Dr. Ethan Thompson  
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Office Hours: TR 11-12; 2-4 and by appointment

Course Description: Exploration of the critical approaches to the study of film from a variety of historical and theoretical perspectives, with an emphasis on narrative film and some consideration of experimental cinema.

Student Learning Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
- 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

About the Professor: Ethan Thompson (Ph.D., University of Southern California) is the director of TV Family, a feature-length documentary, the author of Parody and Taste in Post-War American Television Culture, and the co-editor of the books Television History, The Peabody Archive, and Cultural Memory; How to Watch Television; and Satire TV: Politics and Comedy in the Post-Network Era.

Required Course Texts:


Lester Friedman, et al. An Introduction to Film Genres.

Evaluation:

Multiple Choice Quizzes. 250 points total. 5 quizzes on readings, films, and lectures throughout the semester, 50 points each.

Paper 1: Single Film Analysis. 100 points. 3-4 pages.

Paper 2: Comparative Film Analysis. 100 points. 3-4 pages.

Paper 3: Final Analysis: (250 points: Proposal: 50 points. Draft: 100 points. Final: 100 points). About 1500-2000 words. Final draft due on date of final. You will be required to propose a topic, turn in a draft, and meet with me to discuss your draft and recommended revisions.
Weekly Attendance/Participation: (150 points total) Attendance and active participation is required. After two absences, an automatic 10 point deduction for absences, 5 points for being late, is applied.

Weekly Discussion Forums. 150 points. 15 points each. Points earned over 150 get applied as bonus!

Course Point Totals and Grades
900 - 1000 points = A  
800 - 899 = B  
700 - 799 = C  
600 – 699 = D  
599 and under = 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.
• I am also happy to meet with you in person during office hours or some other time arranged in advance!

Students are expected to:
• Take ownership of your education. It will not be handed to you. You must build it.
• Come to class on-time. Do not get up and leave early.
• 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.
• Participate in class discussions. In addition to the enlightening lectures, our goal during each class will be to have a lively, informed discussion.
• Be responsible for any information and materials missed when absent. If you are absent and wish it to be excused, you will need to provide written documentation, such as a doctor’s excuse.
• 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.
• Proofread all work before turning it in. Really.
• 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.
• 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.
• 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 to discuss their grades (good or bad) inside my classroom.
• 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.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change at my discretion, with notice in advance. Look to the syllabus on Blackboard for any updates.

Readings noted below as “AF” are from the textbook, *American Film: A History, 2nd Edition*. Those noted with “Genre” are from *An Introduction to Film Genres*.

**WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION TO FILM CRITICISM**
21 Jan. First day of class.

**WEEK 2: Post WW2-1940s**
28 Jan. Read: AF, Ch. 5, pp. 197-218; Watch *Best Years of Our Lives* (1946)
30 Jan. Read: Genre, Western; Watch *Red River* (1948)

**WEEK 3: 1950s, Part One.**
4 Feb. Read: AF, Ch. 5, pp. 219-238; Watch *The Searchers* (1956)
6 Feb. Read: Genre, Science Fiction; Watch *Forbidden Planet* (1956)
Friday: Quiz 1

**WEEK 4 1950s, Part Two.**
11 Feb. Read: Genre, Melodrama; Watch: *Giant* (1956)
13 Feb. Read: Genre, Social Problem; Watch: *Giant* (1956)
Friday: Paper 1 Due

**WEEK 5 1959-1960**
18 Feb. Read: AF, Ch. 6, pp. 239-257; Watch: *Rio Bravo* (1959)
20 Feb. Read: Genre, Horror; Watch: *Psycho* (1960)
Friday: Quiz 2

**WEEK 6 1960s, Part One.**
25 Feb. Read: AF, Ch. 6, pp. 258-281; Watch: *Hud* (1963)
27 Feb. Read: Genre, Musical; Watch: *A Hard Day’s Night* (1965)

**Week 7 1960s, Part Two.**
3 Mar. Read: AF, Ch. 6, pp. 282-290; Watch: *Bonnie & Clyde* (1967)
5 Mar. Read: Genre, Romantic Comedy; Watch: *The Graduate* (1967)
Friday: Quiz 3

SPRING BREAK

**WEEK 8 1970s, Part One.**

**WEEK 9 1970s, Part Two.**
Paper 2 Due.
WEEK 10 1980s, Part One.
31 Mar. Read: AF, Ch. 8, pp. 357-376; Watch: Fast Times at Ridgemont High (1982)
2 Apr. Read: America on Film, Excerpt #1; Watch: The Legend of Billie Jean (1985)

WEEK 11 1980s, Part Two.
7 Apr. Read: AF, Ch. 8, pp. 377-410; Watch: Raising Arizona (1987)
9 Apr. Read: America on Film, Excerpt #2; Watch: Do the Right Thing (1989)
Friday: Quiz 4

WEEK 12 1990s, Part One.
14 Apr. Read: Indie, Inc. excerpt #1; Watch: Thelma & Louise (1991)
16 Apr. Watch: Unforgiven (1992)

WEEK 13 1990s, Part Two.
21 Apr. Read: Indie, Inc. excerpt #2; Watch: Dazed and Confused (1993)
23 Apr. Read: America on Film, Excerpt #3; Watch: Lone Star (1996)
FRIDAY: FINAL PAPER DRAFT DUE.

WEEK 14 Y2K
28 Apr. Read: Ch. 9, pp. 411-427; Watch: Being John Malkovic (1999)
30 Apr. Read: Ch. 9, pp. 428-446; Watch: O Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000)

WEEK 15 Conclusion
Friday: Quiz 5

FINAL PAPER FINAL DRAFT Due via Blackboard on the Day and at Time of Final Exam: XXXXX

STATEMENTS:

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
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.

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.C0.03, 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.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.c0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf.

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.