



## **Course Syllabus: Appreciation of Film with Learning Community**

**College of Fine Arts**

MCOM 2213 Section L10

Fall 2019 Thursday, 3:30-6:20PM, FA D202

### Contact Information

Instructor: Prof. Christopher P. D'Amico, M.S.

Office: Fain College B 108

Office hours: Tuesday 2:00-5:00PM, Thursday 2:00-3:00PM, Friday 10:00-11:00AM

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### **Course Description**

This class will introduce students to the study of film and its relationship to society, culture, and technology. Understanding film requires reading it from a number of perspectives: as a technology, as a business, as entertainment, as art, and perhaps most importantly, as a socio-cultural artifact which, to some extent, reflects the cultural conditions under which it is produced and received. Towards that end, the class will introduce and explore a wide variety of issues related to the study of film: production, distribution, reception, aspects of film form and style, genre, auteur theory, realism, and formalism. The class will also introduce broader concepts of ideology and representation as theorized within cultural studies, and provide an overview of film history in relation to issues of human diversity. Students will begin to develop the necessary skills for analyzing film form and meaning in relation to the larger spheres of culture and ideology.

*Students who are unwilling to explore issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality within an educational framework should consider enrolling in another class.*

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### **Textbook**

Giannetti. *Understanding Movies*: 14<sup>th</sup> Ed. **ISBN**: 9780134492087.

Note: The textbook is your responsibility. You are to keep up with the readings in the textbook as we progress through the course. You do not need to bring the text to class, but if you wish to have it and use it during class that is your call. Be prepared to walk into our classroom ready to discuss what you have previously read.

Handouts will be utilized in our course as well. It is your responsibility to keep track of those handouts. They are available on D2L.

### **Learning Community**

Appreciation of Film, MCOM 2213-L10, is partnered in a Learning Community with Introduction to Mass Communication, MCOM 1233-L10. Because you will be attending both classes with the same people, you will have an increased opportunity to make connections and friends with each other and help each other succeed, individually and as team members.

Learning community benefits

- Research shows that students in learning communities:
  - Have a higher GPA than students not in learning communities
  - Are more connected to their school and classmates
  - Stay in college and have a lower drop out rate
  - Feel more comfortable in college and closer to faculty
  - Feel more satisfied in their courses

([http://web.monroecc.edu/mnolan/stories/storyReader\\$15](http://web.monroecc.edu/mnolan/stories/storyReader$15))

### **Drop policy:**

Because these courses are linked and must be taken together, if you decide to drop one of these classes, you will be required to drop both of them. Dropping these courses could have significant impact on your student record and financial aid. It is also recommended, prior to dropping, you consult with the Financial Aid Office.

Comments from students who have taken a course like this one:

- "This is a great way to start college."
- "This helped me to adjust to college."
- "I got closer to my classmates and professors. This was a great experience." ([http://web.monroecc.edu/mnolan/stories/storyReader\\$13](http://web.monroecc.edu/mnolan/stories/storyReader$13))
- "It was an amazing experience. I think this is a great way to learn and I would absolutely recommend it to everyone." (<https://blog.frontrange.edu/2013/11/13/what-is-a-learningcommunity/>)
- "Don't be afraid to ask questions. That is the way learning is done in this class."

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- "Do not hesitate to talk and meet other students in and out of class. They understand things you don't, and vice versa."
- "I wish I had asked more questions and been more engaged in group discussions from the start."
- "Do not let yourself feel discouraged. The teacher and your classmates can and will help you."
- "Feel free to ask a question ... even if you think it is a stupid question."
- "This format is much more fun and less intimidating than a lecture."
- "This method helped me learn more and remember more than I thought possible."

### **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

Clear cases of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the course. Plagiarism is (1) the use of source material of other persons (either published, including the Internet) without following the accepted techniques of giving credit or (2) the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given. If a student in the class is caught plagiarizing, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The Student Creed developed and adopted by the MSU Student Government reinforces the discouragement of plagiarism and other unethical behaviors. The first statement of the Creed reads, "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so." Plagiarism is lying cheating and stealing.

### **Grading**

Assignments	Points
Paper # 1	10
Paper # 2	10
Midterm Exam	15
Discussion Board (20/20)	40
Final Exam	25
Total Points	100

Grades will be determined on as follows: A, B, C, D, and F.

### **Exams**

There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. Both exams will include "objective" questions. All course material (i.e. lectures, class exercises, and readings) will be covered in these exams.

### **Message Board Posts**

Utilizing our D2L message board, you will be posting weekly online. I will post a question/prompt weekly after/before our class on Wednesday. It is your responsibility to make an initial post by Friday at 5:00PM responding to my post. Then to keep our conversations going outside of the classroom, you will respond to two (2) other classmates' initial posts by Sunday at 12:00PM (noon). It is not about whether you agree or disagree about an idea or statement, rather you should take a critical look and respond accordingly. You should have a lively debate, discussion and/or pose follow-up queries. You are NOT to comment on the same classmate(s) more than once. This will ensure that the reaction posts are inclusive and not exclusionary.

