

**English 340, Introduction to Film, 3 hrs.**  
**Fall 2014**  
**Prerequisite: English Core Curriculum**  
**Jennings 307 Tues, 1:30-4:00**

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### **Course Description**

An introductory study of the elements of film that includes a brief survey of film history and the viewing and discussion of significant representative films.

### **Course Rationale**

Welcome to this introductory course in film--a subject with which you are undoubtedly quite familiar in many ways. Your interest in movies will be an asset to you in this course, and your experience in the English core curriculum will be vital in your writing about the films we study. As the English core courses emphasize analysis of text, so will this course also focus on close "readings"--of the visual medium. To prepare you for the specific analyses that you will make, this course will provide a broad background in the history and technique of the motion picture. Four approaches provide the structure for the course: 1) history of the film, from silents to contemporary; 2) technique, including overviews of film terminology and production; 3) genres of the film; and 4) great directors. What makes a great director or a great film forms a core for debate, as does the study of great literature. And, as with literature, a scholarly approach to the work relies on much more than opinion alone.

### **Course Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to teach basic written evaluation of films by introducing the historical and aesthetic development of the motion picture. This course examines how films shape and reflect our culture. At course's end, you should know the general history and technique of the motion picture and its significant genres and directors. You should also be proficient in basic oral and written critical analysis of films.

### **Student Outcomes**

You will be asked to demonstrate your familiarity with each of the four areas of the course in two major examinations, one oral report, and several written assignments. Written assignments will call for clearly argued, effective prose as taught in English core composition courses. Your oral report will be an evaluation of a film or director (details on this report will be discussed in class). A written term paper will accompany the oral report. Two one-page, single-spaced evaluations of separate films will also be written, as well as short writing assignments for homework and in-class exercises. To be fair to all, late work will be graded down. See the attached English department policy sheet.

Your active participation in class will have an impact on your final grade. We will be doing frequent in-class exercises involving films, and we will watch a couple of films in their entirety. Your attendance in class is required, and you are responsible for all assignment changes mentioned in class. Remember, missing one class is like missing one week of work. I value your participation highly; please be on time and be prepared. I follow the attendance policy of Mississippi College (see the catalog--note carefully that 4

absences result in an ‘F’ for a class that meets once a week). Your grade will be affected by tardiness for class and absences. Quizzes will be given on the readings at the beginning of class. Also, during class please limit your eating to reasonable levels (alas, no giant tubs of popcorn, or anything else that would disrupt class). And although this is a film course, I don’t want our class environment to reflect that of the multiplex theaters--so, no talking during the movies, please. **THE LAST DAY TO DROP A COURSE IS FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31. STUDENTS CANNOT WITHDRAW WITH A ‘W’ (PASSING) AFTER THIS DATE UNLESS THEY MEET THE CONDITIONS OUTLINED UNDER “WITHDRAWAL FROM COLLEGE” IN THE MC CATALOG.**

### **Academic Integrity**

“Mississippi College students are expected to be scrupulously honest. Dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism, or furnishing false information, including forgery, alteration or misuse of University documents, records or identification, will be regarded as a serious offense subject to severe penalty, including, but not limited to, loss of credit and possible dismissal” (MC Undergraduate Catalog).

### **Methods of Instruction**

Lectures, class discussions, group discussions, individual writings, individual reports.

### **Grading**

Short Writing #1	15%
Short Writing #2	15%
Mid-term exam	20%
Term paper/presentation	20%
Final exam	20%
Class particip.(quizzes, homework, class activities)	10%

My grading scale is as follows: A=92-100; B=83-91; C= 74-82; D=65-73; F= below 65

### **Texts**

1. Gazetas, *An Introduction to World Cinema*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (McFarland, 2008).
2. Gocsik, Barsam, and Monahan, *Writing About Movies*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Pearson Longman, 2007).

**Outline of Topics and Schedule** (tentative--changes may be announced in class)

- Aug 26 Film history & technique (read pp. 253-256 in the Gocsik text before first class)
- Sep 2 Silent Classics--*Birth of a Nation, The General* (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 11-40; and Gocsik, pp. 3-32 and 181-190)
- 9 German Expressionism--*M* (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 41-50, 62-75; and Gocsik, pp. 33-62 and 191-202)
- 16 Begin genres and Hitchcock--*Psycho, North by Northwest* (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 92-99, 119-127; and Gocsik, pp. 62-85 and 203-215)
- 23 Short Paper #1 due**  
Genres con't (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 128-140; and Gocsik, pp. 216-227)
- 30 Westerns, war, HUAC, begin international (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 159-168, 179-189; and Gocsik, pp. 89-109 and 228-238)
- Oct 14 Westerns, international, con't. (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 169-178, 190-201; and Gocsik, pp. 111-121 and 238-252)
- 21 Midterm exam**
- 28 Horror (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 202-218; and Gocsik, pp. 123-132)
- Nov 4 **Short Paper #2 due**  
Continue horror and begin sci-fi (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 237-247)  
Begin oral reports—Chaplin, Riefenstahl, Capra, Huston, Wertmuller
- 11 Sci-fi and anti-myth (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 248-257)  
Oral Reports—Welles, Ford, Lean, Bergman, Nichols, Scott, Nolan
- 18 New German (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 275-281)  
Oral Reports—Kurosawa, Truffaut, Herzog, Wenders, von Trotta
- Dec 2 **Optional Short Paper #3 due**  
Auteurs (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 282-293)  
Oral Reports—Altman, Coppola, Kubrick, Allen, Burton, Coens
- 9 Revisiting genre (Discuss *World Cinema* pp. 294-305, 323-334)  
Oral Reports—Campion, Jarmusch, Scorsese, Jonze, Bigelow, Cameron
- 16 Final Exam, 12:00-3:00 p.m. (exam begins promptly at noon)**

