

FILM STUDIES 3362G: THE MUSICAL
Winter 2018: THE INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL FILM

"Films are constructed so as to address our minds in the knowledge that mind is much faster and more comprehensively perceptive than intellect." – V. F. Perkins

Instructor: Michael Raine

Email: mraine3@uwo.ca

Office: AHB 1G31

Office Hours: Monday 3:30-5:30, or by appointment.

TIMETABLE

Screening: Monday 12:30-3:30 AHB-3B02

Lecture/tutorial: Wednesday 11:30-1:30 AHB-3B02

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

The course will survey the history of the musical film in Hollywood and around the world. It will also explore the history and relation of popular song and narrative in film. We will study films made in Hollywood, the financial, technological, and stylistic center of the musical film from its inception in the late 1920s to the present day, as well as films made in France, India, China, and Japan. The class involves advanced close analysis of audiovisual texts and careful reading of the arguments about musical films that are central to the development of Film Studies over the past several decades. Topics include theories of narration, ideology critique, psychoanalysis, and aspects of popular culture such as the media convergence of popular music and film, and the political economy of cultural industries.

COURSE AIMS

The course aims to help you develop your understanding of the multidimensional concept of the musical film, as a genre and in relation to other media. It also seeks to help you appreciate the material histories of such films produced in various global situations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Understanding, capacity for argument, judgement and analysis will be fostered by essays, presentations and assignments, and by in-class small-group and whole-class discussion.
2. Communication skills will be imparted through in-class discussion and credit given for frequency and quality of contributions, and by essays and other assignments marked in accordance with a grading scale given to the students and including benchmarks for the expectations associated with each grade, from A+ to F.
3. Awareness of the limits of knowledge will be enhanced by exploring the legitimate differences of opinion and methodology within the field, and by requiring students to negotiate the formulation of their own opinions in-class with the terms and knowledge brought to that discussion by other students and the instructor.
4. The ability to argue and decide on complex issues will be fostered by essays and in-class discussion; that to manage time, by the need to prepare properly for class and to deliver assignments in a timely manner; and that for academic responsibility, by the need to source assignments accurately.

COURSE TEXTS

Steven Cohan. *Hollywood Musicals, the Film Reader*. London: Routledge (2002) [HMR]

Corey K. Creekmur and Linda Y. Mokdad (Eds.). *The International Film Musical*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP (2012) [IFM]

All other reading material will be posted to the class web site. ***You must print these out and bring them to class in paper form.***

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Class attendance, web posting, and participation in group discussion [15%]
- In-class quizzes [10%]
- Close analysis of a musical sequence (1200 words) [10%]
- Research Essay (2500 words) [30%]
- Final Examination [35%]

1. Attendance and participation:

- 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. **Six or more unexcused absences will result in you failing the course.**
- If you are absent from a screening or a lecture / tutorial, you need to provide supporting documentation to your Academic Counselor in order to get credit for attendance. For more information, please visit the Student Services website:
<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>
- *Attendance requires your undivided attention:* please turn off all electronic devices in screenings and make notes using pen and paper. After each screening you will be given a prompt on the class web site forum. Your contributions to those forums will count toward your participation grade.
- Participation includes paying attention in class: asking relevant questions and engaging productively in discussions. The score will be lowered by such behaviors as arriving late, leaving early, being disrespectful to the views of others, or engaging in disruptive behaviors in the classroom such as reading non-class-related materials, using personal electronic devices, or having private conversations during class. Computers can be used in class only for taking notes.
- Small-group discussions will be a feature of every class. You will discuss assigned topics related to the film or one of the readings with a group of fellow students and then report back to the class. The worksheets that you use will be handed in and will become part of your participation grade.

2. In-class quizzes

- Pop quizzes will be given at the start of most lectures and count toward the grade. **Don't be late!** In calculating this grade I will drop your two lowest scores.

3. Close analysis essay

This assignment requires a 1,200 word close analysis of the material qualities (cinematography, editing, performance, sound, etc.) of a musical sequence, so that you can practice and demonstrate your mastery of the tools needed to analyze film as an audiovisual medium. You should analyze those elements and make an argument for how they guide your experience of the film as a whole.

