

Syllabus - MCOM 2213-201; Appreciation of Film HONORS; FALL 2024

Midwestern State University

Contact Information

Class Meeting Time: Mondays 2—4.50 PM

Classroom: FA C111

Course Instructor: Dr. Supriya Karudapuram

Office Hours: 9-10.30 & Noon--2 WF and 3.30 to 5 P.M.TuR & by appointment

Office: D-WING 205

Office Phone: 940-397-6608

Email: Supriya.karudapuram@msutexas.edu; you can also email me in D2L

Catalog Description:

The history, theory, and aesthetics of film as artistic expression. Cinematography, editing, script, and genres will be emphasized.

Barbie



Oppenheimer



Synopsis:

Summer of 2023, Barbie and Oppenheimer were all the rage at the box office. Viewers flocked to movie theaters to enjoy the films while also offering commentary on how and why the film resonated with them or did not. The question remains: Why do some movies succeed at the box office while others fail?

Films take a number of forms or genres ranging from romcoms to sci-fi, have different versions of heroes/heroines and villains—male and female and other genders. Films play a number of functions including entertainment and instruction about right and wrong. Films are US based as well as global---think Hollywood and Bollywood. The purpose of this course is to prepare students for gaining an appreciation of film through different conceptual and analytical lenses covered through course reading materials and lectures. While the course will overview history, theory, and aesthetics of film, a thematic thread across screened films could be representations of right/virtue vs. wrong/vice.

Classroom instruction will be through lectures based on readings and screened films and in-class activities such as informal group discussions. One of the highlights of the class is planning and implementing a 2-day Film Festival as a culmination activity. Since this is an Honors class, one of the learning objectives is to *promote community engagement, civic leadership, and or the pursuit of the common good*. A film festival is an opportunity to showcase your thought process, critical and aesthetic skills, and leadership for the campus community while screening exemplars within genres selected by us as a class. There will be 2 graded assignments designed around the film festival.

I am available during office hours and beyond if necessary to provide supporting & clarifying instruction as needed. D2L will be the primary source of instructional information dissemination such as lecture slides, supplemental reading material, links to films, and assignment instructions. Assignment submissions for written assignments will also be through D2L. The Mid-Term exam will have the option of completion and submission through D2L or in handwritten form in-class. Details will be discussed closer to the mid-term exam date. So please get up to speed with D2L features and functions ASAP.

Required Text:

(It is free!!!): Sharman, Russell “[Moving Pictures: An Introduction to Cinema](#)”

We will be using an open access (free) online textbook. Please use this link above. (Supplemental readings and resources will be made available through D2L as we move through the semester.)

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will learn how to acquire proficiency in analytical and critical writing about film.
- 2) Students will be prepared for cultivating oral communication skills in conveying film appreciation knowledge.
- 3) Students will grasp concepts and theories as well as aesthetics of visual communication as they pertain to film appreciation.
- 4) The class will equip students to think critically about film.

Grading

Graded Assignments:

Assignment	Points
1 Film Review Paper	10
2 Readings-based Critical Film Analysis Papers	20 (2x10)
1 Imaginary Conversation with a Director/Actor/Actress	10
Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down	10
In-Class Mid-Term Exam	25
Final Paper or Paper & Creative Project	25
Film Festival 20 points	
Total Points	120

Grading Scale:

- 100-90 points= A
- 89-80= B
- 79-70= C
- 69-60= D
- 59 & Below: F

Brief Descriptions of Assignments:

Detailed descriptions for each assignment with rubrics and grading scheme will be made available through D2L well in advance of the deadlines for completion. *Consult Weekly Course Schedule below for due dates. If you are required to submit an assignment in class such as an outline it needs to be word processed. The Mid-Term exam can be handwritten. I expect college-quality work for all assignments—therefore it is crucial that you spellcheck and proofread written submissions.

1 Film Review Paper:

- Early on in the semester you will be assigned a screened film for a 1-page review. Think Rotten Tomatoes or Siskel and Ebert. This is free form meaning it does not have to be based on a reading.

Instructions will be provided. Total Possible Points: 10 Points; ***Due:** Any time before or by 11.59 P.M., Sunday, September 15th on D2L

2 Readings-based Critical Film Analyses:

- You will critically analyze 2 screened films based on course concepts/theories discussed in readings. You will analyze both effective and ineffective aspects of the films in approximately 2 paragraphs each. Instructions will be provided. Total Possible Points: 10 points x 2 analyses = 20 Points; ***1st Readings-based Critical Film Analysis Paper Due:** Any time before or by Sunday, September 29th 11.59 P.M., on D2L; ***2nd Readings-based Critical Film Analysis Paper Due:** Any time before or by 11.59 P.M., Sunday, November 3rd on D2L

1 Imaginary Conversation with a Director/Actress/Actor:

You can choose any film from the class or from your own viewing experience. You will generate an imaginary conversation with either the director of the film or an actress or actor in the film about the film/role or across the corpus of work through 5 questions. Experimenting with AI tools for answers is encouraged but not required. The conversation has to pertain to the film and not to their personal lives. Instructions will be provided. Total Possible Points: 10 Points; ***Due:** Anytime before or by Monday, November 25th, 11.59 P.M. on D2L

Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down:

You will choose a film from your viewing experience. You will do an appr. 5 mt. in-class presentation either praising or panning the film for its representation of identity---race or ethnicity/class/gender/sexuality/nationality/age/ability. Or you can focus on a character. No spoiler alerts please! This is a rolling assignment where appr. 3-4 students will be assigned to a class session throughout the semester except on the day of the Mid-Term exam. It is an individual assignment. You are welcome to screen a brief clip from the film. Instructions will be provided. Total Possible Points: 10 Points; ***Scheduled** between Monday, October 21st to Monday, November 25th In-Class

Mid-Term Exam:

You will answer 2 short answer questions based on assigned readings. There will also be a Match the Following and Agree/Disagree section based on readings covered till the Mid-Term Exam day. There will be 1 open-ended creative question. A study guide will be provided and we will have an in-class review session during the class prior to the exam day. Total Possible Points: 25 Points; ***Due:** Monday, October 14th, In-Class

Final Paper OR Paper & Creative Project:

You can do a 3 double-spaced paper using 3 course/concepts comparing & contrasting 2 films from the same genre using analytical and critical writing. Or you can do a shorter paper of 2 double-spaced pages in length and a creative project proposal such as a PowerPoint slides deck or a YouTube uploadable artifact or a digital installation like a montage on any platform based on course concepts/theories. Both films can be from your viewing experience or 1 of them can be and the other from screened films. Instructions will be provided. Total Possible Points: 25 Points; ***Due date TBA; to be submitted on D2L**

Film Festival—parts I and II:

Towards the end of the semester, 2 class periods will be allocated for a Film Festival divided into two sequences. As a class we will select genres and 1 exemplar that represent each genre. We will have a brief

introduction to the film festival and then screen each film. There will be brief graded activities designed around the Film Festival sequences. Film Festival scheduled for Monday, November 25th and Monday, December 2nd In-class

Course Policies:

Attendance:

You are allowed 1 unexcused absence during the semester. Otherwise attendance is mandatory as films will be screened for assignments and class lectures may go beyond the readings. Absences beyond the 1 allowed absence will result in a cumulative 2-point deduction. Emergencies and religious holidays as well as attendance at university-permitted events such as sports will be excused—but please notify me via email ahead of time or in the prior class in person if you can. It is your responsibility to make up work missed as soon as possible by coming to my office preferably during office hours or through a peer. And yes, every class is important—so the question “did I miss anything answered” is redundant.

Punctuality:

For Class:

Since films will be screened in class and presentations will occur, punctuality is required. You are allowed to be late up to 5 mts. after class begins 2 times during the semester. Subsequently each tardy show up will result in a cumulative 2-point deduction. If you are going to be late by 5 mts. beyond the allowed 2 times because of classes in a building across campus communicate that to me as soon as possible when classes start. Should emergencies occur on a class day that necessitates tardy show up, email me as soon as you can.

For Submission of Assignments:

On time submissions of assignments is crucial for grading and to honor students who do so. Since most of your submissions will be through D2L you have considerable latitude in submitting assignments on the required day/date. You are allowed to submit 1 written assignment by the following day without penalty. Subsequent to that I will deduct half the total possible points for late submissions if within the week or by the weekend depending on the required date/day. Assignments submitted the week after the required date/day will result in an F. Mid-Term exam cannot be made up. Similarly, the Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down assignment cannot be made up. Emergencies need to be communicated to me in a timely manner should they interfere with timely submission of assignments.

Classroom Conduct:

We live in a society and culture where difference either makes the world go around or not! I have selected films that speak to different audiences and hope you will communicate with me if you find the content offensive. The film choices are not meant to offend—however I realize issue and feelings may come up that may go against your sensibilities and sensitivities. In like manner, if and when we have discussions and activities, please honor your fellow classmates who may come from a different life path than you. You do not have to agree; however, you respectfully disagree. Disruptive behaviors such as *ad hominem* attacks, silencing your peers, and offensive language such as profanities and threatening non-verbal behaviors will not be tolerated and can result in me requiring you to leave the classroom and reporting such behavior to university authorities. Practice empathy—meaning put yourself in another person’s shoes—in this case your fellow classmates—and ask yourself if such behavior is acceptable to you before engaging in it.

Academic Honesty/ Integrity:

Academic honesty/integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Plagiarism:

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (2) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. ***Any writing that is not the work of you or your group members is plagiarism. *Students in this course are expected to adhere to the MSU Student Honor Code.** Do note that D2L comes with a plagiarism detection tool.

By way of advice, do not wait till the last minute as this might increase the chances to cheat or plagiarize. Study. Look to me for guidance on assignments and the mid-term exam.

