

Department of English & Writing Studies

Film 2258G (001)
Canadian National Cinema
Winter 2025

Instructor: Dr. Katrina Younes
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Prerequisites

At least 60% in Film Studies 1020E or Film Studies 1022 or special permission of the Department. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This 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. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This 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.

Course Description

Beginning in the silent period and extending into the twenty-first century, this course seeks to answer historical, cultural, ideological and aesthetic questions about Canadian cinema. We will explore how cinema has reflected the complex and unstable notion of Canada as a nation, focusing upon issues of representation as well as problems of production, distribution and exhibition as these are grounded in political economy. Additionally, we will consider the transnational flows between the Canadian film industry, Hollywood, and other global film industries through co-production and casting. Questions addressed include: What is the influence of the documentary tradition on Canadian cinema as a whole? Is there an innate division between Canadian “art” cinema and popular cinema? What are the relationships of Indigenous, regional, diasporic and queer cinemas to a Canadian national cinema? Does Canadian cinema embody two linguistic, cultural and industrial “solitudes” or are there in fact a range of Canadian cinemas? How have colonialism, immigration, and economics shaped Canadian cinema? What roles can genre play in producing and understanding Canadian cinema? How do gender, sexuality, race and class inflect the representation of Canadian nation on screen?

Objectives:

- Understandings of the historical trajectory of Canadian cinema.
- Mastering of Film Studies’ critical terms ‘national cinema,’ ‘genre,’ ‘postmodern,’ ‘political

economy,' 'colonial discourse,' 'decolonization,' 'transnational,' and 'ideology' as these apply to Canadian cinema.

- The above will be acquired by students through a capacity for argument, research, judgement and analysis that will be fostered by essays, and other assignments, and by in-class small-group and whole-class discussion on Canadian national cinema.
- Communication skills will be imparted through in-class discussion and credit will be given for frequency and quality of contributions.
- Research skills will be developed through the reception study assignment and the research required for the term paper.
- Essays and other written assignments are marked in accordance with the grading criteria listed below and include benchmarks for the expectations associated with each grade.
- 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 discussions by other students and the instructor.
- The ability to argue and decide on complex issues will be fostered by essays and in-class discussion. Time management skills will be fostered by the need to prepare properly for class and to deliver assignments in a timely manner. Academic responsibility will be developed by the need to source assignments accurately.

Course Materials

- Christopher E. Gittings, *Canadian National Cinema: Ideology, Difference and Representation* (London/New York: Routledge, 2002): <https://lb.ca/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/additem.bbx?/Z109991/I9781134764853>
 - There are two physical copies available via UWO libraries
 - E-copy Cost: \$73.95
 - Students can purchase any other e-edition of this book that is cheaper than the above price
- Additional Readings available on the course Brightspace page under Content

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

- Participation 10%
- Film Reception Assignment (Annotated Bibliography, research notes, PowerPoint) 20%
- Mid-term 15%
- Research Essay 20%
- Final Exam 35%

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at

<http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

Statements

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Plagiarism, AI, and Other Scholarstic/Academic Offences

Western treats plagiarism very seriously. Plagiarism is the copying or stealing of another's work, in part or in full, without proper attribution. Suspected plagiarism can result in: a grade of 0 on the assignment, a grade of 0 in the course, and/or a permanent entry on your record of conduct. Other scholastic offences include (but are not limited to): re-submitting work you have previously submitted for another class (in part or in full) as "original" work in this class, cheating on a midterm or exam, submitting false records or documentation, and aiding or abetting another student doing these things. Western University's official policy on academic offences is: Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

ChatGPT and its various analogues are not "research help" nor are they "grammar checkers." They produce text based on a predictive model as to what word is most likely to come next. When asked to cite "research," they have no capacity to do actual research, so they invent articles and books. You may find yourself citing a work whose author and title are complete fictions; more often, the AI attributes its imaginary research paper to a real scholar, but not necessarily one who even works in the area. Using a Generative AI app may seem like an easy way to manage your time or to simplify your workload, but if you use it without acknowledging that you are doing so, you are cheating. You are also depriving yourself of the value of education, since by using ChatGPT you are not building your own skills in critical thinking, research, or communication, all of which are areas of significant interest to potential employers. In brief, if you use a Generative AI app to help with your assignment, you must identify every part of your assignment that you did not write yourself. Anything else is a violation of academic integrity and subject to all the same penalties as more traditional types of plagiarism. If ChatGPT use is suspected, you may be asked to show your rough work, to answer questions about your sources and your research process, and to explain your argument orally.

