



Course Syllabus: Appreciation of Film College of Fine Arts
MCOM-2213-102
Fall 2026 Mondays, 6:00 - 8:50PM, FA C111

Contact Information

Instructor: Jackie McCartney, Ed.D.

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NOTE: For all e-mail correspondence, please make the subject line look like this:
Appreciation of Film: Subject of Message

If you send an email to me, treat it as a professional means of communication. This means it should include a salutation, correct punctuation, and a proper closing.

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.

Instructional Materials

We will not utilize a textbook.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program. 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.

Teaching and Learning Philosophy

Students' responsibility: Take responsibility for your own learning and take advantage of in- and out-of-classroom opportunities

Professor's (facilitator's) responsibility: Provide students with meaningful learning opportunities in the classroom and through assignments

Drop policy

Dropping this course could have a *significant* impact on your student record and financial aid. It is also recommended, prior to dropping, you consult with the Financial Aid Office.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook 2025-26](#)

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.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Grading

Final grades will be based on two papers, discussion boards posts and responses, a midterm, and a final exam. You should take note that you will be required to do a lot of writing over the course of the semester, and the quality of your writing will be a factor in your final grade. You will also be required to think critically about the issues being discussed and form coherent, defensible positions.

Final grades will be based on the following:

Assignments	Percent
Scene Analysis Essay 2-3 pages	20%
Midterm Exam (October 5)	20%
Comparative Film Essay 4-5 pages	20%
Final (December 7)	20%
Journal	20%
Total Points	100%

Grade	Points
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	Less than 60%

Class Participation and Attendance

Because abundant lecturing tends to be counterproductive for both you and me, I try to include activities that are more interesting than straight lecture, such as discussions, presentations, field trips, guest speakers, etc. The success of this format depends on your willingness to **actively participate** in class discussions and other activities.

Attendance and participation are critical to your success. Another way to describe this is professionalism. **Professionalism** means that you're here, ready to engage in new opportunities.

The college learning environment is a professional environment. It is similar in many ways to a professional work environment. You are expected to demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviors; including, but not limited to, arriving on time, being prepared, actively participating, communicating respectfully, and staying for the full class period. If you miss class, you miss the chance to participate in your education and the education of others in class. Your peers are counting on you to be in class and participate.

If you must miss class, please let me know BEFORE the class period that you will miss. You may notify me by e-mail. An absence may be excused at my discretion in accordance with university policy if you provide documentation of the reason for your absence. When you have an acceptable excuse, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and arranging to make it up with the instructor. Missed work must be made up within one week of when you return to class, or you will receive a zero.

Plan carefully regarding appointments and/or work schedules to avoid missing class. Any personal emergencies that arise will be dealt with on an individual basis. Do not assume you will be allowed to make up assignments missed during an unexcused absence. If you MISS CLASS, it is **YOUR** responsibility to find out what you missed.

If you miss more than two classes, or if you are habitually late or leave early, **your final grade may be lowered by 1/3 letter grade for each instance beyond one absence**. Two tardies = one absence. One minute to 19 minutes late = one tardy. Twenty minutes or more late = one absence. Leaving before class is dismissed = one absence. After four absences or tardies, you are subject to being dropped from the course with a grade of "F."

I reserve the right to determine what, exactly, constitutes an excused absence or when a late arrival is excusable.

Finally, it is unacceptable to skip another class to work on a project for this class. Do not ask me for an excused absence to work on another course. Plan accordingly and be organized.

Some additional guidelines:

- You are responsible for all material presented in every class period, whether present or not.
- If you miss a class period you should obtain the material presented from another classmate. (I will not repeat lecture material that was missed. Handouts are available from my office – it is your responsibility to come get them.)

Assignments and Quizzes

You will be asked to complete assignments and tests to reinforce concepts you are learning in class.

Please note that the number of tests and assignments is not set in stone. This means that it is impossible at the outset of the semester to determine how much each individual quiz or assignment will be worth.

Message Board Posts

Utilizing our D2L message board, you will be posting weekly online. I will post a question/prompt weekly after our class on Monday. It is your responsibility to make an initial post by Thursday at 6:00 PM responding to my post. Then to keep conversations going outside of the classroom, you will respond to two other classmates' initial posts by Sunday at 11:59 PM. It is not about whether you agree or disagree about an idea or statement, rather that you take a critical look and respond accordingly. You should have a lively discussion, debate, 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.

