

**FILM 2332-002: UNDERSTANDING FILM (CV/HONORS)  
FALL 2008**

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**Instructor:** Dr. Adrienne L. McLean  
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**Office Hours:** 6:45-7:15 PM Tuesday/Thursday and by appointment; room JO5.606 (Jonsson Building). *E-mail queries are answered promptly, and are encouraged.*

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**Course Description**

Focusing primarily on canonical and classical film texts, this course is designed to familiarize students with the history and formal and stylistic elements of cinema as a medium of art and expression, to develop students' ability to analyze films practically and ideologically, and to enable them to become more informed and sophisticated film viewers, evaluators, and cultural critics. Roughly the first half of the course will be devoted to exploring how and why cinema became a mass medium and in outlining the features and techniques of film art. The remainder of the course will be devoted to examining the many ways these elements were employed by filmmakers working in Hollywood and elsewhere over the past century. Generally, classes will consist of lecture (augmented by brief screenings of relevant material) as well as discussion of the reading and screening for the week. Assessment of students' progress in achieving the learning objectives of the course will occur through student presentations, two exams, and two essays.

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**Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

To familiarize students with the history and formal and stylistic elements of cinema as a medium of art and expression, to develop students' ability to analyze films practically and ideologically, and to enable them to become more informed and sophisticated film viewers, evaluators, and cultural critics.

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**Required Textbooks and Materials**

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 8th edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008).

There are a few additional reserve readings (**RR**) from Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, eds., *Film Theory and Criticism*, 6th edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). They can also be found online and downloaded through WebCT.

Note that full-length films are assigned weekly for viewing before the regular class session. *These films are required texts as well.* All are on reserve at McDermott Library, but are also available in a number of other venues.

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**CLASS CALENDAR**

DATE	TOPIC/READING/OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENINGS (Weeks in <b>bold-face</b> indicate exams, presentations, or due dates therein.)
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Week 1 August 21	<b>Introduction and Course Mechanics</b>
Week 2 August 26-28	<b>Production, Film Form and Style</b> READING: Chapter 1 (pp. 10-47) and pp. 440-459; chapter 2 and pp. 304-309. OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Rear Window</i> (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954; 113 mins.).
Week 3 September 2-4	<b>Narrative and Narration</b> READING: Chapter 3 and pp. 310-315. OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Citizen Kane</i> (Orson Welles, 1941; 119 mins.).
Week 4 September 9-11	<b>The Shot: Mise-en-scene, Color</b> READING: Chapter 4 (through p. 153) and pp. 392-396. OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Do The Right Thing</i> (Spike Lee, 1989; 120 mins.).
Week 5 September 16-18	<b>The Shot: Camerawork and Cinematography</b> READING: Chapter 5. OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Grand Illusion</i> (Jean Renoir, 1937; 111 mins.) or <i>Rules of the Game</i> (Jean Renoir, 1939; 120 mins.).
Week 6 September 23-25	<b>---EXAM 1 TUESDAY; PRESENTATIONS THURSDAY---</b>
Week 7 Sept. 30-Oct. 2	<b>Shot to Shot: Editing</b> READING: Chapter 6 and pp. 388-392. OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Psycho</i> (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960; 109 mins.).
Week 8 October 7-9	<b>Sound and Sound Design</b> READING: Chapter 7 (through p. 292). OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>The Conversation</i> (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974; 113 mins.).
Week 9 October 14-16	<b>Genre Criticism and Style</b> READING: Chapter 9 and pp. 419-426. OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>The Searchers</i> (John Ford, 1956; 120 mins.) or <i>Meet Me in St. Louis</i> (Vincente Minnelli, 1944; 113 mins.).
Week 10 October 21-23	<b>Documentary and Screen Reality</b> READING: Chapter 10 (pp. 338-344, 348-355) and pp. 410-419. OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>The Thin Blue Line</i> (Errol Morris, 1988; 103 mins.).
Week 11 October 28-30	<b>Italian Neorealism, the French New Wave</b> READING: pp. 397-401, 459-463. OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Breathless</i> (Jean-Luc Godard, 1959; 89 mins.).
Week 12 November 4-6	<b>---EXAM 2 TUESDAY; PRESENTATIONS THURSDAY---</b>
Week 13 November 11-13	<b>Authorship and the Art Film</b> READING: RR David Bordwell, "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice." OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Persona</i> (Ingmar Bergman, 1966; 83 mins.).

Week 14  
November 18-20

***Generic Transformation, the "New Hollywood"***

READING: pp. 426-430, 463-468. Reread pp. 34-47.

OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *Bonnie and Clyde* (Arthur Penn, 1967; 105 mins.) or *Raging Bull* (Martin Scorsese, 1980; 127 mins.).

Week 15  
November 25

**...PRESENTATIONS...**

Week 16  
December 2

**...PRESENTATIONS; and Summing It All Up...**

**...FILM ANALYSIS DUE at beginning of class...**

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***...There will be a final exam for this class only in the direst of circumstances; but if one is necessary, it will take place at 2:00 PM Tuesday, December 16...***

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*All screening times are approximate.*

*Syllabus subject to change, but not without notice.*

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## Grading Policy

Grades will be figured as follows; the presentation/essay and film analysis grades are weighted, with the highest score given the higher percentage in the calculation of the overall course grade:

<b>Attendance and participation</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Exam 1</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Exam 2</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Presentation and essay</b>	<b>20-25%</b>
<b>Film analysis (5-6 pages)</b>	<b>20-25%</b>

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## Course & Instructor Policies

Students are expected to attend all classes, to be punctual and attentive and considerate, and to keep up with the assignments listed on the syllabus; screenings and reading are all to be completed *before* the Tuesday class session. *If a student must miss a class, he or she remains responsible for all course material covered in that class; there are no make-up classes, and each class will only be taught once.* All students are fully responsible on exams for all in- and out-of-class screening material, including clips used in lecture. Attendance will be taken for every class. All exams are in-class exams.

There will be no incompletes given in the course unless proper procedure is followed (see below); all course requirements must be met (including attendance; if a student misses more than ten class periods, he or she will generate an automatic failing grade for the course); all exams must be completed in full; late work will be penalized; and make-up exams will be permitted only in the most serious circumstances (family emergency or illness) which must be documented.

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## Field Trip Policies

### Off-campus Instruction and Course Activities

*Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address [http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel\\_Risk\\_Activities.htm](http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm). Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. Below is a description of any travel and/or risk-related activity associated with this course.*

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## Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and

each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part I, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

### **Academic Integrity**

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

### **Email Use**

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

### **Withdrawal from Class**

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any

class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

## **Student Grievance Procedures**

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

## **Incomplete Grade Policy**

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

## **Disability Services**

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:  
The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22  
PO Box 830688  
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688  
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

### **Religious Holy Days**

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

***These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.***