Class Content

Students should be respectful of each other's opinions and positions. While free speech and discussion are always encouraged, comments deemed hateful towards a specific person or group will not be tolerated in the classroom. Moreover, disruptive conduct can result in removal from the classroom. While you are expected to strive toward make the learning environment as comfortable as possible for everyone involved, a "safe space" cannot be guaranteed. If you choose to share personal or sensitive information, please keep in mind that the privacy of the classroom cannot always be ensured. Should the nature of any class content make you feel distressed or uncomfortable to the point you cannot attend or remain in the classroom, please feel

free to excuse yourself from the room for part or all of the lecture period. Contact the instructor as soon as possible to ensure you receive appropriate accommodation for any missed class time.

Support Services

All Western students have the following services available to them through the Student Development Centre: Psychological Counselling, Career Services, Learning Skills, Effective Writing Program, Employment Services, International Student Services, Services for Students with Disabilities, and First Nations Services. Visit <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca> for details. If you are in emotional/mental distress, refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. If you are unsure about where to go, the Wellness Education Centre (room 76 in the lower level of the University Community Centre) has a “no wrong door” policy, meaning that they will direct you to the appropriate service or person for any and all questions or concerns about your overall wellbeing (whether academic, psychological, physical, financial, or otherwise).

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty’s Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

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.

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Electronic Communication

Please observe professional email etiquette when communicating online. Electronic communication which is overtly disrespectful or is deemed by the recipient to be harassment will result in disciplinary action. When sending emails to your instructor or TA, please use your Western email account to ensure your message is not mistakenly labelled as spam. Check your Western email regularly for updates about the course. Failure to check your email regularly is not a valid reason for not completing an assignment or not completing it according to specified directions.

Missed Coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for attempted or completed work, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request without supporting documentation in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation: Examinations scheduled during official examination periods (defined by policy)

When a student misses the Final Exam and their Academic Consideration has been granted, they will be allowed to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam). See the Academic Calendar ([Special Examinations](#)), especially for those who miss multiple final exams within one examination period.

Rubric

Needing Improvement 50-59%: Fair work, minimally acceptable

Below 50%: Failing grade, assignment submitted does not apply to course OR basic requirements of the assignment are not met meeting requirements

60-69%: Competent work, meeting requirements

70-79%: Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory Note: A grade in the range of 75-79 indicates an assignment or test that borders on a grade in the 80 range but has some significant flaw that prevents giving out the higher grade

Exceeding Expectations 80-89%: Superior work which is clearly above average

90-100%: One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level

Grade Negotiation

Students must wait 24 hours before appealing any grades they receive on assignments or tests. Emails received before this point will be disregarded. If you believe your work has been marked unfairly, you must submit a 1-paragraph explanation of exactly how you believe this to be the case. An example of an acceptable grade appeal is available on the course's OWL webpage. If your work has been marked by a TA, you must attempt to discuss your grade and submit your explanation for appeal to them before contacting the course instructor. The official policy of the Women's Studies Department is never to increase a student's grade purely to improve that student's average. "Grade grubbing" simply in order to maintain minimum averages to enter medical school, law school, or business school will not result in a grade increase.

Academic Consideration

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/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.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/accessibleeducation/index.html>

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a **substantial but temporary** impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of the student's Faculty of Registration.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant.

Deadline with a No-Late-Penalty Period

Research Essay and Reception Study *only*. Students are expected to submit each of the assignments by the deadline listed. Should extenuating circumstances arise, students do not need to request Academic Consideration and they are permitted to submit their assignment 24 hours past the deadline without a late penalty. Should students submit their assessment beyond 24 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 2% per day will be applied for up to 5 days. After 5 days, a late penalty of 5% will be applied.

