

Spring 1-15-2016

ENG 4904-001: Studies in Film

Robin Murray

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Spring 2016 English 4904, Studies in Film
The City in Film

Instructor: Robin L. Murray
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Course Schedule: T 3:30-6:50, Coleman Hall 3691
Office Hours: MW 1-2:45; R 2-3:15 and by appnt.
Wiki: <http://studiesinfilm.wikispaces.com/home>

“Independent films are where you really get to cut your teeth and have some fun and do the things that mainstream Hollywood doesn't want to do.” (Anthony Anderson)

Course Description:

Studies in Film—The City in Film:

The history of our movement from the farm to the city overlaps nearly perfectly with the development of cinema. This course will begin to examine connections between cinema and the city in relation to history, race, gender, sexuality, class, and the environment. Themes: Law and Social Justice; Genre, Form and Poetics; Science and the Environment; Media, Technology and Popular Culture. Note: May be repeated once with permission of Department

Course Objectives:

Students will:

1. Evaluate urban films as art form and cultural artifact
2. Analyze and synthesize theories of film form and visual style
3. Identify and analyze both narrative and non-narrative urban cinema
4. Identify, critique and apply film theories and historical contexts to urban cinema
5. Write analytically and effectively about urban cinema and related concepts
6. Construct and explain selected urban cinema contexts and concepts

Course Texts:

Bordwell, David and Thompson, Kristin. *Film Art, An Introduction*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2010. Print.

Routledge Introduction to Film Theory
Cinema of Latin America

Course Policies and Requirements: In order to succeed in this course, you must effectively complete each of the following:

1. Once a week you will complete an **entrance card** answering a question about the film(s) screened and/or text read for that class. More later.
2. You will also be expected to keep a **film log**, with notes on each film screened in class (you may use on your midterm and final). Make sure you read the material for each class. In-class writing and quizzes will occur sporadically, as well.

3. You will also write **two papers**, one due at midterm and one due by the final class session:
- The first paper will give you the opportunity to expand one of your entrance cards and critically analyze one of the films on the course calendar in 4-6 pages.
 - The second paper will allow you to look beyond films screened for class to examine a particular sub-genre, period, or region in 6-8 pages.
 - You will also provide a Wiki page for your sub-genre and at least two representative films.

Note: Paper prompts will be provided.

4. Individually you will choose a film (of your week's sub-genre) introduce it and lead discussion following its screening.
5. You will take a **midterm exam** and **final exam**, which will allow you to synthesize information gained from the textbooks, films, and their cultural and historical contexts.

In addition to the above requirements, students enrolled in the course for graduate credit will extend one of their papers to approximately 15 pages. These students will be asked to submit a prospectus for the paper, as will all other students, but should also include a bibliography with their prospectus.

Note: No late work will be accepted unless I have approved extensions before the date the work is due.

Grades: Grades for this course will be determined as follows

• Entrance Cards	15%
• Paper 1	10%
• Paper 2	15%
• Wiki Page and presentation	10%
• Film Log	10%
• Film introduction and discussion	10%
• Midterm	15%
• Final Exam	15%
	<hr/>
	100%

Other Policies:

1. **Plagiarism Statement:** "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--the inappropriate imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work'—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty

student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of 'F' for the course.

2. If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
3. Please also note that this course is Writing Intensive, so a paper completed for the course can be turned in to your electronic writing portfolio—some time during the actual course of the class.
4. Ambitious students can also seek help from the Writing Center. Call for an appointment (581-5920) or visit ((CH3110) at any point in the writing process, from brainstorming, planning and drafting, to final editing. Bring your assignment sheet and any written work and/or sources with you. The Writing Center is open Monday-Thursday, 9-3 and 6-9, and Friday from 9-1.
5. You must complete all major assignments to complete this course.
6. Students seeking Teacher Certification in English Language Arts should provide each of their English department professors with the yellow form, "Application for English department Approval to Student Teach." These are available on a rack outside the office of Dr. Melissa Ames.

Spring 2016 Tentative Course Calendar, Subject to Change
English 4904, Studies in Film

January

The Silent City on Film

- 12 Introduction to the class and review of film form, style, and history. Representing the City through Documentary, Comedy, Drama, Gangster Shorts, City Symphonies, and Morality Tales. Introduce the city on film. Introduce in-class responses.

