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FILM 103L.01: Introduction to Film

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INTRODUCTION TO FILM

FILM 103L

Instructor: Tobin Addington

E-mail: tobin.addington@mso.umt.edu

Office Hours: Tues 10:30-12; Thurs 3:30-5:00 in McGill 230

Day & Time: T/R 8:00-10:20

Room: Forestry 206

Readings:

Understanding Movies

Other readings will be posted on our Moodle page

Assignments:

Weekly essay quizzes, take-home essays, a midterm exam, and an in-class comprehensive final exam. (See grading breakdown below.)

Course Goals/Objectives:

This class requires students to assess film from three different perspectives:

- 1) Aesthetics & Conventions – Students will learn the conventions involved in putting together a narrative fiction film, as well as the aesthetic commitments and possibilities involved in using these conventions.
- 2) Ethics – Many, if not most, films have at their center some ethical issue or dilemma. Students will learn to identify, characterize, and write clearly about the filmic expressions of these dilemmas, separating the *characters'* judgments and point of view from that of the *films*.
- 3) Politics – Students will learn to be critical viewers of film and to look for the social significance in the apparently neutral image and within the medium itself.

Grade Determination:

*** *Your grade will be determined out of a possible 250 points.* ***

90 points Quizzes (9)

40 points Midterm

30 points Representation Essay

30 points Genre Essay

60 points Final Exam

Quizzes

Students will take a brief, essay-question quiz the class period following most film screenings. Students may use their notes for these quizzes. NOTE: If students miss a quiz, they have one week to make it up (for 50% credit); any quiz not made up within a week of its original date will be graded as a zero.

Midterm

Students will complete a midterm exam partway through the semester, consisting of fill-in-the-blank and essay questions. Students will NOT be allowed to use notes during this exam.

Representation & Genre Essays

Students will complete written essays on two units during the course of the semester.

Final Exam

Students will complete a comprehensive final exam at the end of the course.

Class Schedule:**I. Film Conventions and Aesthetics**

- 1/23 Introduction
1/25 Terminology and Realism/Formalism
Reading: *Understanding Movies* pg. 1-16
- 1/30 *Winter's Bone*
Reading: *UM* ch.7 – "Dramatization"
2/1 Quiz on *Winter's Bone*
Discussion
- 2/6 *Alien*
Reading: *UM* ch. 2 – "Mise-en-Scène"
2/8 Quiz on *Alien*
Discussion
- 2/13 *The Limey*
Reading: *UM* ch. 4 – "Editing"
2/15 Quiz on *The Limey*
Discussion
- 2/20 *Pulp Fiction*
Reading: *UM* pg. 17-45; and ch. 9 – "Writing"
2/22 Quiz on *Pulp Fiction*
Discussion – Putting it all together – Narrative, Cinematography, Editing, Mise-en-Scene

II. Ethics in Film

- 2/27 *Gone Baby Gone*
3/1 Quiz on *Gone Baby Gone*
Discussion
Readings: Ethics reading Moodle
- 3/6 *Michael Clayton*
3/8 Midterm: focused on *Michael Clayton*

III. The Politics of Representation - Contemporary Representations of American Slavery

- 3/13 *Twelve Years a Slave*
3/15 Quiz on *Twelve Years a Slave*
Discussion
Readings: Slavery in Cinema on Moodle
Assigned: Essay on Politics of Representation
- 3/20 *Django Unchained*
3/22 Quiz on *Django Unchained*
Discussion
Readings: comparing *Django* and *Twelve Years...*

3/27 & 3/29 NO CLASS – Spring Break

IV. Genre

- 4/3 Introduction to Genre
Introduction to "The Western"
Readings: *UM* ch. 8 – "Story"
Due: Essay on Politics of Representation
- 4/5 *Stagecoach*
- 4/10 *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*
- 4/12 Quiz on *The Assassination of Jesse James...*
Discussion
Assigned: Essay on Film Genre
- 4/17 Evolution of a Genre – "The Spy Thriller"
The Bourne Ultimatum
- 4/19 Quiz on *The Bourne Ultimatum*
Reading: Spy Thriller reading on Moodle
Discussion
- 4/24 *Spy*
- 4/26 Quiz on *Spy*
Wrap-up Genre Discussion

V. Film and Affirmation

- 5/1 *tbd*
Due: Genre Essay
- 5/3 Summary and Review
- 5/7 8:00-10:00 – **Comprehensive Final Exam**