

Department of English & Writing Studies
Film Studies Program

Film Studies 1022 (002)
Introduction to Film Studies
Fall/Winter 2024-25

Instructor: Michael Raine
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Screening: *** Virtual Screening -- See Course Site on Owl Brightspace ***

Lecture: Wednesday 3:30-5:20 SH 3345

Antirequisite: Film Studies 1020E.

You are responsible for *all* the following information. Please read it completely and carefully:

Course Description

This year-long introduction to Film Studies will develop your understanding of film narration and film style, while remaining attentive to the various ways in which cinema always also involves an interaction with specific audiences and larger social structures. We will pay particular attention to the construction of film images, systems of film editing, film sound, and the various modes of organizing these core elements (narrative, non-narrative, etc.). We will also trace how cinema has represented race, ethnicity, gender, and the natural environment. Throughout the course, we will closely examine the construction of a variety of film forms and styles, including classical Hollywood style, New Wave cinema, experimental film, and contemporary independent and global cinema. The second term of the course will incorporate key issues in film studies, including theories of realism, spectatorship, authorship and genre.

Course Aims

This course has been designed to provide students with a broad introduction to the study of film. In addition to teaching students the basic vocabulary of film studies, it is intended to provide an overview of the variety of films that have been and are being made, the different approaches to film (e.g., film as art, film as industry, film as ideology), and specific ways of grouping films in critical practice (e.g., historically, by genre, nation, style, authorship, or mode of production).

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will have a solid grounding in the study of cinema: you will have learned the basic vocabulary of the discipline and the elements of film form and style; you will have been introduced to key figures, films, movements, and theories of the Classic Hollywood and other cinemas; and you will have begun to learn to read and write critical analyses of film images and scenes.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

1. Bordwell, David, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith. *Film Art: An Introduction*. 13th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2024). This will be referred to in the syllabus as *Film Art*. You can use either the paper or electronic version of the textbook, both available through the bookstore.
2. In addition to the textbook, articles are assigned as required reading in several weeks, particularly in the winter term. All articles will be posted along with the weekly lecture slides under the Resources folder in Owl Brightspace. I have also posted a bibliography of the readings on the Syllabus page.

Methods of Evaluation

Fall Term (35%)	Assignment	Due Date	Length	Value
	Attendance and Participation	every class		5%
	Quizzes	weekly	5-10 questions	5%
	October Test	October 30	90 minutes	10%
	Shot Analysis	December 1	~1,100 words	15%
Winter Term (35%)				
	Attendance and Participation	every class		5%
	Quizzes	weekly	5-10 questions	5%
	January Test	January 29	90 minutes	10%
	Sequence Breakdown	March 21	TBA	15%
Final Examination (30%)		TBA	3 hours	30%

Course Content

The Owl Brightspace site contains folders for each week with links to the film(s), lecture slides, readings, and other materials for that week. Please note *these materials are copyrighted* and cannot be shared with people outside the class. Students are responsible for checking the course site on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. Students may access the OWL Brightspace Learner Support site for assistance: <https://brightspacehelp.uwo.ca/>.

Technical Requirements and Electronic Devices

Multiple choice quizzes will be given at the beginning and end of most lectures, using the quiz function of Owl Brightspace. Please make sure you bring a device to class that can access the class website, **using WiFi and not a phone connection. You will only be given credit for attendance if you take the quiz using the university WiFi connection.** Electronic devices must not be used for random web surfing, social networking, game playing, or any other activity unrelated to the class. No electronic devices are permitted in any of the written tests and examinations.

Statement on the Use Of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

I would encourage you to explore the AI tools that are available to you. The large language models used by some implementations of generative AI produce syntactically correct and logically coherent sentences. You will benefit from seeing how generative AI, drawing on the "wisdom of crowds," organizes sentences and arguments. These tools also serve as a kind of non-ironic "dictionary of received ideas" – they compile what has been written on the internet to give you a general sense of what people think about various topics. Use them to gain familiarity with the films, and the methods and issues, that we will discuss on this course. **However**, generative AI is not yet capable of satisfying the writing requirements of this course. You will be asked to write analytically about images and sequences, using the methods taught to you in the class. That means you will need to describe, as concretely as possible, the actual images you see, as well as relate them to the moment-by-moment flow of attention that they cue. The current AI models can't do that. **Note:** you will be asked to reflect on your use of AI at the end of the fall writing assignment. It is an academic offense to pass off text generated by AI as your own.

