

**Communications Studies COMS 401.27 L02  
Special Topics in Communications Studies**

**(Kung Fu films\* and Asian Religion)**

**Fall 2011  
L02 T/R 11:00-12:15**

**Instructor:** Dr. A.W Barber.

**Office  
Location:** SS330

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**Office Hours:** T. 12:20-1:00

**Additional Information**

(\*For the purposes of this course any film that has significant use of Asian martial arts is termed a “Kung Fu film”.)

**Course Description**

This course is designed to provide students with the analytic tools to critically examine the themes within film narrative. The topic will be Chinese Religions as used in the narratives of the Kung Fu film sub-genre. Topics will include: methodology, history of Kung Fu films, cinematography, history of Kung Fu, the three religions of China, the use of a theme in the motivation of the characters, the use of a theme to frame the experiences of the characters, the use of thematic settings and icons, and others. The goal of the course is to expand the student’s understanding of the films use of themes in the narrative as a means of communication.

**Objectives of the Course**

Students will gain insight into thematic issues in film narrative. The approach will allow students to sharpen their analytic skills and expose them to sources and methodologies. Students will also become familiar with this important sub-genre of films. The special use of cinematography and editing of Kung Fu films will be discussed. Students will be introduced to Kung Fu “action” techniques as well. In general the Kung Fu hero is often similar to the knight and religion is an important theme depicted in this sub-genre of film.

Students will gain cultural appreciation and exposure to international cinema through lectures, readings, discussions, and viewings.

### **Internet and electronic communication device information**

Recordings of images or sounds of classroom activities is not permitted without written permission.

### **Textbooks and Readings:**

*A guide to Narrative Film Analysis* by Manfred John <http://www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppf.htm>

*Handbook of Narrative Analysis* by Luc Herman & Bart Vervaeck (selections only) ON Reserve

Chinese Religions by Mario Poceski (selections only)

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

There will be one test and one research paper due for this course. The paper must be 12-15 pages long (double spaced, 12 pt. font) including notes and bibliography. The paper will be your analysis of the use of Asian religious concepts in either Star Wars or Matrix.

**Test I .....30 pts.** (Oct. 11, 2011)

**Test II .....35 pts.** (Nov. 15, 2011)

**Paper ..... 35 pts.** (Due Dec. 8, 2011 4:30pm)

**Total.....100 pts**

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

### **Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:**

There is NO Registrar-scheduled Final Examination.

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

## Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

## Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented.

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: [www.efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

## Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

(Revised, effective September 2008)

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

## **Plagiarism**

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (MacEwan Student Centre 4<sup>th</sup> floor, [efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://efwr.ucalgary.ca)) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

## **Academic Misconduct**

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link;  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

## **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

## **Students' Union**

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see  
<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

## **Student Ombudsman**

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see  
<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

## **Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points**

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

## **"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

## **Ethics**

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:

<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreb>

## **Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

To be handed out in class.