

**Film Studies (FILM) 301 L01
Topic in National Cinema
American Independent Film
Fall 2010
Lectures: Wednesday, 9 – 10:50
Screenings: Monday, 9 – 11:50**

Instructor: Donna Brunsdale
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Office Hours: Thursday 2:30 – 4:30 or by appointment

Additional Information

Some of the materials and topics presented in class may include explicit content (sex, violence or language). If these materials make you uncomfortable, you are encouraged to speak with the instructor. You will not be exempt from any class assignments but we will work together to accommodate your concerns.

Responsibility for attending and fulfilling the requirements for lectures, screenings, readings and assignments resides with the student. The instructor will not give out lecture notes, repeat information, nor provide replacement copies of material that was provided during regular class hours.

Students are expected to attend the weekly assigned screenings. There is no guarantee that you'll be able to find copies of the film in video stores or on the web, and the Visual Resources Centre does not have the resources to schedule individual screening times.

Students are expected to check Blackboard before the class for any last minute changes or cancellations.

Course Description

This course looks at American films made since 1977 which contributed to the greater visibility and mainstream success of films categorized as “independent.” It will include films by Sayles, Jarmusch, Lee, Haynes, Linklater and Holofcener.

Objectives of the Course

To define the category of American independent cinema

To identify and analyze key films and filmmakers in this category

To develop written skills in film analysis

Internet and electronic communication device information

No laptop use is allowed during film screenings. During lectures, laptops are for note-taking only; any other use is not allowed. Texting and cell phone use is not permitted, turn off these devices when you arrive in the classroom.

Textbooks and Readings

Readings will be posted on Blackboard under “Course Documents” or will be available from the McKimmie library. It is the student’s responsibility to read the assigned readings each week.

Assignments and Evaluation

2 X In-class Tests: October 13, November 17 **40%**

Essay, November 3 **25%**

Take-Home Exam, December 8, due December 15 **35%**

In-class Tests: 2 X 20% = 40%

October 13, November 17

The tests will cover lectures, readings and screenings; their format will include a mix of short answer and essay questions.

Essay, Due November 3: 25%

1200 – 1500 words

More details will be given in class.

Take Home Exam: Due December 15: 35%

A take-home exam with either one or two questions will be distributed and discussed at the last lecture, **December 8**. The exam will encompass material from the entire course. Students will be expected to undertake independent research on their own and write a sound, scholarly response in essay format. Your final submission should be between 1500 – 1800 words.

The take-home exam is due by **Wednesday, December 15 at 12 PM**, for grading with comments. After that date, exams will be graded with no comments. **No exams will be accepted after December 21.**

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your 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: No

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

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

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 4th floor, 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/compliance/ethics/info/undergrad/>