Attendance and Class Participation

All screenings in this class are *virtual*: the film will be linked to on Owl Brightspace. Students are expected to watch *all* the films, including films you have already seen, and attend *all* lectures, having completed the readings assigned for that week. The quizzes will be used as a proxy for attendance, so you must take *both* quizzes in person each week. Tutorial attendance is also *mandatory* and will comprise a large part of the Attendance / Participation mark (10% of your final grade). While we understand that not all students are comfortable talking in class, we encourage all students to engage in tutorial discussions and to ask questions. Participating actively enhances your experience in any class and facilitates greater learning.

Quizzes, Tests, and Final Examination

Quizzes

Short quizzes will be given at the beginning and/or end of most classes, using the quiz function on Owl Brightspace. **You must take the quiz *in class*, using your own device and over the university WiFi network.** No outside help is allowed. These tests will check your understanding of the material for the current week, before and after the lecture. You must be on time; no make-ups for missed quizzes will be granted.

October Test

This 90-minute midterm test will cover all the material covered in Weeks 1 to 6. The test will comprise two parts: Part 1: 40 multiple-choice or true/false questions: 40 marks; Part 2: two out of five short answer (less than one page) questions: 60 marks. Total: 100 marks, worth 10% of the final grade. We will return your grade at least three days before November 12, the last day to withdraw from the class without penalty.

January Test

The 90-minute midterm test will test cover all the material covered from Weeks 9 to 16 and comprise two parts: Part 1: 40 multiple-choice or true/false questions: 40 marks; Part 2: two out of five short answer (less than one page) questions: 60 marks. Total: 100 marks, worth 10% of the final grade.

Final Examination

The 3-hour final exam will test your knowledge and understanding of the material covered throughout the course and comprise four parts: 1) 30 multiple choice or true/false questions: 30 marks; 2) two out of five paragraph questions on the course readings assigned in the winter term: 20 marks; 3) two out of five paragraph questions on material covered since the start of the course: 20 marks; 4) one long answer on the film, and the sequence, analyzed in the spring writing assignment: 30 marks. *Students may not write on any film or issue/topic more than once in Parts 2, 3, and 4.* Total: 100 marks, worth 35% of the final grade.

Assignments

The requirements for the assignments will be posted in Owl Brightspace.

Fall Writing Assignment: Shot Analysis

Students will answer a series of prompts on the mise-en-scene and cinematography of a shot from one of the films on the course. This is an exercise in analysis, not an essay or an evaluation of the film as a whole. Word target is within 10% of 1,100 words. If your analysis is short or long, expand or edit your work carefully until you are within the word limits. If the submitted paper is not within the word limits, we will deduct marks at our discretion to a maximum of one full grade. In some cases, if an assignment exceeds the word limit by 50% or more, it will be returned unmarked to the student; if an analysis is short by 50% or more, it will receive a failing grade. Detailed instructions will be posted in Owl Brightspace. The paper is due by 11:55pm on Sunday, December 1.

Spring Writing Assignment: Sequence Breakdown

Students will form groups to prepare a shot breakdown – something that we will practice multiple times in the tutorials – of a given sequence from one of the films on the course. This assignment is an exercise in analysis, not an essay or an evaluation of the film as a whole. Detailed instructions will be posted in Owl Brightspace. The breakdown is due by midnight on Friday, March 21.

Statement on Academic Consideration

The university policy on academic consideration (not academic accommodation) is laid out here: https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

You will not be penalized if you miss an assignment deadline by less than three days. Also, your first two absences from lecture and first two absences from tutorial each term will not affect your attendance grade. Finally, your bottom four quiz scores each term will be dropped. In accordance with university policy, assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not count towards the course grade are not eligible for additional consideration.

If you miss the October or January Test or the Final examination, please contact the Academic Advising office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final examination). See: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/definitions.pdf

Due Dates

Papers handed in, without prior permission, beyond the three-day grace period will be returned with a grade but without comments. We will deduct 3% from the final grade of the assignment each day beyond the third day, including weekends (Saturday + Sunday = 6% deduction). Papers submitted after the assignment has been returned to the rest of the class will not normally be accepted. Just send it in!

