

**Western University  
Film Studies Program**

**POST-CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD CINEMA (1960-present)**

Film 3342G (001)

Winter 2025

Dr. Joseph Wlodarz

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:30-5:30 pm (in-person—UC-4411)

Thursdays 12:00-1:00 pm (online) & by appt.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course surveys the central industrial, technological, aesthetic, and ideological developments in the history of post-classical Hollywood cinema (roughly 1960-present) as well as the parallel growth of American independent cinema. We will explore the economic, aesthetic, and ideological transformations in American film from the social upheavals of the '60s and '70s to the contemporary era of conglomeration, globalization, and digital media. Key topics will include: the politics of genre revision; the shifting parameters of the “New Hollywood”; the fall of the Production Code and the representation of sex and violence; independent cinemas and social identity; the emergence of the international blockbuster; and crises of security in post-9/11 cinema.

**Course Objectives:** This course operates as an American film history course, but it also investigates the methods and ideological issues of film historical research more broadly. In addition, the course explores how film aesthetics and theory may be understood in the context of American film history.

**Learning Outcomes:** In addition to enhancing your formal analysis and critical thinking skills through class discussion and research papers, you will acquire the basic tools necessary to conduct informed film historical research, particularly of American film history, which can then be applied to the study of other cinemas.

**COURSE TEXTS**

*Required:*

1. Readings from E-Journals/Books available on OWL

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING GUIDELINES**

- Class Attendance and Participation [10%]
- Discussion Leading (Questions and Clip Analysis) [10%]
- In-Class Exams (Jan. 29 & March 5) [10% each]
- Film Analysis (1200 words) [15%]
- Final Research Paper (2000 words) [25%]
- Final Exam [20%]

**Course Content:** Course Assignments, Lecture slides, OWL readings, Tutorial Clips, and Streaming Links will be posted on the OWL site for the course:

<https://westernu.brightspace.com/> Use the weekly units and related tabs to access the course content for each week. All course assignments must be submitted to OWL by the due dates listed on the syllabus. Students are responsible for checking the course OWL 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. If you need assistance with the course OWL site, you can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, you can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

***\*Note: Although I will send mass emails to the class through OWL, you should use my Western email account for any correspondence.***

***Students must also use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses when contacting their instructors.***

**Electronic Devices:** No electronic devices/aids of any kind (e.g. cell phones, tablets, smart watches) are permitted during in-class exams.

**Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):** To foster independent, critical thinking and to help students develop traditional research skills, AI tools, such as ChatGPT, should *not* be used in this course. In all submitted coursework, students are expected to critically evaluate obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop *their own* ideas, arguments, and perspectives. Course assignments (papers/exams) that simply borrow or adapt responses from AI tools will not receive full credit and may be reported as plagiarism. ***\*\*See note on plagiarism in the POLICIES and REGULATIONS section below.***

**Attendance and Participation:** You are required to attend all class meetings. Attendance will be taken regularly. Be sure to come to class fully prepared, having read all of the weekly reading assignments, and with your course readings and textbook in hand. Thoughtful participation is highly encouraged and will improve your final participation grade. Lateness, early departures, not having the appropriate readings, texting, or other disruptive behavior will adversely affect your participation grade. More than **THREE unexcused** absences will result in a zero for your final participation grade. Only

documented medical emergencies—verified through the Dean's office (see below)—will be considered for paper extensions or exam rescheduling.

**Discussion Leading:** Working with 4-5 of your fellow classmates, you will lead discussion at least once during the term on the weekly screenings and readings. I will provide a list of guidelines and tips, but each discussion leader will be responsible for presenting a specific question about the film and/or the course readings as well as engaging your fellow students in a discussion about that element. You will need to coordinate with your group members to prepare and organize the discussion questions/material, and in most cases I will assess the group as a whole based on the overall quality of the discussion leading.

