

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

FILM 201 (L01): Introduction to Film Studies

FALL 2021: September 6 to December 7 (excluding Sept. 30, Oct. 10, and Nov. 6-12)

Lecture: asynchronous

Lab (film screenings): asynchronous.

Tutorials: online synchronous or in-person (check with registrar)

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ONLINE COURSE DELIVERY

Asynchronous & Synchronous Course Components: Please read this outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate in person or online at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous sessions hosted on Zoom can be accessed on D2L by clicking on the Communications tab and selecting Zoom.

Note: If you will not be able to participate in synchronous in-class or online class sessions owing to time differences or geographical location, then consult with the instructor to see if accommodation is possible or arrange to take this course in a future term.

Timed Online Quizzes/Tests: You will be allowed a minimum window of 7 days to access online quizzes and exams, but there may be a time limit for completing a quiz once you open it. Read the description carefully.

Timed Online Final Exams: You will be allowed a minimum window of 24 hours to access online final exams, but there may be a time limit for completing the final exam once you open it. Read the description carefully. Timed final exams allow for an additional 50% extra time.

Instructor:	Ryan Pierson
Office:	SS 214
Email:	Ryan.pierson@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	T/Th, 12:30 – 1:30 pm

Course Description

This course introduces basic concepts of film analysis, which are discussed through examples from different national cinemas, genres, and directorial oeuvres. Along with questions of film technique and style, we consider the notion of the cinema as an institution that comprises an industrial system of production, social and aesthetic norms and codes, and particular modes of reception.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L.

Recordings of each week's lecture will be provided asynchronously, as will links for viewing each week's film. Tutorials will either be online synchronous or in-person, depending on what you've registered for.

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

This course provides foundational tools and concepts required for film analysis. Students will develop different ways of considering – and writing about – the formal, aesthetic, institutional, and cultural dimensions of the cinema. The course is intended to prepare students for further work in film studies.

Communication

Please allow one full business day (M-F, 9:00-5:00) for response to emails. (E.g., if you send an email at 8 p.m. on a Saturday, do not expect a response at 8:45 that night; please anticipate possible issues accordingly.) In cases of confusion about material, assignments, attendance, disciplinary issues, etc., your TA is your first line of defense. If you have a specific issue with your TA, please notify the instructor directly.

Textbooks and Readings

David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith, *Film Art*, 11th ed., available at university bookstore.

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online synchronous courses only).

If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact IT support services. See

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

Since lectures and labs are asynchronous, an overall policy on communication devices would be kind of pointless. However, your TA may have a policy during tutorials.

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Assignments and Evaluation

Participation (ongoing, tutorials only)

10%

In-class discussion is an essential component of this course. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the week's reading and screening. Participation will be graded on a simple all-or-nothing scale: all you need to do is make one comment of substance (i.e., not a simple yes/no/poll answer) during tutorial, and you will get full participation credit for that day. If your tutorial is online, comments in the chat function will count toward participation

Note: by this scale, attendance by itself does not count toward participation.

If you are absent during a tutorial, you may get full participation credit by submitting a 200-word response on how the week's film makes use of the topic for the week (mise-en-scene, cinematography, etc.), within 7 calendar days of your absence.

Short analysis, 2 (ongoing)

15% each

Twice during the semester, you will submit a short paper (2-3 pages) on a film from the course, examining the way the film makes use of one element of our formal vocabulary (mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, sound), singling out one sequence of the film for close analysis.

You may submit your first paper at any time between weeks 5 and 8, and your second paper at any time between weeks 9 and 13.

More detailed instructions will come later in the term.

Midterm exam

25%

In week 8, you will be tested on the first six weeks of course material (20-30 questions; mix of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and short essay; no outside materials allowed). You will have 90 minutes to complete the exam; you can take it at any time from Monday of week 8 (12:00 a.m.) through that Sunday (11:59 p.m.).

Final exam

35%

At the end of the term, you will take a cumulative final exam (30-40 questions; mix of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and short essay; no outside materials allowed), at a time to be determined by the registrar.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will attempt to schedule the final exam in the evening, but there is no guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all written assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Short analyses submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 5% or a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require a medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, letter grades will be used for written assignments, while numerical grades will be used for exams and participation grades.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

- * Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

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. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.** Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed, or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). Students who use material protected by copy-right in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct

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

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must

review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk. For resources on D2L, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

I. The Feature-Length Narrative Film

Week 1, week of Sept 6: The Language of Film

Reading:

FA Chapter 2, “The Significance of Film Form”

Screening:

Moonlight (Barry Jenkins, 2016)

Week 2, week of Sept 12: Mise-en-scene

Reading:

FA Chapter 4, “The Shot: Mise-en-Scene”

Screening:

A Woman, a Gun, and a Noodle Shop (Yimou Zhang, 2009)

Week 3, week of Sept 19: Cinematography

Reading:

FA Chapter 5, “The Shot: Cinematography”

Screening:

Gravity (Alfonso Cuarón, 2013)

Week 4, week of Sept 26: Editing

Reading:

FA Chapter 6, “The Relation of Shot to Shot: Editing”
Screening:
Mad Max: Fury Road (George Miller, 2015)

Week 5, week of Oct 3: Sound

Reading:
FA Chapter 7, “Sound in the Cinema”
Screening:
Mulholland Drive (David Lynch, 2001)

Week 6, week of Oct 11: Narrative

Reading:
FA Chapter 3: “Narrative as a Formal System”
Screening:
Citizen Kane (Orson Welles, 1941)

II. Alternative filmmaking forms

Week 7, week of Oct 17: Animation

Reading:
Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, “The Principles of Animation”
Screening:
The Illusionist (Sylvain Chomet, 2010)

Week 8, week of Oct 24: Documentary

Reading:
Bill Nichols, “Types of Documentary”
Screening:
Stories We Tell (Sarah Polley, 2012)
MIDTERM EXAM
SHORT ANALYSIS DUE

Week 9, week of Oct 31: Avant-Garde Film

Reading:
FA Chapter 10: section on “Experimental Film,” pp. 369-86
Germaine Dulac, “The Avant-Garde Cinema”
Screening:
News from Home (Chantal Akerman, 1976)
Short films TBA

Week 10, week of Nov 7: NO CLASS, FALL BREAK

III. Film Industries and Film Cultures

Week 11, week of Nov 14: Studies in popular genre – the musical

Reading:

FA Chapter 9: “Film Genres”

Richard Dyer, “Entertainment and Utopia”

Screening:

Magic Mike XXL (Gregory Jacobs, 2014)

Week 12, week of Nov 21: 1920s USSR – the Montage movement

Reading:

FA Chapter 6, “Alternatives to Continuity Editing” pp. 252-262; Chapter 12: “Soviet Montage,” pp. 470-473

Sergei Eisenstein, “The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram”

Screening:

Battleship Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, 1926)

Week 13, week of Nov 28: 1990s India – the rise of Bollywood

Reading:

Rosie Thomas, “Popular Hindi Cinema”

Screening:

Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (Aditya Chopra, 1995)

Week 14, week of Dec 5: Digital cinema and hybrid visual forms

Reading:

Jordan Schonig, “*Speed Racer* (2008), Cel Animation, and Animetism” (video essay:

<https://vimeo.com/580808200>)

Screening:

Speed Racer (Lana Wachowski & Lily Wachowski, 2008)

****SHORT ANALYSIS DUE****

Final Examination – Scheduled by Registrar (35%)