

**FILM 461-01**  
**Film Audiences and Reception**  
**Fall 2011**  
**M 15:00-17:50 (screening), W 16:00-17:50 (lecture)**

**Instructor:** Brendan Kredell  
**Office Location:** SS 220  
**Office Phone:** 220-3381  
**E-Mail:** bkredell@ucalgary.ca  
**Office Hours:** R 13:00-15:00 or by appointment

**Additional Information**

Attendance at lectures and screenings 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. 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 professor. You will not be exempt from any class assignments but we will work together to accommodate your concerns.

**Course Description**

*The course maps aspects of spectatorship, audience, and reception approaches as they intersect with the experience and study of cinema. The course provides students with tools to appreciate film as an interactive medium of communication. It explores these approaches with emphasis on spectatorial agency, resistant and subversive reading, and hegemonic and counter-hegemonic readership and production. Prerequisite: FILM 201.*

“The history of the American cinema is not the history of its products any more than the history of railroads is the history of locomotives,” writes Richard Maltby in an essay we will read in this course. The implication is that our understanding of film is incomplete if we do not take into account the complex and diverse ways in which audiences “receive” film texts. In this course, we seek to develop the critical and theoretical toolkit necessary to do just that, recognizing, as Wolfgang Iser once put it, that “the ‘stars’ in a literary text are fixed; the lines that join them are variable.”

**Objectives of the Course**

The overarching goal of this course is to introduce students to the variety of methods and theoretical approaches used by scholars interested in taking account of film audiences and film reception. In so doing, we will cover a broad variety of disciplinary ground and nearly a century of different approaches to the study of media reception.

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Produce a sustained written analysis that incorporates ideas that are introduced during the course
- Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the variety of methods available to reception-oriented scholars, and articulate the benefits and shortcomings of those respective approaches
- Write a term paper that follows all appropriate academic protocol

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

Students are welcome to use laptops and other electronic notetaking devices in this course. That being said, the classroom is a space for learning, and I expect that students' behaviour will reflect a shared appreciation for the importance of an open and high-level discourse within the classroom. Towards that end, the use of laptops should be strictly limited to the purposes of taking notes. **Laptops (and all other electronic devices) are expressly prohibited during course screenings.** Likewise, mobile phones and other devices are prohibited at all times. Failure to respect these rules may result in a lower participation grade, or revocation of your privileges to use devices in the classroom.

### **Textbooks and Readings:**

Janet Staiger, *Media Reception Studies*. New York: NYU Press, 2005.

Will Brooker and Deborah Jermyn, eds., *The Audience Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Additional readings available via Blackboard, as listed below.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Participation <i>Students are expected to regularly attend class and actively participate in class discussions. Full marks will be given to students who regularly demonstrate through their participation in class discussions an engagement with the course readings.</i>	10%
Weekly Response Essays (250-300 words) <i>Students are required to write a one-page response to a discussion prompt posted at the end of class each week, relating to that week's reading and/or film screening. Essays are due prior to the beginning of class each Tuesday, and should be submitted via Blackboard.</i>	10%
In-Class Presentation <i>Students are required to plan for and lead class discussion on one reading of their choosing during the course of the semester. Depending on course enrollment, students</i>	20%

*may be asked to work in groups. Readings will be assigned during the first course meeting.*

Screening/Discussion Reports (500-750 words) 20%

*Following the in-class presentation, students are required to individually write a short essay informed by the class discussion that they led. This essay is due the following Thursday (one week after the in-class presentation), and should be submitted via Blackboard.*

Final Paper Proposal (250-500 words) 5%

*Students are required to submit a proposal in advance of writing their final paper, explaining the topic they have chosen, the question they hope to answer with their paper, and what method(s) they will use in answering that question. Proposals should be submitted to Blackboard prior to the course meeting on **November 30**; written feedback will be provided before the end of the term.*

Final Paper (1000-1500 words) 35%

*In lieu of a final examination, students are required to write a research paper investigating a topic of the student's choosing, per my approval. Papers are due one week after the final course meeting (**December 14**), and should be submitted via Blackboard.*

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:** 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 will be penalized with the loss of one-third of a letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Quizzes and examinations will not be rescheduled except in the case of medical emergencies. Students without proper medical documentation will not be permitted to make up missed quizzes or examinations.

### **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**

Will be posted on Blackboard.