Final Exam

The final exam will be on **Monday, December 7, 2026 at 5:45 PM. Plan ahead. There will be no extensions!** ([Final Exam Schedule](#))

Extra Credit

No opportunities are given.

Late Work

No opportunities are given.

Make Up Work/Tests

No opportunities are given.

More about Grading

- In the professional world, if you can't show up on time and make your deadlines, you won't keep your job. Assignments must be completed on time in the format specified.
- Reading assignments are to be completed by the day they are assigned.
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date.

- Each page of each assignment must be clearly labeled with your name, the assignment, the date, the page number and the total number of pages.
- Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be typed.
- Spelling and grammar count in your assignments and your emails. Grades will be reduced for spelling and grammar errors.
- If you know you will be absent when an assignment is due, arrange to complete and hand in the assignment early.
- You are responsible for keeping all handouts and graded assignments.
- Remember that attendance is required and missing class can result in a grade reduction, a failing grade, or being dropped from class.

Policies: Classroom/Conduct/Academic Dishonesty

- Classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction will result in the instructor's removing the disruptive student(s) from the class.
- "If you promise that you will not halt your class participation to read your email, text with a friend, post to your Facebook wall... I promise that I will not halt my class participation to read my email, text with a friend, or post to my Facebook wall." (from [oh richard](#) on chronicle.com)
- Students are expected to adhere to the Standards of Conduct as published in the [Student Handbook 2025-26](#). Students should refer to the current MSU student handbook and activities calendar for University policies and Student Honor Creed on academic dishonesty, class attendance, student's rights, and activities.
 - a. The main statement from the MSU Student Honor Creed should be a guiding principle for you: "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so."
 - b. I reserve the right to drop any student with an F if he/she engages in any form of academic dishonesty. I further reserve the right to recommend other sanctions as may be appropriate. Students are also encouraged to consult the following sources for additional discussion of students' rights and responsibilities regarding cheating, attendance and general conduct:
 - i. The MSU Student Honor Creed
 - ii. *MSU Undergraduate Catalog*
 - iii. *MSU Student Handbook*
 - c. In addition, the university requires faculty to provide this statement to all students: "By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a "limited right" in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The "limited right" shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student's work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and educational purposes."
- On the Internet, plagiarism is especially easy. DO NOT give in to the temptation to copy-and-paste other people's work! YOUR WORK MUST BE YOUR OWN. If you plagiarize as a professional and get found out, you will

damage if not destroy your own reputation and do great harm to the reputation of any organization you work for. In this class, plagiarism will have dire consequences.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism comes from the Latin word plagiarus, which means kidnapper. Webster's Dictionary defines plagiarize as to take (ideas, writings, etc.,) from (another) and pass them off as one's own-plagiarizer. Plagiarism includes the deliberate as well as inadvertent failure to properly attribute. All of the work you do in this class should be the work of you. **Violation of this policy will result in the student and/or group receiving a failing grade for this course. IGNORANCE IS NO EXCUSE...IF IN DOUBT-ASK! Students in this course should adhere to the MSU Student Honor Code.**

Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

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.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: Campus Carry Rules and 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](#)

Notice

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

Course Schedule

The course meets weekly on Mondays from 6:00 PM - 8:50 PM.

Suggestions

- Attend class regularly.
- Remember I am available to help you. Ask for help immediately if you don't understand something. Waiting to "get it later" doesn't always work and could get you into trouble.
- Expect the unexpected.
- Try to do work for this class ahead of time. This will give you some cushion in case you have problems.
- Sometimes things will go smoothly, other times they won't – the important thing is to have fun and practice thinking and working with both sides of our brains.
- This is **your** class; we can do (or try) almost anything you want; be creative!

Final Caveat: I reserve the right to change any part of this syllabus for any reason. This includes changing or deleting assignments. Sufficient notice will be given to you if changes to the syllabus are necessary.

By accepting this syllabus and staying enrolled in this course, you are indicating that you understand and accept the terms of this syllabus.

Thanks to Dr. Jim Sernoe who allowed me to adapt some of their classroom policies and who shared ideas and assignments.