

COMMUNICATION 1400

"Introduction to Film Criticism"

Autumn 2017

Monday & Wednesday @ 5:30 ~ 7:30 PM

Padre Rubio Hall 10

Professor: Brian M. Goss, Ph.D.

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Office: San Ignacio Hall, N°313

Office Hours: Monday 2:30-5; Tuesday, 5:30-7; Wednesday, 2-4

Course Credit: 3.0 Hours

Prerequisite: English 150 or Equivalent

Course Description

This course presents a survey of film as an art form and as a medium of mass communication and broadly orients students to the fundamentals of film studies. We will examine the formal aspects of film that constitute its "language" (*i.e.*, narrative, cinematography, *mise-en-scene*, editing, sound). Alongside reading films, the course will introduce fundamentals of film theory (*e.g.*, auteurism, genre), the political economy of the industry, and present background on the conditions under which films on the syllabus were produced. The films that will be screened span the decades between the 1940s and the current decade and also range from commercially viable to "art house" films (as well as the interpenetration between them). The films are drawn from an eclectic array of national film industries (*i.e.*, United States, Denmark, United Kingdom, Germany, South Korea, Argentina) and are distinct with respect to genre.

Method of Evaluation

Semester grades will be calculated out of 1000 possible points as follows:

Two 4-6 Page Essays ... 340 points (*i.e.*, 170 points each)

Ten-Twelve Quizzes ... 150 points

Mid-Term Examination ... 150 points

Final Examination ... 180 points

Attendance & Participation ... 160 points

Journal Entry ... 20 points

The essays, journal entry, and examinations will be explained in detail in subsequent handouts. Quizzes will cover material from both the films and the assigned readings. Notice that quizzes are weighted heavily to underscore the importance of being prepared for class. All quizzes are unannounced but will, nonetheless, be “predictable” since they will be regularly administered. Quizzes will be distributed at the start of class and collected no later than 17:45. If you are late, the quiz will be graded as zero. There is no make-up for a quiz but it will be graded “Excused” in the event of a documented excusable absence.

Course Objectives

Practice in reading films’ text and social context; fluency in formal language of film analysis; familiarity with some essential film theories; enhanced knowledge of film across time periods, genres and national cinemas.

Miscellaneous Policies

Written work that is submitted late without an acceptable excuse will be penalized, the magnitude of which will be at my discretion. If written work is not submitted within two weeks of the due date, it will be assigned a grade of zero. Aside from excused absences (documented illness, university-sponsored excursion), attendance is mandatory and will be recorded at all class meetings. A student may be granted no more than three excused absences.

The student is obligated to plan doctor’s appointments and personal excursions outside of class time. Early exits from class session always present poor etiquette; do not show up for class unless you plan to stay the whole period.

Students are expected to be prepared, attentive, participatory, and courteous with the people with whom they share the academic milieu. A student should have something to say at all class meetings and make regular, substantial contributions, while displaying the sensitivity toward others that one would expect to be apportioned toward one’s self. During screenings, it is by definition impossible to follow closely what is

happening on two screens at once. Ergo, devices must be put away (telephones, laptops, and so on); no exceptions. If a student elects to do otherwise, he or she will be recorded as absent.

Notice that before each class session, I need to prepare audiovisual materials. Please do not approach me with questions until I have the materials ready for the whole class' benefit and edification.

By virtue of being enrolled in this course, the student *by definition* firmly grasps all policies described in this syllabus.

The appendices at the end of this document detail (1) the grading scale that will be employed for final grades; (2) the campus calendar for the semester, and (3) university-wide policies (integrity, Title IX, special needs).

Materials

In addition to the films, there are three further channels for the course's required texts:

- (1) *Film Art* (Tenth Edition/International or Eleventh Edition/International) by David Bordwell & Kristin Thompson, available at the university bookstore;
- (2) Scanned readings distributed directly to students via email;
- (3) Readings distributed via Internet, indicated below in the "Sequence of Films and Readings" by URL.

Notice that the "Sequence of Films & Readings" section of the syllabus (below) indicates page numbers for *both* the tenth and the eleventh editions of Bordwell & Thompson's text. Use whichever edition is most convenient for you, but be attentive to following the correct page numbers for the edition of the textbook that you are using that are flagged in this syllabus.

Be forewarned that several films on the syllabus present mature and/or extremely harsh content.

