

# Gangsters, Mobsters, and Molls: Organized Crime in the Movies

Department of History

## College of Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences

# HIST 4933-202

MWF: 11:00-11:50 A.M.

# Spring 2019

## Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Whitney Snow

Office: OD 223

Office hours: MWF 10:00-11:00 A.M.; 12:00-1:00 P.M.; and R 8:00-noon; and by appointment

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## Course Description

This course will explore the history of organized crime in twentieth-century American history and its representations in film. Prevalent myths and stereotypes will be analyzed as will the mass popularity of mafia-themed movies and television shows. The major themes will be immigration, cultural identity, localism verses globalism, and popular culture.

## Textbooks

## Adler, Tim. *Hollywood and the Mob: Movies, Mafia, Sex & Death*. Bloomsbury,

## 1st edition, 2007.

Grieveson, Lee and Esther Sonnet, et al. *Mob Culture: Hidden Histories of the*

*American Gangster Film*. Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Munby, Jonathan. *Public Enemies, Public Heroes: Screening the Gangster from*

*Little Caesar to Touch of Evil*. University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Renga, Dana. *Mafia Movies: A Reader*. University of Toronto Press, 2011.

Schumacher, Geoff. *Sun, Sin & Suburbia: The History of Modern Las Vegas*.

University of Nevada Press, 2015.

Silver, Alain and James Ursini, eds. *Gangster Film Reader*. Pompton Plains, NJ:

Limelight Editions, 2007.

## Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook 2017-18](https://mwsu.edu/Assets/documents/student-life/student-handbook-2017-18.pdf)

## 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Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual’s to whom credit is given).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.

## Grading

| Assignments | Points |
| --- | --- |
| Book Review #1 | 15% |
| Book Review #2 | 15% |
| Film Critique #1 | 10% |
| Film Critique #2 | 10% |
| Midterm | 25% |
| Final | 25% |

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

| Grade | Points |
| --- | --- |
| A | 90-100 |
| B | 80-89 |
| C | 70-79 |
| D | 60-69 |
| F | 0-59 |

## Exams

\*This course includes two exams (a midterm and a final) which will consist of six identification terms and one essay.

\*Students are expected to bring a bluebook for each exam.

\*Students must use a blue or black pen.

\*Students will be given the entire 50 minutes for each exam. If a student leaves the classroom during testing, he/she must turn in his/her exam and forfeits the remainder of time.

## Book Reviews

\*Students will be expected to select two books from a list of approved options (posted on D2L) and writing a book review on each.

\*The book review must be typed, in 12-point font, Times New Roman, and double spaced. The margins should be 1 inch on the top and bottom and 1.25 inches on the left and right.

\*More in-depth instructions and samples are posted on D2L.

## Movie Critiques

\*Students are expected to write two critiques of movies chosen from an instructor-approved list provided on D2L.

\*The movie critique must be typed, in 12-point font, Times New Roman and double spaced. The margins should be 1 inch on the top and bottom and 1.25 on the left and right.

**Weekly Pass Papers**

\*Each week, students are expected to have watched the assigned movie before coming to class. Be sure to have a typed, two-page response to that movie. You may be asked to share it during class before turning it. These will be Pass/Fail.

## Extra Credit

\*No extra credit assignments will be accepted, but bonus points may be offered for attending instructor-specified events on campus.

\*Students are expected to be **ON TIME!!!** If an extra credit event is at 5:00 PM, show up before 5:00 PM. If you are going to be late, don’t come. For example, in the past, the instructor offered bonus points to attend a campus speaker whose talk started at 5:00 PM. Campus talks usually last around 40 minutes, but in this particular case, the speaker ran short and ended at 5:20 PM. One student entered the room at 5:20 PM and still expected to sign the sign-in-sheet with the logic being that at least she bothered to show up and it wasn’t her fault that the talk was a little short. However, the length of the speaker’s talk is a non-issue. What mattered was being prompt and respectful enough to show up on time with a willingness to listen to and learn from the speaker. This student, having shown up 20 minutes late, had missed the entirety of the speaker’s talk and thus, was not given the bonus points. Note, even if the speech had lasted 40 minutes, this student would still have missed half of it and would still have been denied the bonus points.

