English 3321.001—The City in Film and Literature
Spring 2019
Wednesday 7:00-9:30 p.m.
OCNR-133

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Course Description

How do we imagine city life? How have urban imaginaries changed over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries? What are the politics of urban space? Who has the right to the city? How do film and literature teach us how to think about the city? These are some of the questions we’ll be asking in “The City in Film and Literature.” From bustling city centers to sleepy suburbs to futuristic metropolises, the city provides the backdrop for so much of the film and literature we consume. This course will examine the ways in which these media not only represent cities, but also how they allow readers and viewers to experience cities in the most immediate of ways. Students will learn to read literary texts cinematically and, conversely, to read filmic texts through a literary lens. Students will also become proficient in the vocabulary of film studies as they analyze and create filmic texts.

Required Texts

Ed Sikov, Film Studies: An Introduction
Thomas Pynchon, The Crying of Lot 49
Steven Millhauser, Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer
Bruce Norris, Clybourne Park
Helena María Viramontes, Their Dogs Came with Them

In addition to these texts, many of the required readings are available for download on Blackboard. When we cover these readings in class, students should either bring hard copies or bring a laptop or tablet on which they may access the readings. **Cell phones are not permitted for accessing course readings in class.**

Films

You are required to watch all films on your own time. Films are accessible through Blackboard or the TAMU-CC Library Database **Kanopy.**

Course Objectives
1. To examine the connections between filmic and literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts by reading and viewing texts by authors from a range of cultural backgrounds.

2. To explore the distinctive characteristics of film and literature as narrative-based media.

3. To understand and use basic literary and filmic terms and concepts.

4. To develop analytic skills by close reading, class discussion, and writing.

5. To use writing as a tool for learning.

6. To gain a basic understanding of theories on cities and urban space.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Students who successfully complete ENGL 3321 will be able to:

1. Recognize the connections between filmic and literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts;

2. Respond critically to filmic and literary works;

3. Communicate their ideas through cogent critical analysis of the course texts.

**Course Grading**

The course will be structured on a 1000-point scale. The scores you receive on your assignments, video adaptations, poster presentations, and participation will be totaled at the end of the semester, and your final grade will be calculated based on this score. The points will be distributed as follows:

- Writing Assignment #1: 200 points
- Dérive Writing Assignment: 100 points
- Dérive Presentation: 100 points
- Final Writing Assignment: 300 points
- Poster Presentation: 100 points
- Instagram Video Adaptations: 100 points
- Participation: 100 points

Participation will be calculated based on class attendance, participation in class discussions, and preparedness for class discussions. Reading quizzes may be factored into this grade as well. If a student is absent for a class period, he/she is not participating. Students will be expected to bring their text to class every day, having read the assignment due for that day.

**Class 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 severe 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.

**Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*, 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.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*. These documents are accessible online at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html).

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**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.

Policy on class attendance: Students are allowed a maximum of TWO (2) absences. All absences count equally, irrespective of the cause, and students who exceed two absences will be penalized one hundred points on their final grade for every absence over the limit.

- If you are unable to attend class, you do not need to email me to explain the circumstances. You should contact another student in class and copy his/her notes.

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. 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. April 5th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” for the term.

If I am absent: If I need to cancel class because my car broke down, or if I am ill, etc., I will try to get someone to post a sign. I also will try to email you all before class. However, if you come to class and I am not here by the time 15 minutes has elapsed (from when class is to start), please assume that class is canceled.

Policy on Laptops and Cell Phones: Cell phones are only permitted in class on days featuring Instagram Video Adaptations. If a student is found using a cell phone on any other day, they will be counted absent for that day. Laptops may only be used to access a reading posted on Blackboard.

Late Writing Projects: All papers are due on the date listed on the syllabus. Students submitting their papers after this time will lose one letter grade for every class period that the paper is late. Students must submit their assignments via the link provided on Blackboard.