## English Department / Departmental Policies / Upper-level and Graduate

**Attendance:** The English Department adheres to Mississippi College's attendance policy as outlined in the current *Undergraduate Catalog* and *Graduate Catalog*:

Class attendance is an essential part of university education, and students are expected to attend regularly and punctually all classes and laboratories for which they are registered. Cumulative absences may result in a lowered grade or loss of credit for the course. Tardiness is also subject to penalty, as is any failure to complete required class work on time. Although some specific requirements may vary according to the nature and structure of the course, the following guidelines summarize university policy:

1. Class attendance is required, and accurate records are kept.
2. Students must not accumulate excessive absences.

A student receives a grade of F in a course immediately upon accumulating the following number of absences, whether excused or unexcused:

- 12 in semester classes meeting 3 times per week
- 8 in semester classes meeting 2 times per week
- 4 in semester classes meeting 1 time per week
- 4 per session in the Accelerated Degree Program (ADP)
- 6 in summer day classes

For lesser numbers of absences, the student should expect a lowered grade in the course, with the maximum penalty of one letter grade for each week of absences (in a semester) or the equivalent.

*Absence Appeal.* If a student misses more than the number of class periods specified in university policy and believes that there are reasonable explanations for the absences, he/she may appeal the absences to the dean of the school in which the course is being taught. Students may obtain a Student Absence Appeal Form from the office of the appropriate dean.

**Academic Integrity Statement:** The English Department adheres to Mississippi College's academic integrity policy as outlined in the current *Undergraduate Catalog* and *Graduate Catalog*:

Mississippi College students are expected to be scrupulously honest. Dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism, or furnishing false information, including forgery, alteration or misuse of University documents, records or identification, will be regarded as a serious offense subject to severe penalty, including, but not limited to, loss of credit and possible dismissal. See the current *Mississippi College Student Handbook* or University Policy 2.19 for specific information regarding penalties associated with dishonest behavior at Mississippi College.

**Late Paper Policy:** The English Department has established the following policy for late work submitted in upper-level and graduate English courses:

**No major papers or projects will be accepted after the due date** except in the case of your hospitalization or the death of an immediate family member; you may appeal your

case, if necessary, to a departmental committee after filling out an appeals form available from the department chair.

**Grades for other assignments will be reduced** according to the following schedule:

- after time due and up to 24 hours late: one letter grade;
- after 24 hours and up to 48 hours late: two letter grades;
- after 48 hours and up to 72 hours late: three letter grades;
- after 72 hours, any paper turned in will be given an “F.”

Failure to turn in an assignment will result in a grade of zero on that assignment

## **Student Assistance**

### **A. Early Alert System**

Mississippi College has adopted the practice of finding students early in the semester who may be exhibiting behaviors that could ultimately have a negative impact on their academic progress. These behaviors are often called “red flag” behaviors and include, but are not limited to, excessive absences, poor test grades, and lack of class participation or evidence of non-engagement. Identifying these behaviors early gives the instructor the opportunity to raise the “red flag” on behalf of a particular student so that the student can take the appropriate action to redirect his/her progress. The system alerts the student, the student’s advisor, and the Office of Student Success.

These messages are intended to help a student recognize an area of concern and to encourage him/her to make some choices to improve the situation. When a student receives an Early Alert message, the student should quickly make an appointment to talk with his/her professor about the situation. Also, students can make full use of the Office of Student Success to set academic goals and connect to campus resources.

### **B. Students with Disabilities**

In order for a student to receive disability accommodations under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, he or she must schedule an individual meeting with the Director of Student Counseling Services **immediately upon recognition of their disability** (if their disability is known they must come in before the semester begins or make an appointment **immediately** upon receipt of their syllabi for the new semester). The student must bring with them written documentation from a medical physician and/or licensed clinician that verifies their disability. If the student has received prior accommodations, they must bring written documentation of those accommodations (example Individualized Education Plan from the school system). Documentation must be current (**within 3 years**).

The student must meet with SCS **face-to face** and also attend two (2) additional follow up meetings (one mid semester before or after midterm examinations and the last one at the end of the semester). Please note that the student may also schedule additional meetings as needed for support through SCS as they work with their professor throughout the semester. Note: Students must come in **each semester** to complete their Individualized Accommodation Plan (example: MC student completes fall semester IAP plan and even if student is a continuing student for the spring semester they must come in again to complete their spring semester IAP plan).

Student Counseling Services is located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Alumni Hall) or they may be contacted via email at [mbryant@mc.edu](mailto:mbryant@mc.edu) . You may also reach them by phone at **601-925-7790**. **Dr. Morgan Bryant is director of MC Student Counseling Services.**