**Exams:** There will be two 1-hour exams during the term and one comprehensive (3-hour) final exam for the course. In-class exams will include clip analysis, multiple choice, and paragraph answer questions. The final exam will include clip analysis, multiple choice, paragraph answer, and an essay question. The final exam will be a 3-hour exam administered during the formal exam period. One week before each exam, I will also distribute an exam review sheet with sample questions and topics to review.

**Paper Assignments:** During the term, you will focus your two writing assignments on *one* film made in the United States that is listed on the assignment sheet. The list includes films that will *not* be screened in class but that are relevant to the overall course material. The films will be drawn from the period of 1960-2020. You are encouraged to meet with me about these assignments at any point, especially when expanding on the first essay to complete the final research paper. The two paper assignments are:

1. **Film Analysis Essay (1200 words) [15%]**  
*Due Friday, February 14*
2. **Film Research Paper (2000 words) [25%]**  
*Due Friday, April 4*

**Late Work:** Course papers must be turned in complete and on time. Late papers will be penalized 5% points per day late (including weekends), except in the case of *properly documented* medical emergencies or illnesses (see below).

**Note on Screenings:** You are required to view weekly screenings before each Wednesday lecture/discussion. All weekly film screenings will be available via streaming sources. Links to the weekly screenings will be found on OWL alongside a screening introduction and related screening questions. I will post the weekly Screening Introduction and Screening Links on Fridays.

I encourage you to view the films on as large a screen as possible so that you can pay close attention to the visual style and formal construction of the films. Most screening links will also have optional subtitles/closed captions that you will be able to turn on (or off).

**Recordings:** Participants in this course are *not* permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. You should also remember that the course lectures are *not* in the public domain but are each instructor's intellectual property. They should not be shared or distributed outside the course in any manner.

**Lecture Outlines:** Lecture slides will be posted each week on OWL. These slides will provide a brief overview of lecture topics for that week, but they will not contain all the relevant material from lecture and should not be seen as a substitute for weekly lectures. Be sure to download these lecture overviews before class to help you take notes during lecture periods.

**Office Hours:** I will be available to answer questions, clarify concepts/assignments, and assist you with your coursework during my weekly office hours (posted above). If you have an occasional conflict, feel free to email me and we can set up an alternative time to meet. I will also be available via email M-F from 9-5 and will do my best to respond to your email within two days. *\*I may, however, not respond to questions about the course that can be answered by simply reviewing the course syllabus.*

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **Section I: POSTCLASSICAL and "NEW HOLLYWOOD" CINEMAS**

#### **Week 1—January 6-8—Slashing Hollywood's Conventions**

**Screening:** *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960, 109 min.)

**Reading:** Williams, "Discipline and Fun: *Psycho* and Postmodern Cinema"

#### **Week 2—Jan. 13-15—Underground Cinema & Urban Crisis**

**Screening:** *Scorpio Rising* (Kenneth Anger, 1963, 28 min.)  
& *Midnight Cowboy* (John Schlesinger, 1969, 113 min.)

**Reading:** Tinkcom, *Working Like a Homosexual* (excerpts)  
& Simon, "One Big Lousy X"

### **Section II: GENRE REVISION and the HOLLYWOOD RENAISSANCE**

#### **Week 3—Jan. 21-23—Reframing Film Noir**

**Screening:** *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974, 131 min.)

**Reading:** Naremore, *More Than Night* (excerpts)

**Week 4—Jan. 27-29— Reimagining the Hollywood Musical**

**Screening:** *Nashville* (Robert Altman, 1975, 159 min.)

**Reading:** Kael: “Coming: *Nashville*”  
& Niemi, *The Cinema of Robert Altman* (excerpts)

**\*\*Exam #1 on Wednesday Jan. 29 at the beginning of class\*\***

**Week 5—Feb. 3-5—The Horror of War: Vietnam**

**Screening:** *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979, 150 min.)

**Reading:** Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies* (excerpts)  
& Beck, “The Sound of Storytelling”

**Section III: FEMINISM and NEW HOLLYWOOD CINEMA****Week 6—Feb. 10-12—Women and Working-Class Heroism**

**Screening:** *Norma Rae* (Martin Ritt, 1979, 110 min.)

**Reading:** Nystrom, excerpt from *Hard Hats, Rednecks, and Macho Men*  
& Giroux, “*Norma Rae*: Character, Culture and Class”