### **Requirements All Submitted Work**

All work submitted in this course should be prepared according to the following guidelines and submitted on D2L. 1) Papers must be typed, double-spaced in 12-point font in Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins. 2) Pages must be numbered in the top, right-hand corner of each page. 3) Papers should have a cover page with a title, your name, course identifier, and date. 4) Papers must include accurate and complete in text citations and a complete reference list. You should follow the guidelines of the MLA or APA style manual.

### **Revision Policy**

I believe all work is in a constant process of revision. Therefore, I invite and encourage you to rework your assignments. A revision, however, means more than just changing some grammar errors and typos. It requires you to rethink, recognize and rewrite your work. As a rule of thumb, I never drop your grade based upon a revision. The lowest grade you will receive is the original grade. There is only a one (1) week window of opportunity for you to revise and resubmit (Example- If I hand back a paper on Thursday, then the revision is due the following Thursday.)

### **Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

### **Attendance**

Successful completion of the course requires regular class attendance at lectures and active participation in class discussions and projects. More than two (2) absences will result in a fifteen (15)-point deduction from your grade. On the fourth (4) absence from the class, you will fail the course.

If you have to miss a class or a deadline for any reason, please contact me IN ADVANCE to let me know. CONTACTING ME IN ADVANCE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY EXCUSE AN ABSENCE, but it is a lot better than calling after the

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fact. If you fail to contact me before the next class period to explain an absence, it will be very difficult for me to excuse the absence. Please note that work, non-emergency medical and dental appointments, hangovers, intramural games, visitors from out of town, fixing your roommate's computer, fraternity/sorority events, arguments with boyfriends/girlfriends and studying for other classes do NOT constitute excused absences.

### **Missed Assignments Policy**

If you miss any assignments without being excused, you will fail the course. I reserve the right to determine whether an absence will be excused. In-class assignments may be excused at my discretion; however, all outside assignments must be completed within a reasonable time frame after your absence — no exceptions. In addition, I reserve the right to determine what, exactly, is a "reasonable time frame." In sum: This is a zero-tolerance policy. I have no time or patience for those who are not going to take this class seriously; thus, "three strikes and you're out" does not apply. "ONE strike and you're out" is more applicable. Some past students have flunked the course for this reason. In any case, I tend to be cynical about making up missed assignments, but if you have a legitimate problem, alternate arrangements can be made at my discretion. If you cannot make it a priority to complete every assignment, on time, please drop now so another student, who is more serious, can have your spot. By accepting this syllabus and remaining enrolled in this course, you are indicating that you understand the Missed Assignments Policy.

### **Sports Teams**

Individuals on sports teams, please see me with a copy of your schedule (games and practices) so we can make accommodations for those missing classes. This however must be initiated and followed through by the athlete not the instructor's responsibility.

### **Professional Conduct**

I expect common courtesy and civility: Do not speak when someone else is talking (that includes your instructor!). I appreciate a sense of humor, but you should know when to get serious. Offensive comments directed towards the instructor or other students are not appropriate. Inappropriate behavior will bring down your final grade at the discretion of the instructor. If for any reason you need to leave the classroom while in session, please be considerate to the rest of the class and do it in a quiet non-disruptive manner! D2L use is required for this course - all PowerPoints, handouts, syllabus, etc.. In addition, when an exam/quiz is given, it must be completed during the class it is given. No makeup exams or pre/post arrangements are made. Only documented and verified excused absences, (as supplied by the Office of the Provost) will be given an opportunity for any make up.

### **Missed Class**

It is your responsibility to find out what you missed in the event of absence from class. I recommend befriending another classmate and exchange contact information so you can find out what you missed and not fall behind schedule.

### **Religious Obligations**

Please notify the instructor of any religious obligations that might conflict with our class schedule at the beginning of the semester.

### **Electronic Devices**

No cell phones, laptops, headphones, music, computer games, nor texting/IMing/e-mail/camera devices of any description are to be used during class: ZERO TOLERANCE. This means all aforementioned devices (and presently unknown versions of such) are to be turned off and out of your sight and mind. In any case, I reserve the right to ask you to leave immediately or to embarrass you mercilessly if your beepers/phones/pagers/etc. make noise during class. If cell phones become more than a one-time problem, I reserve the right to lower your final semester grade and/or take further disciplinary actions.

### **Writing Center**

Begin drafting papers as early as possible and take advantage of the MSU Writing Center, located off the 2nd floor atrium of Prothro-Yeager! Tutoring is available Monday through Thursday from 9am to 4pm; you can also find a tutor at the satellite location in Moffett Library Honors Lounge, Sunday and Thursday from 6pm to 9pm. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide support and feedback at every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading.

### **Privacy**

Federal privacy law prohibits me from releasing information about students to certain parties outside of the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases I will not discuss your academic progress or other matters with your parents. Please do not have them call me. Regardless of these important legal considerations, it is my general policy to communicate with the students, not their parents, even when a student has signed a consent form. College students are adults and are expected to behave accordingly.