Requests for academic consideration pertaining to the midterm and final exams **must** be accompanied by supporting documentation. Supporting documentation is always required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term.

When a student receives academic considerations or academic accommodations which overlap with the built-in flexibility of the assessment, the longest period of accommodation will determine the deadline. The built-in flexibility of the assessment should not be taken to extend any considerations or accommodations.

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the course instructor alone. Please contact ws-ugrad@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

Assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not count towards the course grade are **not** eligible for additional consideration.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner.

Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term **always** require formal supporting documentation.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in all classes. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western 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.

Intellectual Property/Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination,

communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

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.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Week 1

Screenings:

- *Back to God's Country* (Canada David Hartford, 1919) 73 min. Weldon/McIntyre: <https://stream-mcintyre-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/westernu2020/title/21608>
- *Nass River Indians* (Canada, Marius Barbeau, 1927) 17 min. Weldon/McIntyre: <https://stream-mcintyre-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/westernu2020/title/21717>
- *Of Japanese Descent* (Canada, D.C. Burritt, 1945) 21 min. Weldon/McIntyre: <https://stream-mcintyre-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/westernu2020/title/21657>

Readings:

- Gittings, "Introduction" CNC 1-6
- Gittings, "Immigration and Empire Building: Film as a Colonizing Discourse" CNC 1-32
- Gittings, "Of Japanese Descent: An Interim Report" CNC 69-75
- Gittings, "Saving the Sagas: salvage ethnography" CNC 46-54
- James Oliver Curwood's source text for the film adaptation may be found here: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4539/4539-h/4539-h.htm> (optional reading)

The first week's readings are necessarily more numerous than future weeks as we have a great deal of historical context to absorb. Please do try to complete all of the readings by the end of Week 1.

Week 2

Screenings:

- *Kanehsatake 270 Years of Resistance* (Canada Alanis, Obomsawin, 1993) 119 min. Weldon via National Film Board link: https://www-nfb-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/film/kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance/?ctlgsrc=mr

Readings:

- Gittings, "Visualizing First Nations" CNC 199-230

Week 3

Screenings:

- *Mon Oncle Antoine* (Canada, Claude Jutra, 1971) 104 min. Weldon via National Film Board link: <https://www-nfb-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/film/mon-oncle-antoine/>
- *Neighbours* (Norman McLaren, Canada, 1952) 08 min. Weldon via National Film Board link: https://www-nfb-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/film/neighbours_voisins/?ctlgsrc=mr

Readings:

- Gittings, "External and Internal Colonialism" CNC 103-106
- ---, "Melodrama" CNC 114-115
- ---, "Mon oncle Antoine" CNC 115-119
- ---, "Producing a National Cinema" CNC 76-102

Week 4

Screenings:

- *Goin' Down The Road* (Canada, Don Shebib, 1970) 90 min (watch first 30 minutes or all of it). McIntyre: <https://stream-mcintyre-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/westernu2020/title/21643>
- *The Grey Fox* (Canada, Phillip Borsos 1982) 110 min. McIntyre: <https://stream-mcintyre-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/westernu2020/title/21825>

Readings:

- ---., “Genre Texts” CNC 113-114
- ---., “Goin’ Down The Road” CNC 158-163
- ---., “The Western” CNC 163-176

Week 5

Screenings:

- *Jésus de Montréal* (Canada/France, Denys Arcand, 1989) 118 min. McIntyre Media platform: <https://stream-mcintyre-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/westernu2020/title/21644>

Readings:

- Bill Marshall, “Modernity and Postmodernity.” Quebec National Cinema. Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s, 2001: 285-312.

Week 6: MIDTERM EXAM (in-class, 12:30-2:30 PM)

Week 7 (READING WEEK)

Week 8

Screenings:

- *The Making of Monsters* (John Greyson, 1991) 35 min. McIntyre Media platform: <https://stream-mcintyre-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/westernu2020/title/21646>
- *Zero Patience* (Canada, John Greyson, 1993) 100 min. McIntyre Media platform: <https://stream-mcintyre-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/westernu2020/title/21645>

Readings:

- Gittings, “Screening Sexuality” CNC 281-293
- Michele Aaron, “New Queer Cinema: An Introduction.” In ed. Michele Aaron, *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004: 3-14.

