

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**  
**Film Studies (FILM) 403-01: Steven Soderbergh**

**Block Week Fall 2022:**  
**Aug 29, 2022 - Sep 2, 2022**

**Lecture: MoTuWeThFr 9AM - 5:00PM**  
**All course components are in-person, held in SS203.**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Lee Carruthers
<b>Email:</b>	lee.carruthers@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Email for an after-class meeting.

### **Course Description**

This intensive course focuses on the films of Steven Soderbergh, reading his work as a significant case study for American 'indie cinema' that illuminates its contexts and meanings. Spanning the early critical acclaim of *Sex, Lies and Videotape* (1989) and *Out of Sight* (1994); the broad commercial success of *Erin Brockovich* (2000), *Traffic* (2000), and *Ocean's Eleven* (2001); idiosyncratic projects such as *Bubble* (2005) and *The Good German* (2006), and the assertive stylization of recent titles such as *No Sudden Move* (2021), the course investigate the key aesthetic and thematic preoccupations of Soderbergh's cinema from 1989 to the present. Notably, the course also situates Soderbergh's directorial style and achievements within the wider framework of international film history, exploring the ways that contemporary cinema refashions older film traditions. To this end, the films are read in relation to key cinematic antecedents and/or influences, considering their affinities with diverse directors such as John Boorman, Howard Hawks, Richard Lester, Ken Loach, Alain Resnais, and Andrei Tarkovsky.

### **Important Course Information**

This is a block week course, taught in-person, that runs five full days. **Attendance is required for the full session every day, which blends lecture, discussion, and film screenings.** Attendance will be recorded every morning and afternoon: if you have a medical issue or other urgent situation during the course week, notify the instructor ASAP.

Because the course is an intensive learning format, it requires significant time and attention from you. Students should expect to spend approximately **two hours each night preparing for the next day's class.** There will be assigned readings to complete every evening after class, so please do not plan any additional activities (work shifts, volunteer activities, etc.) for the duration of the course. Consistently completing the readings will prepare you for the **daily quizzes**, written during class time, as well as the film screenings. Please note that all course tasks are to be completed at specified times during the day: they cannot be deferred until later in the day, submitted the next day, or after the course ends. The one exception is the final essay, which is due three weeks after the course concludes. (See Assignments and Evaluation, below.)

The daily schedule of topics and readings will be emailed to you before the course starts and a copy will be posted on the D2L course page. Students are responsible for reading and following all policies discussed in the document and should also keep up with any adjustment to the schedule announced in class.

### **Objectives of the Course**

This course has three main objectives:

1. Generally, to examine a range of films by director Steven Soderbergh so as to identify the stylistic and thematic preoccupations evidenced across his work.
2. Specifically, to develop and utilize keen film-analytical skills that will allow us to approach these films as complex, aesthetic objects.

- Finally, to understand Soderbergh's work as reflexive and historical— that is, as responsive to older film traditions, precedents, and practices.

### Textbooks and Readings

All course readings will be made available on the D2L course page. Required readings that will be covered on the quizzes are listed as such on the syllabus; recommended readings are designed to supplement your understanding but will not be featured on a quiz. **Required readings for the first day of class that will be covered on the first quiz will be emailed to you directly** before the course begins: be sure to read these in advance to prepare for Day One.

### Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete online (or blended) 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.

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

Do not use electronic devices for email, texting, or unauthorized browsing during class time or you will jeopardize your participation grade. No photographic, audio, or video recording is permitted without the instructor's permission. 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

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
40%	<b>Daily Quizzes</b> These short, closed-book quizzes will be written at the start of each day. Each quiz presents 2-5 straightforward questions about the assigned reading: if you have read the material carefully, you will find the quizzes simple to complete. The course syllabus indicates which readings to complete each day; questions will cover <i>required</i> readings only (not recommended ones) and will sometimes reference the course films. You will have approximately twenty-five minutes to complete each quiz. It is your responsibility to read the instructions carefully to ensure your success. If you have concerns or questions about this task, please contact me.	Daily, completed in-class, 5 total
20%	<b>Film Notes</b> Your observations and ideas about the films screened in class, responding to a daily prompt. Guidelines for writing a good film note will be provided both in-class and on the course D2L page. Your notes will be drafted during class time and posted to D2L thereafter.  <b>In-class participation</b> <b>Informed</b> contributions to discussion will support this part of your grade. ('Informed' means, 'on the basis of the course readings and discussions.')	Daily, in-class, posted to D2L  Assessed daily

40%	<p><b>Final Essay</b></p> <p>A paper that deploys the course literature and performs some film-textual analysis, 2500 words in length, on one of the central films and/or issues of the course. A range of suggested topics and detailed instructions for the successful completion of this essay will be provided on that last day of the course.</p> <p>Papers are due after the course ends: see the designated due date and submission instructions. Late papers will be subjected to a grade penalty.</p>	<p>Due date: <b>Sept. 23 2021</b></p>
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### **Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO**

**Note:** You must complete all assignments and exams or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. If you miss a required course component, contact your instructor as soon as possible.

### **Submission of Assignments**

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments. The daily quizzes will be collected in class; film notes will be posted in the D2L discussion area; final essays should be submitted to the designated D2L Dropbox folder. **Note:** It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Quizzes will not be accepted for grading after the deadline. Course essays submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a 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/](http://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, final grades are reported as letter grades; quizzes and film notes will be scored numerically; the final essay will receive a letter grade. 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.

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](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 copyright 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/desire2learn/home/students>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

**A complete schedule of lecture topics, readings, and films  
will be emailed to you, and posted on D2L, before the course start date.**