

University of Calgary

Department of Communication, Media and Film

Film Studies (FILM) 305 L02

Film Genres: The Western

Winter 2015

Lecture: Tuesday 10:00 – 12:45

Lab: Thursday 10:00 – 11:50

Instructor: Dr. Murray Leeder

Office: SS 220

Office Phone: 220-3381

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Office Hours: Monday 13:00 – 14:00, Thursday 13:00 – 15:00

Course Description

One of the oldest and most durable film genres, the Western is also perhaps the genre most closely linked to American identity, and yet its appeal has never been confined to the United States. This course's focus on the Western will allow us explore how we can define genre and how genres change and evolve over time, as well as issues of gender, ideology, race and national identity.

Additional Information

Attendance at lectures, screenings and tutorials, and informed participation are essential components of this course and will help determine your final grade. Students must come to class prepared to discuss the required reading.

WHAT YOU MUST DO EVERY WEEK TO DO WELL IN THE COURSE:

- Read the weekly material assigned.
- Take notes while you read.
- Bring the readings to class, both lecture and discussion, so you can refer back to the readings if needed.
- Always bring your syllabus to class to get a sense of where we are in the evolution of the course.
- Try not to miss any lectures and discussion groups.
- Even if you have seen the scheduled film already, you should watch it again and refresh your memory. "I have seen this film several times," is not an excuse for not attending class or leaving before the screening.
- Develop the ability to take concise notes that capture the *essence* of the lecture. I will sometimes include lengthy quotes in my powerpoint slides.
- Go over your notes and reading(s) right after each week's lecture on Monday.

CLASSROOM DECORUM:

- Return to your seat on time after taking a short break after the lecture and before the screening. The short break is usually about **10 minutes**, sufficient for going to the washroom or stretching a bit, but not for going to the cafeteria.
- Don't chat with your friends during classes and screenings. **And turn off your cell phone.**

Objectives of the Course

In addition to interrogating the Western in particular, this course is also designed to deliver the fundamentals of genre analysis in general. The student will also learn about elements of American society through the frame of the Western, as well as globalization through analysis of its international popularity.

Internet and electronic communication device information

This course observes a strict laptop and cell phone policy. Laptops are for note-taking only. Likewise, texting and cell phone use is not permitted during class time: turn off these devices when you arrive at the classroom to avoid embarrassment and annoyance.

Textbooks and Readings:

The following textbooks are available at the University of Calgary bookstore:

The Western Reader (Rickman and Kitses)

Injuns: Native Americans in the Movies (Buscombe)

Other readings will be posted on Desire2Learn.

All readings are *required*.

Assignments and Evaluation

25% First Assignment, Due Feb. 3

Choose one of the following options.

1. Building on Slotkin's explanation of the frontier myth's role in American culture, compare and contrast the role that the frontier plays in at least two of the following films: *Stagecoach*, *High Noon* and *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*.
2. Building on Altman's semantic/syntactic model of film genres, choose a single convention present in all three of the films (*Stagecoach*, *High Noon* and *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*) and trace its development. It can be a semantic or a syntactic element. Be sure to explore the reasons why it changed over time, rather than simply observing that it does.
3. Explore how Kitses's set of binaries between Wilderness and Civilization are operative in at least two of *Stagecoach*, *High Noon* and *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*. The student will be expected to interrogate whether or not Wilderness vs. Civilization is indeed the overriding concern of the Western, as Kitses argues.

The essay should be 4-5 pages. No essay that fails to utilize, quote and cite at least one of our readings will pass. Consult the style guide and follow it thoroughly.

35% Second Assignment, Due Mar. 26

Choose one of the following options.

1. Building on Rick Altman's work on genre mixing to explore the process in one of the following films: *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954), *Oklahoma!* (1955), *Billy the Kid vs. Dracula* (1966), *Jesse James Meets Frankenstein's Daughter* (1966), *Paint Your Wagon* (1969), *Westworld* (1973), *Blazing Saddles* (1974), *A Dirty Western* (1975), *Assault on Precinct 13* (1976), *Star Wars* (1976), *Near Dark* (1987), *Toy Story* (1995), *Vampires* (1998), *Ravenous* (1999), *Shanghai Noon* (2000), *Mulholland Dr.* (2001), *Bubba Ho-Tep* (2002), or *Kill Bill* (2003/4). You should interrogate why this mixing is being done and what it says about the commensurability of different genres with the Western. Be sure to draw on, quote and cite Altman's chapter on genre mixing.
2. Compare gender roles in *Johnny Guitar* and/or *Unforgiven* to one of the following films: *My Darling Clementine* (1946), *Red River* (1948), *The Gunfighter* (1950), *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), *Ride the High Country* (1962), *The Hired Hand* (1971), *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* (1972), *The Ballad of Little Jo* (1993), *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* (2007), *Appaloosa* (2008) or *Meek's Cutoff* (2010). Be sure to utilize, quote from and cite at least two of our readings.
3. Compare depictions of Native Americans in *The Searchers* and/or *Soldier Blue* to one of the following films: *Fort Apache* (1948), *Broken Arrow* (1950), *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964), *A Man Called Horse* (1970), *Little Big Man* (1970), *Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull's History Lesson* (1976), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), *Dead Man* (1995) or *The Lone Ranger* (2013). Be sure to utilize, quote from and cite at least two of our readings.

The essay should be 6-7 pages. No essay that fails to utilize, quote and cite at least one of our readings will pass. Consult the style guide and follow it thoroughly.

30% Final Exam (to be scheduled by registrar)

10% Participation Mark (ongoing)

Students are expected to attend both lectures and labs and participate in classroom discussion. Marks will be assigned determined by the quality and volume of participation.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

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://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: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments: 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.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

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.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of the course.

Writing Skills Statement

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<http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in 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: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading System & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Work in this course will be graded using letter grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	0%

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

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

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 (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 <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/research/research-ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (PIC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 picarts@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps 	http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/hom

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Ombudsman 	<p>e.html http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</p>
<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</p> <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

Schedule of Lecture and Readings will be made available on D2L once the course commences in September.