Blackboard Grade Center: You will see grades for assignments, exams, and blackboard discussion postings appear on Blackboard during the semester. While these scores may be useful in tracking your grade throughout the semester, they should NOT be used to calculate your final grade. Several point categories will not appear on Blackboard (such as Participation and Reading Quizzes), and only I will have access to these scores. If you are ever concerned about your grade, visit me in
my office and we can discuss the issue in person.

Resources

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 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.

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.

Reminder to English Majors: As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should keep a copy of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

Blackboard 9.1: To log into Blackboard, go to: http://bb9.tamucc.edu. You must have a NET ID (also known as an Active Directory account) to log in. For instructions on how to get this account and more information about using Blackboard, go to: http://distance-education.tamucc.edu/student_resources.html. If you need additional help at any time to access, download, or print course materials on Blackboard, please contact the Island Online (IOL) Help Desk by telephone at (361) 825-2825 or by email at iolsupport@tamucc.edu.

Instagram Video Adaptations: Twice during the semester, students (in groups of three or four) will create short (10-20 second) video clips that reenact scenes from the novels on the course syllabus. For each video, students will incorporate at least one filmic concept from the Film Studies textbook. In addition to utilizing this filmic concept in the production of the short clip, students will be asked to explain, using
the vocabulary from the textbook, the decisions they made during the filming and editing process. Two students from each group will be expected to have an Instagram account.

Course Calendar

Unit One: Contested Spaces and the Right to the City

January 16
- Introductions and Syllabus Overview
- Koyaanisqatsi (Dir. Godfrey Reggio, 1982) (Blackboard)

January 23
- Sikov, Introduction and Chapters 1-3
- Metropolis (Dir. Fritz Lang, 1927) (Kanopy)

January 30
- Sikov, Chapters 4-5
- Valeria Luiselli, “Relingos: The Cartography of Empty Spaces” (Blackboard)
- Playtime (Kanopy) (Dir. Jacques Tati, 1967) (Kanopy)
- Helena María Viramontes, Their Dogs Came with Them (1-78)

February 6
- Sikov, Chapter 10
- Helena María Viramontes, Their Dogs Came with Them (81-200)
- Do the Right Thing (Dir. Spike Lee, 1989) (Blackboard)

February 13
- Helena María Viramontes, Their Dogs Came with Them (200-Finish)
- Instagram Adaptation #1
- Rem Koolhaas, “Coney Island: The Technology of the Fantastic”

Unit Two: Fantasy and the Erotic City

February 20
- Millhauser, Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer (1-129)
- Writing Assignment #1 Due 7 p.m.

February 27
- Instagram Video Adaptation #2
- Millhauser, Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer (129-Finish)
Unit Three—The Gentrified City

March 6
- Peter Moskowitz, “Introduction” How to Kill a City (Blackboard)
- Richard Florida, “The Urban Contradiction” (Blackboard)
- Bruce Norris, Clybourne Park

March 13
- SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS

Unit Four: Power, Postmodernity, and the Simulated City

March 20
- Thomas Pynchon, The Crying of Lot 49 (1-80)
- Jean Baudrillard, “Simulacra and Simulations” (Blackboard)

March 27
- Downtown Dérive (Meet outside Water Street Oyster Bar, 7 p.m.)
- Dérive Refresher: Situationist Internationale #1-4
  http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/index.htm

April 3
- Lieven de Cauter, “The Capsular City” (Blackboard)
- Thomas Pynchon, The Crying of Lot 49 (80-Finish)

April 10
- Dérive Presentations

April 17
- The Truman Show (Dir. Peter Weir, 1998) (Blackboard)
- Dérive Writing Assignment Due

April 24
- The Florida Project (Dir. Sean Baker, 2017) (Kanopy)
- The Pruitt-Igoe Myth (Dir. Chad Freidrichs, 2011) (Kanopy)

May 1
- Storyboard Poster Presentations

Final Assignment Due May 5, 7 p.m.