### **Senior Portfolio Requirement**

Please note that all mass communication majors are required to submit a portfolio as part of their Internship course (Internship is a prerequisite to Senior Production). This requirement is a part of MSU's reaccreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and is non negotiable. Through the portfolio, students are required to demonstrate communication competence through the written word and visual communication; two examples of each competency are required. As you go through this and other classes, you are responsible for saving course work that could be included in your senior portfolio. Please see me, your adviser, the department chair or any mass communication faculty member for handouts with more information ("Mass Communication Portfolio Competencies" and "Mass Communication Portfolio FAQ"). These handouts are also available on our department web page:

<http://finearts.msutexas.edu/masscomm/>.

### **Services for Students With Disabilities**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to <http://www.msutexas.edu/student-life/disability>.

College Policies Refer to: Campus Carry Rules and Policies

### **Notice**

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

**Course Schedule**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Activities/Assignments/Exams</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Week 1 8/29	<p><b>Class:</b> What is this course about?                      Expectations?                      Screening: <i>Black Mirror</i></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b>                      Initial Post and Reaction Posts                      Read: Chapters 1 &amp; 12</p>	Initial Post and Reaction Posts
Week 2 9/5	<p><b>Class:</b>                      Compare/Contrast Paper Assigned</p> <p>Narrative and Cinematography  <i>Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp;</i></p> <p><i>Screening</i>  <u><i>Screening: Citizen Kane (1941)</i></u></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b>                      Work on Compare and Contrast                      Paper                      Initial Post and Reaction Posts                      Read: Chapter 6</p>	Initial Post and Reaction Posts
Week 3 9/12	<p><b>Class:</b> Chapter 6: Acting and Star                      Audiences                      Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp;                      Screening</p> <p><u><i>Screening: His Girl Friday (1940)</i></u></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b>                      Work on: Compare and Contrast                      Paper                      Initial Post and Reaction Posts                      Read: Chapter 5</p>	Initial Post and Reaction Posts



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<b>Week</b>	<b>Activities/Assignments/Exams</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Week 4 9/19	<p><b>Class:</b> Chapter 5: Sound <i>Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp; Screening</i></p> <p><u><i>Screening: Enter the Void (2009)</i></u></p> <p><b>Read:</b> Chapter 4: Editing</p>	<p>Compare and Contrast Paper Due 9/19</p> <p>Initial Post and Reaction Posts</p>
Week 5 9/26	<p><b>Class:</b> Chapter 4: Editing <i>Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp; Screening</i></p> <p><u><i>Screening: City of God (2002)</i></u></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Study for Midterm Read: Chapter 7: Dramatization</p>	<p>Initial Post and Reaction Posts</p>
Week 6 10/3	<p><b>Class:</b> Midterm Exam</p>	
Week 7 10/10	<p><b>Class:</b> Chapter 8: Story <i>Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp; Screening</i></p> <p><u><i>Screening: Moonlight (2016)</i></u></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Read: Chapter 9: Writing</p>	<p>Initial Post and Reaction Posts</p>
Week 8 10/17	<p>Class: Genre Paper Assigned Chapter 9: Writing</p> <p><i>Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp; Screening</i></p> <p><u><i>Screening: Rear Window (1954)</i></u></p> <p>Assignment: Work on Genre Paper Read: Chapter 10</p>	<p>Initial Post and Reaction Posts</p>
Week 9 10/24	<p><b>Class:</b> Chapter 10: Ideology Representation of Gender and Sexuality <i>Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp; Screening</i></p> <p><u><i>Screening: Elle (2016)</i></u></p>	<p>Initial Post and Reaction Posts</p>

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<b>Week</b>	<b>Activities/Assignments/Exams</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Week 10 10/31	<p><b>Class:</b> Representation of Race and Social Contexts</p> <p>Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp; Screening</p> <p><u>Screening: Dear White People (2014)</u></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Work on Genre Paper Read: Chapter 2: Mise En Scene</p>	Initial Post and Reaction Posts
Week 11 11/7	<p><b>Class:</b> Chapter 2: Mise en Scene &amp; Authorship</p> <p>Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp; Screening</p> <p><u>Screening: The Graduate (1967)</u></p>	Initial Post and Reaction Posts
Week 12 11/14	<p><b>Class:</b> Documentary</p> <p>Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp; Screening</p> <p><u>Screening: Tropic of Cancer (1967)</u></p>	Genre Paper Due 11/14  Initial Post and Reaction Posts
Week 13 11/21	<p>Representation of Class</p> <p>Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp; Screening</p> <p><u>Screening: Rich Hill (2014)</u></p>	Initial Post and Reaction Posts
Week 14 11/28	Thanksgiving Break No Class	
Week 15 12/5	<p><b>Class:</b> Adaptations</p> <p>Review, Lecture, Discussion &amp; Screening</p> <p><u>Screening: Won't You Be My Neighbor? (2018)</u></p>	Initial Post and Reaction Posts

**Final Exam: December 10<sup>th</sup> 3:30PM, Tuesday**