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: 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.

Required Subscription: You must subscribe to Netflix in order to do the screenings for this course.

Evaluation:

- ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS AND ACTIVITIES: 120 POINTS
- PAPER: (FORMAL ANALYSIS OF SCENE): 120 points. Details to come.
- TESTS: 3 @ 80 POINTS EACH (Combination multiple choice, short answer, essay)
- GROUP WIKI: (SOCIAL/FORMAL ANALYSIS OF FILM): 120 points. Details to come.

Total Possible Points: 600
540 and above = A
480 – 539 = B
420 – 479 = C  
360 – 419 = D  
359 or less = F

E-Communication Policy:

- CONTACT ME THROUGH BLACKBOARD MESSAGES FOR THIS COURSE.
- I will respond to messages within 24 hours (usually sooner), except for Friday at 3 pm until Monday at 9 am.
- I will be happy to talk on the phone, instant message, Facetime, etc. with you during my office hours.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Summer I (5/30 – 6/30)

Although this is an online class, you are expected to do the work on particular units by the dates noted. All assessments within units will become available as the term progresses. In other words, you cannot do all the work whenever you want.

All readings are from the Nichols book.

WEEK 1: Week 1: Tuesday May 30 5 through Friday June 2

Unit 1: Introduction  
Read: Introduction (pp. 3-25)  
Assessments: Syllabus quiz, Introduction Discussion

Unit 2: Cinematography  
Read: Ch. 1: Film as Language: Cinematography & Sound (pp. 50-69)  
Watch: Dope  
Assessment: Cinematography and Meaning in Dope

WEEK 2: Monday June 5 through Friday June 9

Unit 3: Editing & Sound  
Read: Ch. 1: Film as Language: Semiotics & Editing (pp. 29-50)  
Assessment: Godfather Scene Discussion

Unit 4: Art Cinema & Avant Garde Film  
Read: Ch. 2: Cinema Engagement and Avant Garde  
Watch: Assorted films on YouTube (see links) and Amelie  
Assessment: Avant-Garde & Amelie Discussion

Unit 5: Narrative Structure  
Read: Ch. 4: Storytelling
Watch: *Moonrise Kingdom*
Assessment: Narrative Discussion

**TEST 1**

**WEEK 3:** Monday June 12 through Friday June 16

Unit 6: Mise en Scene
Read: Nothing new, but review pp. 60-64.
Assessment: Mise en Scene Discussion

Unit 7: Documentary
Read: Ch. 3: Documentary
Watch: *The Thin Blue Line*
Assessment: Documentary Form & Meaning Discussion

Unit 8: Three Styles
Read: Ch. 5: Three Fundamental Styles
Watch: *Wet Hot American Summer* (the movie not the series)
Assessment: Style Discussion

**TEST 2**

**WEEK 4:** Monday June 19 through Friday June 23

**PAPER DUE**

Unit 9: Hollywood, Indies, and Beyond
Read: Ch. 6, Institutional and National Contexts
Watch: *Sunset Boulevard*
Assessment: Old and New Styles Discussion

Unit 10: Genre
Read: Ch. 7: Genre
Watch: *Housebound*
Assessment: Genre Expectations Discussion

Unit 11: Ideology & Unit 12: Race & Ethnicity
Read: Ch. 8: Ideology & Ch. 9: Race & Ethnicity
Watch: *Fruitvale Station*
Assessment: Power and Ideology Discussion

**TEST 3**

**WEEK 5:** Monday June 27 through Thursday June 29

Unit 13: Gender
Read: Ch. 10: Gender and Masculinity
Watch: *Force Majeure*
Assessment: Form and Gender Discussion

Unit 14: Feminism
Read: Ch. 11: Feminism and Film
Watch: A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night
Assessment: Genre and Gender Discussion

Friday June 30  GROUP PROJECT DUE/OPTIONAL FINAL EXAM

Students are expected to:
1. Take ownership of your education. It will not be handed to you. You must build it.
2. 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.
3. Proofread all work before turning it in. Really.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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—“IN REAL LIFE” OR ONLINE!

ASSORTED POLICIES:

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.

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.

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.

**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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Grade Appeals**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**Disabilities Accommodations**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.