\*The instructor understands that not all students will be able to attend all extra credit events but don’t worry. There will be several opportunities throughout the semester and surely you will be able to attend at least one.

\*If students attend an extra credit event be it Moffett Movie Madness or a campus speaker, the instructor expects them to pay attention. All too often, she has seen students attend such events and spend the entirety of the movie or speech with earbuds in their ears and eyes locked on their cell phone. Such behavior is not only inappropriate and rude, reflecting poorly on our university to visiting speakers, but disqualifies students from bonus points.

\* Students will be asked to sign-in at the beginning of each extra credit event. Students will also be asked to sign-out at the end of each extra credit event. In order to receive the bonus points, students must sign-in and sign-out.

\*When it comes to the sign-in-sheet and sign-out sheet, students are ***NOT*** allowed to sign for friends. Consecutive signatures in the same handwriting will be discounted.

## Make Up Work/Tests

Students who miss class due to university-related activities will be able to make up exams and writing assignments. In cases of a doctor’s excuse and/or a family death, students will be able to make up exams and writing assignments.

**Office Hours**

If the door is closed during the instructor’s appointed office hours, it doesn’t mean she is not there. ***Just knock!*** If the instructor steps out for any reason, she will place a post-it note on the door. It will indicate an estimated time of return. If the instructor’s office hours conflict with your schedule, feel free to see her after class or email her in regards to making an appointment.

**Email**

\*Please send all emails to this email address: [whitney.snow@msutexas.edu](mailto:whitney.snow@msutexas.edu); emails sent to this address will be answered

\*Do ***NOT*** send emails through D2L; they will not be answered

## Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes:January 14-16.

Deadline to file for graduation: February 18

Last Day to drop with a grade of “W:” March 25

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](https://mwsu.edu/student-life/development/learning/index)

## 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](https://d2l.mwsu.edu/) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

## Attendance

\*While attendance is not part of your grade, it is nevertheless expected and will be taken into consideration if a student is close between letter grades. Official university absences will be excused. A student with excessive unexcused absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor.

\*The instructor will not give out notes under any circumstances. Students are responsible for all missed information.

\*If students are absent when graded exams/assignments are returned, they should pick them up after the next class attended or during the instructor’s office hours.

\*If a student makes up exams/assignments, it is his/her responsibility to pick up the graded exams/assignments either after the next class attended or during the instructor’s office hours.

\*Even though your grades are posted on D2L, actually looking at your graded movie critique, writing assignments, and exams helps identify ways to improve your academic performance so please be sure to collect each!!!

## Instructor Class Policies

\*Attendance requires more than being present in class. It means showing up prepared; contributing insightful information and appropriate questions to class discussions; and exhibiting respect for classmates and the instructor.

\*Cell phones should be on silent and put away during class. If seen surfing, texting, and playing games on a phone, students may be asked to leave the classroom. During exams, students seen with a phone in their hands and/or on their desks will have their bluebook confiscated and will not be able to complete said exam.

\*Smart watches are not allowed in class on days of exams. If a student is seen looking at his/her smartwatch during the midterm or final, he/she will have their bluebook confiscated.

\*Earbuds will not be tolerated and if a student is seen wearing earbuds in class, he/she may be asked to leave the classroom.

\*Laptops are a privilege and not a right. Students are welcome to use laptops to take notes. However, if they are seen using the laptop for a non-class-related purpose, students will be given a verbal warning. This warning will be that a repeat offense will mean they are no longer welcome to bring a laptop to class. If this persists, the offending student may be asked to leave the classroom.

## Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classeseach semester.

## Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

## 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 [Disability Support Services](http://www.mwsu.edu/student-life/disability).