Submitting Your Assignments

To submit an assignment, in Owl Brightspace click on "Assignments" in the menu on the Home Page. Find the appropriate assignment and follow the instructions to upload. 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 for such checking 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>). Make sure you receive confirmation that your submission has been uploaded and that you have uploaded the correct file. *You are responsible for ensuring that the assignment is properly uploaded to the system. You will not be credited with completing the assignment until it is.*

Extensions

You will not be penalized if your assignment is less than three days late. If you have a good reason for a longer extension, *the request must be made through Academic Counselling in your home faculty*. For more information, please see the [Academic Counselling](#) website for your home faculty. If you miss an exam or an assignment due date, or if you require an extension at the last minute on medical or compassionate grounds, you must notify your academic counsellor *immediately*. Proper documentation must be given to the academic counsellor (*never to your professor or TA*) as soon as possible. If the academic counsellor believes the student has a valid need for an extension, they will contact your professor. Should you require an extension due to a disability, and that extension exceeds the grace period mentioned above, please consult the policy found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Keep a copy!

Always save electronic copies of each file on your computer *and* on an external hard drive, a USB key, or the cloud. Services such as Dropbox or OneDrive are highly recommended. Retain all assignments at least until you receive your official final grade for the course from the Registrar's Office. If you plan to go on to grad school, keep everything!

Returning Assignments

If you believe an assignment has been unfairly graded for whatever reason and you to launch an appeal, you must follow the procedures prescribed by the university. See the ["Undergraduate Student Academic Appeals"](#) document posted on the University Secretariat's ["Rights and Responsibilities"](#) webpage and in the Academic Calendar.

In brief, you must first consult with the person who marked your paper. If a TA marked your paper and you are still not satisfied after they have re-examined the assignment, request through your TA a consultation with the professor. The professor will verify with the TA that the proper procedures have been followed, and if they have, the professor will then review the assignment and contact you with a decision. If you are still not satisfied after the professor re-examines the assignment, you must make a request for academic relief in writing to the Chair of the English and Writing Studies department.

Gradebook in Owl Brightspace

Your marks will be recorded as percentages in Gradebook. You will also be able to see a grade that represents a tally of the work submitted so far. The marks for the final exam and your final grade will not be posted in Owl until the course is over.

Students should always keep track of their marks during the term. If a grade posted in Gradebook does not match the grade on a quiz, test, or assignment, please let us know immediately.

Final Grades

Your final grades are released by the Registrar's Office, not your instructor.

Talking to Your Professor and TAs

Office Hours

Please check the office hours listed for the professor on the first page of this syllabus. Your TAs will also be able to meet with you outside of the tutorial. Contact your TA for a mutually convenient time. Be aware that professors and TAs are extremely busy people, so please be considerate: if you schedule an appointment, show up! Be sure to inform us if you can't make it.

Email

We are happy to communicate with students via e-mail, but there are two provisos:

1. We can't always answer emails instantly; please allow 48 hours for a response and remember that we might not check email after the end of workdays or on weekends (therefore, emails received Friday to Sunday will be answered by Tuesday).
2. We will respond only to *short* emails. Extended discussions or questions about lecture material, assignments or exam expectations or results, course readings, etc. must be in person.

Student Email Accounts

The university requires that students use their uwo.ca email accounts for university business. If we need to contact you, we will email you either at your uwo.ca email account or through Owl. You have the option to forward your Owl messages to your uwo.ca or other email address. *Students are required, therefore, to check your UWO email account(s) daily. Ignorance is no excuse.*

Academic Accommodation

Academic Accommodation is "a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program." https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Accessible Education at the earliest opportunity. "Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students" http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html.

Religious Accommodation

Western's Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf.

In the case of mid-term tests, notification is to be "given in writing to the instructor as early as possible, but not later than one week prior to the writing of the test".

Academic Integrity Tutorial

All students are required to enroll in and complete the Centre for Teaching and Learning's Academic Integrity Tutorial. To access the tutorial, please use the link provided on OWL Brightspace. Once the tutorial has been completed, you will receive a downloadable certificate. You must upload the certificate and submit it through the course Assignments tab in order to complete this assignment. The tutorial must be completed by Friday in the second week of term. This tutorial is mandatory in order for you to complete and pass the course. If you have completed the tutorial already for another course, you may upload the same certificate for this course; you do not need to repeat the tutorial.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

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

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Whenever you take an idea or passage from another author, you must acknowledge the debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. You must not submit AI generated written work as your own. AI can help with brainstorming and smoothing out your syntax, but vague AI generalizations will not get you good grades for written assignments. As stated above, the fall writing assignment will be passed through a plagiarism checker.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western University is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Other Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support & Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.