONS

1. **Plagiarism:** Students must write their essays in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage, from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the UWO Calendar). Pg 19

2. **Plagiarism Checking:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com).

3. **Prerequisites:** Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

4. **UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:** Please go to the following site for information on the university Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness: https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf

Please Note: Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

5. **Complaints:** If students have a complaint concerning a course in which they are enrolled, they must discuss the matter with the instructor of the course. If students are still not satisfied, they should then take the complaint to the Film Studies Office, University College, Room 80. These regulations are in place because a failure to follow these procedures creates the potential for injustices of various kinds affecting either the instructor or the students themselves, or both parties. Concerns should not be allowed to fester but should be raised with the instructor in a timely manner, so that they can be addressed in time to make a difference to the course.