Week 9 RECEPTION ASSIGNMENT DUE

Screenings:

- *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (Canada, Jeff Barnaby, 2013) 88 min Weldon via Criterion on Demand: https://media3-criterionpic-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/htbin/wwform/006?T=AL524361&ALIAS=AL524361_CC.KF&M=0_xd3f7j bl&DSTYLE=0#multimedia_resources_AL524361

Readings:

- “Interview with Filmmaker Jeff Barnaby on Rhymes for Young Ghouls” in Muskrat Magazine.com <http://muskratmagazine.com/interview-with-filmmaker-jeff-barnaby-on-rhymes-for-young-ghouls/>
- Christopher Gittings. “Indigenous Canadian Cinemas: Negotiating the Precarious.” *The Precarious in the Cinemas of the Americas*. Eds., Constanza Burucúa and Carolina Sitnitsky, London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018: 221-244.
- Thomas King, “We Are Sorry” in *The Inconvenient Indian*. Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2012: 107-126.
- Hayden King and Erica Violet Lee, “The truth is there. But reconciliation is deeply complicated.” Globe and Mail 15 Dec. 2015. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/the-truth-is-there-but-reconciliation-is-deeply-complicated/article27759105/>

- John Ibbitson, “Missing children, unmarked burials a legacy of residential schools.” *Globe and Mail* 15 Dec. 2015 <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/missing-children-unmarked-burials-a-legacy-of-residential-schools/article27772367/>

Week 10

Screenings:

- *Slash/Back*: <https://media3-criterionpic-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/htbin/wwform/006?T=MON2794>

Readings:

- CBC, “*Slash/Back* Shows how Indigenous Creators Get Things Done Despite ‘Unlimited Barriers’” <https://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/slashback-indigenous-filmmakers-1.6501407>
- Interview with Nyla Innuksuk #1 <https://scriptmag.com/filmmaking/indie-spotlight-interview-with-slash-back-writer-director-nyla-innuksuk-and-actors-nalajoss-ellsworth-and-tasiana-shirley>
- Interview with Nyla Innuksuk #2 <https://www.inuitartfoundation.org/iaq-online/nyla-innuksuk-on-her-new-film-slash-back>
- “Why Horror Matters for Telling Indigenous Stories” <https://crimereads.com/why-horror-fiction-matters-for-telling-indigenous-stories/>

Week 11

Screenings:

- *Ginger Snaps* (Canada, John Fawcett, 2000) 108 min, Weldon via Criterion on Demand https://media3-criterionpic-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/htbin/wwform/006?T=A08744&ALIAS=A08744_ECC.KF&M=0_y8brwvdy_&DSTYLE=0#multimedia_resources_A08744

Readings:

- April Miller, “The Hair that Wasn’t There Before.” *Western Folklore* 64.3 Summer-Fall 2005: 281-303.
- Martin Barker, Ernest Mathijs, Xavier Mendik, “Menstrual Monsters” *Film International*, July 2006, 4.3: 68-83.

Week 12 **RESEARCH ESSAY DUE**

Screenings:

- *One Big Happa Family* (Jeff Chiba Stearns, 2010) 85 minutes: <https://www.kanopy.com/en/uwo/video/453903>

Readings:

- Gittings, “Multicultural Fields of Vision” *CNC* 231-255

Week 13

Screenings:

- *Stories We Tell* (Canada, Sarah Polley, 2012) 108 min, Weldon via National Film Board link: https://www-nfb-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/film/stories_we_tell/?ctlgsrsrc=mr
- *Offshore* (interactive documentary, Brenda Longfellow): <https://offshore-interactive.com/site/>

Readings:

- Bill Nichols “The Reflexive Mode of Representation” *Representing Reality. Issues and Concepts in Documentary*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991: 56-75.