Sequence of Films and Readings

WEEK I

Monday 4 September

Introduction to the Course

Wednesday 6 September

Screening and Discussion of *Shallow Grave* (Dir: Danny Boyle, 1994, United Kingdom)

—Scanned Reading: David Bordwell, “Meaning Made”

Journal Entry Assigned

WEEK II

Monday 11 September

Screening: *El secreto de sus ojos / The Secret in Their Eyes* (Dir: Juan José Campanella, 2009, Argentina-Spain)

Wednesday 13 September

Discussion of *The Secret in Their Eyes*

—Bordwell & Thompson, 10th Edition, pp.72-75 & 85-100 (“Narrative as a Formal System”) —or- Bordwell & Thompson, 11th Edition, pp.72-99

—Scanned Reading: Alfred Hitchcock & François Truffaut, from *Hitchcock*

Journal Entry Due

WEEK III

Monday 18 September

Screening: *Jagten / The Hunt* (Dir: Thomas Vinterberg, Denmark, 2012)

Wednesday 20 September

Discussion of *The Hunt*

—Bordwell & Thompson, 10th Edition, pp.112-140 (“*Mise-en-Scene*”) —or- Bordwell & Thompson, 11th Edition, pp.112-154

—Internet: *Le Voyage dans la Lune / Trip to the Moon* (Dir: Georges Méliès, France, 1902) at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FrdVdKlxUk

WEEK IV

Monday 25 September

Screening: *Salinui Chueok / Memories of Murder* (Dir: Joon-ho Bong, South Korea, 2003)

Wednesday 27 September

Discussion of *Salinui Chueok*

—Bordwell and Thompson, 10th and 11th editions, Chapter 5 (“Cinematography”)

—Internet: Minette Walters, “This Man is No Hannibal Lector, He’s an Inadequate Underachiever” at:

www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/dec/17/suffolkmurders.focus

First Essay Assigned

WEEK V

Monday 2 October

Lo Piel que Habito / The Skin I Live In (Dir: Pedro Almodóvar, 2011, Spain)

Wednesday 4 October

Discussion of *Lo Piel que Habito*

—Bordwell & Thompson, 10th and 11th editions, Chapter 6 (“Editing”)

—Scanned Reading: Paula Willoquet-Maricondi, “Introduction”

First Essay Due

WEEK VI

Monday 9 October

Screening and Discussion of *Run Lola Run (Lola Rennt)* (Dir: Thomas Tykwer, 1998, Germany)

—Internet: Margit Sinka, “Tom Tykwer’s *Run Lola Run*” at: <http://www2.dickinson.edu/glossen/heft11/lola.html>

Wednesday 11 October: MID-TERM EXAMINATION

WEEK VII

Monday 16 October

Screening: *Casablanca* (Dir: Michael Curtiz, 1942, USA)

Wednesday 18 October
Discussion of *Casablanca*

Reading:

—Bordwell & Thompson, 10th edition, pp. 266-298 (“Sound in Cinema”, 10th Edition) -or- 11th edition, Chapter 7
—Internet: Umberto Eco, “*Casablanca*, or the clichés are having a ball” at: xroads.virginia.edu/~DRBR/eco.html

WEEK VIII

Monday 23 October & Wednesday 25 October: To Be Announced

WEEK IX

Monday 30 October

Screening and Discussion of *The Imposter* (Dir: Bart Layton, 2012, United Kingdom)

—Internet: “Bart Layton Interview”, at: <http://www.viewlondon.co.uk/cinemas/bart-layton-interview-feature-interview-4495.html>

—Internet: Bill Graham, “*The Imposter* Director Bart Layton On Deceiving the Audience and Finding Truth”, at: <https://thefilmstage.com/features/interview-the-imposter-director-bart-layton-on-deceiving-the-audience-and-finding-truth/>

Wednesday 1 November
HOLIDAY (*Día de todos los santos*)

WEEK X

Monday 6 November

Screening: *Jaws* (Dir: Steven Spielberg, 1975, USA)

Wednesday 8 November

Discussion of *Jaws*

—Bordwell & Thompson, 10th Edition, Chapter 4 (“Film Genres”) –or- 11th Edition, Chapter 9

—Scanned Reading: Michael Ryan & Douglas Kellner, “Disaster Film”, from *Camera Politica*

Second Essay Assigned

WEEK XI

Monday 13 November

Screening: *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* (Dir: Alejandro G. Iñárritu, 2014, USA)

Wednesday 15 November

Discussion of *Birdman*

—Scanned Reading: Celestino Deleyto & María del Mar Azcona, “Interview with Alejandro González Iñárritu”

—Scanned Reading: Robert Stam, “The Author”

WEEK XII

Monday 20 November

Screening: *The Prestige* (Dir: Christopher Nolan, 2006, United States-United Kingdom)

Wednesday 22 November

Discussion of *The Prestige*

—Scanned Reading: Janey Place, “Women in Film Noir”

—Internet: “*The Prestige*—Christopher Nolan Interview”, at:

<http://www.indielondon.co.uk/Film-Review/the-prestige-christopher-nolan-interview>

Second Essay Due

WEEK XII

Monday 27 November

Screening: *The Magdalene Sisters* (Dir: Peter Mullan, 2002, Ireland-United Kingdom)

Wednesday 29 November

Discussion of *The Magdalene Sisters*

—Scanned Reading: Robert Stam, “The Question of Realism”

—Scanned Reading: Susan Hayward, “Stars [...]”