## College Policies

### Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](https://mwsu.edu/campus-carry/rules-policies)

## Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

## Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

## Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](http://catalog.mwsu.edu/content.php?catoid=14&navoid=655#Appeal_of_Course_Grade)

## Notice

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

## Course Schedule:

| Week or Module | Readings and other Assignments |
| --- | --- |
| **Week 1**  January 14  January 16  January 18 | *Little Caesar* (1931) and *Scarface* (1932)  \*Intro to Class  \*Munby, *Screening Crime*, 1-18  Silver, *Little Caesar*, 47-64  \*Renga, Chapter 3; Silver, *Scarface*, 19-29 |
| **Week 2**  MLK Day  January 23  January 25 | *The Godfather* (1972)  **\*Holiday**  \*Renga, *Setting the Scene*, 3-32  \*Silver, *All in the Family: The Godfather Saga*,107-118; and Silver, *A Study in Ambiguity*, 165-182 |
| **Week 3**  January 28  January 30  February 1 | *Mobsters* (1991)  \*Grieveson, *Why Boys Go Wrong*, 41-66; and 207-237  \*Munby, *The Gangster’s Silent Backdrop*, 19-38  \*Munby, *The Enemy Goes Public*, 39-65 |
| **Week 4**  February 4  February 6  February 8 | *Mean Streets* (1973)  \*Renga, Chapter 7; and Silver, *Iconography of the Gangster Film*, 39-46  \*Munby, *Manhattan Melodrama’s*, 66-114  **\*Film Critique #1 Due** |
| **Week 5**  February 11  February 13  February 15 | *The Brotherhood* (1968)  \*Renga, Chapter 5; and Silver, *Big Funerals*, 85-96  \*Munby, *Crime, Inc.*, 115-143  \*Munby, *Screening Crime*, 144-185 |
| **Week 6**  February 18  February 20  February 22 | *The Untouchables* (1987)  \*Renga, Chapter 4; and Silver, *The Gangster Film*, 29-38  \*Renga, Chapter 10; and Silver, *Post Code*, 97-106  **\*Book Review #1 Due** |
| **Week 7**  February 25  February 27  March 1 | *Hoodlum* (1997)  \*Grieveson, *The Underworld Films*, 263-281  \*Grieveson, *Walking the Streets*, 281-300  **\*Midterm** |
| **Week 8**  March 4  March 6  March 8 | *Bugsy* (1991)  \*Grieveson, *Gang Busters*, 67-90  \*Schumacher, Chapter 1-6  \*Schumacher, Chapters 7-12 |
| **Week 9**  March 11  March 13  March 15 | *Casino* (1995)  \*Adler, Chapters 1-4  \*Adler, Chapters 5-9  \*Adler, Chapters 10-13 |
| Week 10  **Spring Break** |  |
| **Week 11**  March 25  March 27  March 29 | *Donnie Brasco* (1997)  \*Renga, Chapter 15; and Silver, *The Gangster as Tragic Hero*, 11-18  \*Silver, *The Gangster According to Aldrich*, 155-164  \*Silver, *De* Palma’s Postmodern *Scarface*, 183-194 |
| **Week 12**  April 1  April 3  April 5 | *The Funeral* (1996)  Renga, Chapter 14; and *Billy Bathgate* (1991)  *Billy Bathgate* (1991)  *Billy Bathgate* (1991) contd; and **Book Review #2** **Due** |
| **Week 13**  April 8  April 10  April 12 | *GoodFellas* (1990)  \*Renga, Chapter 12  \*Renga, Chapter 11; and Silver, *The Gangster & Film Noir*, 291-324  \*Silver, *Hits, Whacks, and Smokes*, 325-342 |
| **Week 14**  April 15  April 17  April 19 | *Married to the Mob* (1988)  \*Grieveson, *Ladies Love Brutes*, 93-119; and Silver, A New Kind of Girl, 277-290  \*Grieveson, *Mother Barker*, 146-162  \*Grieveson, *A Gunsel is Being Beaten*, 120-145 |
| **Week 15**  April 22  April 24  April 26 | *Prizzi’s Honor* (1985)  \*Renga, Chapter 9; and Silver, *Yoked Together by Violence*, 195-208  \*Grieveson, *Good Evening Gentlemen*, 163-184  **\*Film Critique #2 Due** |
| **Week 16**  April 29  May 1  May 3 | *Gotti* (2018)  \*Silver, *Family Values and Feudal Codes*, 381-406  \*Renga, Chapter 17; and Grieveson, *Waddaya Lookin’ At*, 185-204  \*Renga, Chapter 18; and Silver, *Reforming Hollywood Gangsters*, 259-276 |

**Final Exam**: Monday, May 6, 10:30-12:30