The Lily of the Tenements (2011), *Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912), *Matrimony's Speed Limit* (1913), *Two Wise Wives* (1921), *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929)

Read *Film Art* excerpts from chapter 4 and 5 and *Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory* introduction, "Modernism versus realism," and "Poetic Cinema" for January 19.

Poetic Realism, Social Realism, and the Screwball Comedy in Urban Space

- 19 In-class response. Introduce Paper I. Discuss Poetic Cinema, Modernism vs. Realism, and Screwball Comedy.

My Man Godfrey (1936), *Mr. Deeds Comes to Town* (1936), and *Pepe le Moko* (1937), and *Port of Shadows* (1938).

Read *Film Art*, chapter 9, genre theory, and readings on D2L for 1/26.

The Underground City: Urban Film Noir and Documentary

- 26 Discuss Film Genre readings. In-class response.

Excerpts from *Dark Days* (2000) and *Children Underground* (2001), *The Third Man* (1949), *Odds Against Tomorrow* (1955), and *Murder by Contract* (1958).

Read *Film Art*, chapter 10, D2L articles, and *Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory* "Fantasy and Spectatorship" for 2/2.

February

The Animated City

- 2 Discuss reading. In-class response.

Disney, Pixar, the Fleischer Brothers and UPA: Shorts and *Mr. Bug Goes to Town* (1941)

Read *Film Art*, chapter 11 and *Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory* "Cinematic movement," "Ideology and Cinema," and "Formalist Theories of Film" for 2/9.

Urban French New Wave and the African Diaspora

9 In-class response.

Cleo from 5 to 7 (Agnes Varda 1962) and *Black Girl* (Ousemane Sembene 1966)

Read *Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory* “Memory and Film,” “Trauma and Cinema,” and D2L articles for 2/16.

Yakuza Tales and Blaxploitation Responses to Urban Disorder

16 Discuss readings. In-Class Response.

Complete draft of Paper I for Tuesday, February 23.

Read D2L articles and *Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory* “Film and Affect,” “Film as Art,” “Film and Emotion,” and “Cinematic Excess” for 2/23.

Yakuza Papers: Battle without Honor and Humanity (1973) and *Shaft* (1971)

The Post-Apocalyptic City

23 Discuss readings. In-class response. Paper I draft due.

The Omega Man (1973), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *12 Monkeys* (1995), *28 Days Later* (2002), *I Am Legend* (2007), etc.

Read *Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory* “Third World Cinema” and the *Cinema of Latin America* introduction and *Official Story* chapter, and Complete Paper I for Tues, March 1.

March

The Politics of the “Disappeared” in the City

1 Discuss readings. In-class response. MT Overview. Paper I due.

The Official Story (1985).

8 Midterm. No reading!

Screening: *Persepolis* (2008) for CIFFF

Read *Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory* “Feminist Film Theory, Core Concepts,” “Feminist Film Theory, History of,” and “Gaze Theory” for 3/22.

14-18 Spring Break! No Classes

Feminist Politics in the City

22 CIFFF Films and Talk

Read *Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory* “Auteur Theory,” “Point of View,” and “Queer Theory/Queer Cinema” for 3/29.

Hong Kong Cinema

29 Discuss readings. In-class response. Introduce Paper II and Wiki.

Wong Kar Wai’s *Chung King Express* (1991)

Read *Cinema of Latin America* chapter on *The Swamp*. Choose an article; read it; and upload it to D2L for 4/5.

April

The Post-Colonial City

5 Discuss reading. In-class response.

Children of God (2002), *Tsotsi* (2005), *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), etc.

Read *Cinema of Latin America* chapter on *Amores Perros*, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory* “Theory of Identification” and articles on D2L for 4/12. Complete a Proposal for Paper II.

Contemporary Latin American Cities and Gender

12 Discuss reading. In-class response. Paper II Proposal.

Amores Perros (2000) vs. *Milk of Sorrow* (2009)

Read Articles on D2L for 4/19. Continue work on Paper II.

Disability, Immigration, and Sustainability in the City

19 Discuss reading. In-class response. Paper II draft due.

Complete draft of Paper II for Tuesday, April 26.

The Garden (2008) and *Lives Worth Living* (2011)

Gender, Race, and Sexuality in the Contemporary Western City

26 Discuss reading. In-class response. Paper II due. Final Exam Preparation.

Girlhood (2015) and *Chi-Raq* (2015)

May

5 Final Exam: 2:45-4:45: Wikis Due for Presentations