Technology Use & Abuse:

In-Class Use of Devices:

I will permit use of mobile devices such as mobile phones and tablets if you use them for in-class research-related activities and/or for the oral presentation assignment if you need to consult an outline and/or if you need to look up an uploaded file or materials on D2L and/or assigned readings. Laptops can be used for note taking during lectures. However, if I find you surfing the net for entertainment/social media and/or emailing/texting your personal circle or working on assignments for other classes, I will mark you down. As far as the oral presentation assignment, university policy prohibits you from connecting your personal laptop to the podium in the classroom for projection purposes. So, either save your presentation to OneDrive or email it to yourself as a downloadable attachment or best—save it on a flash drive/thumb drive/USB port.

AI such as Chat GPT:

The use of generative AI is not permitted in this course; therefore, any use of AI tools for work in this class may be considered a violation of Texas Tech's Academic Integrity policy and the Student Code of Conduct since the work is not your own. The use of unauthorized AI tools will result in referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Disability Accommodations:

Please inform me on day 1 of class if you are a student with a disability and need accommodation in this class. Students with a disability must be registered with Disability Support Services before classroom accommodation can be provided. MSU provides students with documented disabilities academic accommodation (Disability Support Services, Clark Student Center, Room 168).

Campus Carry:

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at [Campus Carry Rules/Policies](#).

Campus Resources for Academic Success and Personal Wellbeing:

Tutoring Services:

Tutoring and Academic Support Services (TASP) Learning Center (TLC) located on the first floor of the Moffett Library provides tutoring free of charge to students. I emphasize writing related tutoring for this class. <https://msutexas.edu/academics/tasp/on-campus.php>

Library Assistance:

The Moffett Library is offering walking tours first week of classes and they have an Ask a Librarian chat function. Please spend some time navigating the site for their resources. <https://msutexas.edu/library/>

IT & D2L Support:

Campus Information Technology support is available via the [MSU Texas IT Webpage](#).

Support for D2L is available via [MSU Texas Student Resource Webpage](#).

Wellbeing:

Wellness related resources information is available via [MSU Texas Wellness Center Webpage](#).

Counseling services information can be found at [MSU Texas Counseling Webpage](#).

**It is my sole discretion to make alterations to the syllabus in your favor*

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Note: some film selections could change due to a variety of circumstances

WEEK 1; MONDAY, AUGUST 26th

Introductions

Syllabus Walk Through

Preparatory Videos

WEEK 2; MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2nd

Labor Day Holiday—No class

WEEK 3, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9th

- Lecture based on assigned reading: Chapter 1: A Brief History of Cinema

- Screening of *Roman Holiday*
- ***Film Review Paper due:** Anytime before or by 11.59 P.M., Monday, on D2L

WEEK 4, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16th

- Lecture based on assigned reading: Chapter 2: How to Watch a Movie
- Screening of *Fistful of Dollars*

WEEK 5, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23rd

- Lecture based on assigned reading: Chapter 3: Mise-en-Scene
- Screening of a *Batman* film
- ***1st Readings-based Critical Film Analysis Paper due:** Any time before or by 11.59 P.M., Sunday, SEPTEMBER 29th on D2L

WEEK 6, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th

- Lecture based on assigned reading: Chapter 4: Narrative
- Screening of *Wall Street*

WEEK 7, MONDAY, OCTOBER 7th

- Lecture based on assigned reading: Chapter 5: Cinematography
- Screening of *Breakfast Club*
- Mid-Term Exam Review Session

WEEK 8, MONDAY, OCTOBER 14th

- ***MID-TERM EXAM—IN-CLASS**

WEEK 9, MONDAY, OCTOBER 21st

- Lecture based on assigned reading: Chapter 6: Editing
- Screening of *Terminator II*
- ***Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down assignment begins**

WEEK 10, MONDAY, OCTOBER 28th

- Lecture based on assigned reading: Chapter 7: Sound
- Screening of *Bend it Like Beckham*
- ***Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down assignment continues**

- ***2nd Readings-based Critical Film Analysis due:** Any time before or by 11.59 P.M. Sunday. November 3rd on D2L

WEEK 11, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4th

- Lecture based on assigned reading: Chapter 8: Acting
- Screening of *Joy Luck Club*
- ***Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down assignment continues**

WEEK 12, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11th

- Lecture based on assigned reading: Chapter 9: Women in Cinema
- Screening of *Thelma and Louise*
- ***Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down assignment continues**

WEEK 13, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18th

- Lecture based on assigned reading: Chapter 10: African-Americans in Cinema
- Screening of *King Richard*
- ***Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down assignment continues**

WEEK 14, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25th

- Lecture based on assigned reading: Supplemental Reading (TBD)
- FILM FESTIVAL, part I
- ***Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down assignment concludes**
- **Imaginary Convo assignment due before or by 11.59 P.M. on D2L**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27th to SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1st---THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

WEEK 15, MONDAY, DECEMBER 2nd

FILM FESTIVAL—part II (last class session)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7th —FINALS BEGIN

- Final Paper/Paper & Creative Project due during Finals Week—deadline TBA