FILM & CULTURE - COMM 1305 – SPRING 2014
(1305.001 Class & .101 Lab)

Dr. Ethan Thompson
Office Hours: BH 3.28
MW 11-2 and by appointment
Ethan.Thompson@tamucc.edu
Ph: (361) 825-5993

Weekly Schedule
Room: BH 206
TUESDAY: 2 – 4:45
(Lecture & Movie Lab)
THURSDAY: 2 – 3:15
(Discussion/Activities)

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to the study of film aesthetics, history, and criticism. It introduces an aesthetic vocabulary that students will use to analyze components of film form, such as mise en scène, cinematography, editing, and genre. The course approaches films as texts that indicate cultural attitudes and norms of their time and that can be understood through textual analysis. A number of critical methodologies are introduced to study cinema’s role in American culture, including issues of race, class, and gender. The course seeks to enhance the students’ understanding of film from a historical perspective, contextualizing film within the history of cinema technology and the movie industry.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the vocabulary of film aesthetics.
- Understand various historical and cultural contexts of films.
- Apply critical approaches to the study of films.
- Analyze film form and content in historical and cultural context.
- Analyze film form and content using the vocabulary of film aesthetics.

Required Book & Materials: You are expected to purchase the book and read the material as assigned on the course schedule. The book is easily available at the bookstore or online through sites like Amazon.com.

Engaging Cinema: An Introduction to Film Studies by Bill Nichols.

One pack of 4 x 6 notecards for weekly responses

Evaluation:

WEEKLY RESPONSES TO FILMS: 10% (Handwritten response to film/prompt on 4x6 card)
WEEKLY QUIZZES: 10% (On readings, lectures, films)
ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION: 10% (Attendance and active participation)
PAPER: 15% (On film style using terms and concepts discussed in class. Details to come.)
MIDTERM EXAM: 25% (3/20: Multiple choice and short essays.)
FINAL EXAM: 30% (Designated date and time. Multiple choice and short essays.)

Grade Scale: A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60, F = 59 and under.

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory. Two absences are acceptable, but any additional unexcused absences will cause a five-point deduction from your attendance and participation grade, and you may not make up any missed work. Excused absences require official documentation. Two “lates” (or leaving early) equal an absence.

E-Communication Policy:
• I will respond to email within 24 hours, except for Friday at 3 pm until Monday at 9 am.
• I will respond to queries on the Facebook group within 24 hours as well.
• I will be happy to talk on the phone, instant message, Facetime etc with you during my office hours TWR 11–2.
• I am also happy to meet with you in person during office hours or some other time arranged in advance!

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in an automatic zero on the assignment and further disciplinary action.

Dropping a Class
Events sometimes occur that make dropping a course seem necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

Classroom/Professional behavior
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.
Students are expected to:

1. **Silence and put away cell phones. Texting (including the reading of texts!) is not allowed in class.** Your social life will survive until the break, I promise.
2. **Come to class on-time.** Do not get up and leave early.
3. **Participate in class discussions.** In addition to the enlightening lectures, our goal during each class will be to have a lively, informed discussion. You will not get an “A” if you do not regularly contribute to class discussion in a productive manner.
4. **Be responsible for any information and materials missed when absent.**
5. **Complete readings and assignments as assigned.** All assignments must be handed in on time; exceptions will be made only for extraordinary cases and official documentation is needed. Exams may not be rescheduled. Do not make travel plans that conflict with exams.
6. **Proofread all work before turning it in.** Really.
7. **Seek help with writing if necessary.** The Writing Center of TAMU-CC, located in GSSC 112, provides free help for students at any stage in the writing process. More information is available at the Center for Academic Student Achievement website, casa.tamucc.edu.
8. **Properly cite sources.** Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form, and will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and further disciplinary action. A useful guide to citing references in APA style is located at http://library.nmu.edu/guides/userguides/style_apa.htm.
9. **Respect the privacy and opinions of fellow students.** I expect students to participate in discussion, and I expect students to respect each other’s (hopefully well-informed) opinions. Grades and course performance are considered private information. Students are not to openly discuss their grades (good or bad) inside my classroom.
10. **Meet with the instructor during office hours.** I will not discuss individual student grades in the classroom. I will, however, be happy to discuss grades on papers, exams, course performance, etc. during office hours. I also do not allow the following topics to be openly discussed in the classroom: student opinions about other faculty, student opinions about other students, student grades in other classes.

*Notice to Students with Disabilities:* Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible. Please have your accommodation letter from Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi Disability Services (DS) Office with you when you come see me. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Disability Services Office (located in 116 Corpus Christi Hall) at 361.825.5816.

**Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

**Grade Appeals Process:** Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html <file:///C:\Users\hartlaub\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.>
For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>SCREENING</th>
<th>QUIZ &amp; RESPONSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 1</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
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<td>WEEK 2</td>
<td>T 1/28</td>
<td>READING: INTRODUCTION</td>
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<td>ADAPTATION (Dir. Spike Jonze, 2002, 114 min.)</td>
<td>R 1/30 Quiz &amp; Response</td>
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<td>WEEK 3</td>
<td>T 2/4</td>
<td>READING: CH. 1: FILM AS LANGUAGE: Cinematography &amp; Sound (pp. 50-69)</td>
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<td>THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER (Dir. Charles Laughton, 1955, 93 min.)</td>
<td>R 2/6 Quiz &amp; Response</td>
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<td>WEEK 4</td>
<td>T 2/11</td>
<td>READING: CH. 1: FILM AS LANGUAGE: Semiotics &amp; Editing (pp. 29-50)</td>
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<td>THE HURT LOCKER (Dir. Kathryn Bigelow, 2008, 131 min.)</td>
<td>R 2/13 Quiz &amp; Response</td>
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<td>WEEK 6</td>
<td>T 2/25</td>
<td>READING: CH 3: DOCUMENTARY</td>
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<td>GRIZZLY MAN (Dir. Werner Herzog, 2005, 103 min.)</td>
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<td>WEEK 7</td>
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<td>CH. 4: STORYTELLING</td>
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<td>THE GRADUATE (Dir. Mike Nichols, 1967, 105 min.)</td>
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<td>WEEK 10</td>
<td>T 4/1</td>
<td>READING: CH. 7: GENRE</td>
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<td>BLADERUNNER (Dir. Ridley Scott, 1982, 117 minutes)</td>
<td>R 4/3 Quiz &amp; Response</td>
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<td>R 4/3</td>
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<td>WEEK 11</td>
<td>T 4/8</td>
<td>READING: CH. 8: IDEOLOGY</td>
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<td>HATE (LA HANIE) (Dir. Mathieu Kassowitz, 1995, 96 minutes)</td>
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R 4/10 Quiz & Response

          FILM: DO THE RIGHT THING (Dir. Spike Lee, 1989, 120 min.)
          R 4/17 PAPER DUE

WEEK 13:  T 4/22 READING: CH. 10: GENDER
          Screening: PERSEPOLIS (Dir. Vincent Paronnaud & Marjane Satrapi, 2007, 95 min.)
          R 4/24 Quiz & Response

WEEK 14:  T 4/29 READING: CHAPTER 11: FEMINISM AND FILM
          Screening: FROZEN RIVER (Dir. Courtney Hunt, 2008, 97 min.)
          R 5/1 Quiz & Response

WEEK 15:  T 5/6 READING: CH. 6. NATIONAL CONTEXTS
          Screening: LET THE RIGHT ONE IN (Dir. Tomas Alfredson, 2008, 115 min.)

FINAL EXAM: ASSIGNED DATE AND TIME