—Internet: Peter Bradshaw, “The Magdalene Sisters” at:

www.theguardian.com/culture/2003/feb/21/artsfeatures1

—Internet: The Journal, “Enda Kenny’s State Apology to the Magdalene Women”, at:

www.thejournal.ie/full-text-enda-kenny-magdalene-apology-801132-Feb2013/

WEEK XIII

Monday 4 December

Screening and Discussion of Screening & Discussion of: *Rope* (Dir: Alfred Hitchcock, 1948, USA)

—Internet: James Walcott, “Death and the Master”:

www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/classic/features/death-and-the-master-199904?currentPage=all

Wednesday 6 December: HOLIDAY (*Día de la Constitución*)

WEEK XIV

Monday 11 December

Screening: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Dir: Michael Gondry, 2004, USA)

Wednesday 13 December

Discussion of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

—Internet: Eric D. Snider, “15 Unforgettable Facts About Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind”, at:

<http://mentalfloss.com/article/67681/15-unforgettable-facts-about-eternal-sunshine-spotless-mind>

WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER at 3:30: FINAL EXAMINATION

APPENDIX I: FINAL GRADE SCALE

910 points /1000 or above: “A”; 890-909 points: “A-”; 860 – 889 points: “B+”; 830 – 859 points: “B”; 800-829: “B-”; 770 – 799: “C+”; 730 – 769 points: “C”; 700 – 729: “C-”; 615 – 699 points: “D”; Less than 615: “F”

APPENDIX II: UNIVERSITY CALENDAR—AUTUMN ‘17

Calendar

Fall 2017

AUGUST		
Thursday	31	TOEFL test (4:00 p.m.)
SEPTEMBER		
Friday-Saturday	1-2	Permanent and Transfer students mandatory Academic Welcome Session and departure for Welcome Days from SLU-Madrid (9:00 a.m.)
Saturday	2	Class of 2021 Convocation at SLU-Madrid (12:00 p.m.-noon) Study Abroad arrival and Housing in host family move-in date
Sunday	3	Study abroad students mandatory Welcome Sessions (10:00 a.m.)
Monday	4	Fall 2017 first day of classes
Friday	8	Application deadline for fall semester degree candidates
Sunday	17	Last day to drop a class without a grade of W and/or add a class Last day to choose Audit (AU) or Pass/No Pass (P/NP) options
Friday	29	Exams for MATH - First midterm (2:00-4:30 p.m.)
OCTOBER		
Thursday	12	<i>Fiesta Nacional de España</i> holiday (University closed)
Friday	13	University closed
Monday	16	Last day to submit Transfer Application for spring semester
Thursday	19	Professors' deadline to submit midterm grades
Monday	30	Last day to drop a class and receive a grade of W
NOVEMBER		
Wednesday	1	<i>Día de Todos los Santos</i> holiday (University closed)
Thursday	2	Registration for Spring 2018 semester begins
Thursday	9	<i>La Almudena</i> holiday (University closed)
Friday	24	Exams for MATH - Second midterm (2:00-4:30 p.m.)
DECEMBER		
Wednesday	6	<i>Día de la Constitución</i> holiday (University closed)
Friday	8	<i>Inmaculada Concepción</i> holiday (University closed)
Wednesday	13	Fall 2017 final day of classes
Thursday-Friday	14-15	Fall 2017 final exams
Monday-Wednesday	18-20	Fall 2017 final exams
Monday	18	Mid-Year Commencement
Thursday	21	Fall 2017 University Housing move-out date
Saturday	23	Professors' deadline to submit fall 2017 final grades

APPENDIX III: UNIVERSITY POLICIES

University Statement on Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed on the Provost's Office [website](#) at: Additionally, SLU-Madrid has posted its academic integrity policy online: <http://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics>. As a member of the University community, you are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions and appeals.

The professor will review these matters during the first weeks of the term. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program or the Academic Dean of the Madrid Campus.

University Title IX Statement: Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 (mmaruri@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid's Counseling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall (counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 230) or Sinews Multiplettherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid (www.sinews.es; 917-00-1979). To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: <http://www.slu.edu/Documents/Madrid/campus-life/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf>.

Students with Special Needs: In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to <https://www.slu.edu/madrid/campus-life/student-services/disability-services>.

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course. Please contact Disability Services at disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu or +915 54 58 58, ext. 230 for an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services. For more information about academic accommodations, see "Student Resources" on the SLU-Madrid webpage.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.