4. Research essay

The emphasis in the assignment will be on marshaling evidence to make cogent arguments, drawing on scholarly and other resources. You will decide your topic in consultation with me. After producing an outline and an annotated bibliography, you will write a 2,500 word essay. I will give you feedback on your topic statement, your bibliography, and your essay. You will have the opportunity to make changes to your essay that can result in an improvement of your grade for that section of the assignment of up to 10%. You cannot lose points on the rewrite. Please note that there are **four deadlines** for this assignment: for the **topic (March 1)**, for the **revised topic and annotated bibliography (March 15)**, for the **first submission (March 25)**, and for the **rewrite submission (April 4)**. Please note:

- a. All essays must be uploaded to the class web site; they will be automatically passed through the plagiarism filters at turnitin.com and a report will be sent to you.
- b. Essays should not be above or below the required word count by more than 10%.
- c. Assignments handed in late without a previously approved extension will be penalized 3% per day. Essays should be submitted to the assignments section of the class web site as a *single uploaded file* in .docx format (please put your name and the film title in the filename and include the .docx file extension). I will write comments in your file and send it back to you. Please read them! You should keep a copy of every assignment you hand in, and you should back up frequently while writing.
- d. Please refer to the grading criteria at the end of this syllabus.

5. Final Examination

In this 3-hour examination covering all the material on the course, students will:

- Answer a series of questions related to the main films screened each week.
- Provide short answers to questions about topics presented in the lectures and/or in the course's readings.
- Write paragraph (less than one page) answers to five from a list of eight questions. Students are expected to elaborate on the films viewed and studied in relation to the readings and to the concepts discussed in the lectures.

E-MAIL POLICY

Generally, all emails will be responded to within 24-48 hours during weekdays (not including holidays). Don't be shy about reminding me if you don't hear back.

LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONES POLICY

Laptops are not to be used during screenings. Exceptions may be granted in the case of students with special needs, but this will only come with official approval from academic counseling. You will be given a screening prompt and an opportunity to write down your thoughts on the film after the screening. Laptops are useful for making notes and reading material from the web site but they are also a source of distraction, to you and to others. Any indication that you are not doing class work will result in laptops being banned for in-class use. Please remember that, and remind your classmates. In addition, be sure to turn off cell phones. Text messaging during class is unacceptable.

SENATE REGULATIONS

1. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a major academic offence. 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. Also, please note that the following description of scholastic offenses includes the following: "Submitting for credit in any course or program of study, without the knowledge and *written* approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has been obtained previously or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere."

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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](http://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: Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to their Academic Counseling Office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Students are allowed three absences without affecting their grade; the lowest two scores on in-class quizzes will be dropped. All other missed work must be made up in consultation with the instructor.

Please go to the following site for information on the university Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

For information on the examination services provided by the Student Development Centre, please visit www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd

5. Mental Health: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>

6. 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, IGAB, Room ON64. 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.

7. Course and programme aim (in accordance with OCAV requirements):

1. Understanding, capacity for argument, judgment and analysis will be fostered by essays, presentations and assignments with formative comment, and by in-class small-group and whole-class discussion.
2. Communication skills will be imparted through in-class discussion and credit given for frequency and quality of contributions, and by essays and other assignments marked in accordance with a grading scale given to the students and including benchmarks for the expectations associated with each grade, from A+ to F.
3. Awareness of the limits of knowledge will be enhanced by exploring the legitimate differences of opinion and methodology within the field, and by requiring students to negotiate the formulation of their own opinions in-class with the terms and knowledge brought to that discussion by other students and the instructor.
4. The ability to argue and decide on complex issues will be fostered by essays and in-class discussion; that to manage time, by the need to prepare properly for class and to deliver assignments in a timely manner; and that for academic responsibility, by the need to source assignments accurately.

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 no individual distillation, but no apparent attempt to deceive.

0 (Report to Department)

Plagiarism with intent to deceive