**\*\*Film Analysis Essay Due to OWL by 5pm on Friday Feb. 14\*\***

**Week 7—Feb. 17-19—Reading Week—No Classes****Week 8—Feb. 24-26—Cold Warriors in the Reagan Era**

**Screening:** *Aliens* (James Cameron, 1986, 137 min.)

**Reading:** Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies* (excerpts)  
& Taubin, “Invading Bodies”

**Section IV: AMERICAN INDEPENDENT CINEMA****Week 9—March 3-5—Race, Resistance, and Revolution**

**Screening:** *Born in Flames* (Lizzie Borden, 1983, 90 min.)  
& *Illusions* (Julie Dash, 1982, 34 min.)

**Reading:** hooks, “The Oppositional Gaze”  
& Brown, “A World on Fire”

**\*\*Exam #2 on Wednesday March 5 at the beginning of class\*\***

**Week 10—March 10-12— New Queer Cinema**

**Screening:** *Paris is Burning* (Jennie Livingston, 1991, 71 min.)  
& *The Living End* (Gregg Araki, 1992, 86 min.)

**Reading:** Pearl, "AIDS and New Queer Cinema"  
& Contreras, "New Queer Cinema: Spectacle, Race, Utopia"

**Section V: ENTERTAINMENT and DYSTOPIA: Millennial Hollywood**

**Week 11—March 17-19—Screening the War on Terror**

**Screening:** *In the Valley of Elah* (Paul Haggis, 2007, 121 min.)

**Reading:** Westwell, *Parallel Lines* (excerpts)

**Week 12—March 24-26—Pixar, Disney, and the Digital Era**

**Screening:** *WALL-E* (Andrew Stanton, 2008, 98 min.)

**Reading:** Sobchack, "Animation and Automation"  
& Archer, *Twenty-First Century Hollywood* (excerpts)

**Week 13—March 31-April 2—No Future?: America after the Crash**

**Screening:** *Manchester by the Sea* (Kenneth Lonergan, 2016, 137 min.)

**Reading:** Tarancón & Loyo, "Introduction: Cinema and the Age of Crisis"  
& Koresky, "The World is Full of Weeping"  
& Tavlin, "Casual Viewing: Why Netflix Looks Like That"

***\*Final Research Essay Due to OWL by 5pm on Friday, April 4\****

***\*\*FINAL EXAM: SEE SCHEDULE for DATE and TIME\*\****

## **POLICIES and REGULATIONS**

This instructor respects and upholds University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to the physically disabled, visually and/or hearing impaired student; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the instructor. For Film Studies regulations governing Term Work, Exams, Faculty Office Hours, Academic Relief (appeals, petitions, complaints), and other matters, please consult “Information for Students” on our website at [www.uwo.ca/film](http://www.uwo.ca/film)

**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.

### **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.

### **Accommodation Policies**

#### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

#### **Accommodation for Students on Medical Grounds:**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. *Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.*

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student’s Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of

the accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

The full policy is set out here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

### **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](#).

### **Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:**

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

### **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/>

**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/>

### **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](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or 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. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.



**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 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>.

**\*Note on AI/ChatGPT:** Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized use of AI tools such as ChatGPT to create content that is submitted as one's own. AI tools may *only* be used for general information gathering and preliminary research purposes. In all submitted coursework, students are expected to critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop *their own* ideas, arguments, and perspectives. Students are thus required to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding all forms of plagiarism. All course assignments and exams *must* reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work.

**Complaints:** If students have a complaint concerning a course in which they are enrolled, they must first discuss the matter with the instructor of the course. If students are still not satisfied, they should then take the complaint to the English Department chair. 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.

## 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 below):**

**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. Failure to follow the course assignment and guidelines.

**0 (Report to Department)**

Plagiarism with intent to deceive.