

## **CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD CINEMA**

Film 2254F

Western University

Film Studies Fall 2018

Screening: Mondays 4:30-7:30 pm (UC-1401)

Lecture/Discussion: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30 pm (UC-1401)

Dr. Joseph Wlodarz

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 4-5:30 pm; Wednesdays 3:30-5 pm and by appt.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course surveys the central industrial, technological, aesthetic, and ideological developments in the history of classical Hollywood cinema. Given the global prominence and influence of Hollywood cinema, much of the course will be focused on the establishment of the Hollywood studio system and its many transformations over the course of the 20th century. We will begin with an analysis of the origins of the medium and its place in American culture at the turn-of-the-century. We will then examine the development of narrative cinematic standards and the rise and consolidation of the Hollywood studio system, paying close attention to genre, stardom, marketing, and popular reception from the 1920s to the 1960s. In addition to key technological developments

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING GUIDELINES

- Class Attendance and Participation [10%]
- Discussion Leading [10%]
- Exams (October 1 & November 5) [10% each]
- Film Analysis (1500 words) [15%]
- Marketing and Reception Analysis (1500 words) [15%]
- Final Exam [30%]

**Attendance and Participation:** You are required to attend all class meetings and screenings for the full duration. Attendance will be taken regularly. Be sure to come to class fully prepared, having read all of the weekly reading assignments, and with your course readings and textbook in hand. Thoughtful participation is highly encouraged and will improve your final participation grade. Lateness, early departures, not having the appropriate readings, texting, or other disruptive behavior will adversely affect your participation grade. More than **THREE** *unexcused* absences will result in a zero for your final participation grade. Only documented medical emergencies—verified through the Dean's office (see below)—will be considered for paper extensions or exam rescheduling. *If you are absent for TEN or more classes (excused or unexcused) you will automatically fail the final exam and the overall course.*

**Laptops, Tablets, Cell Phones:** Laptops/tablets/cell phones are *not* to be used during screenings. You will need to take notes using paper and pens, so be sure to bring these materials to class. Exceptions *may* be granted in the case of students with special needs, but this will only come with official approval from the Dean's office. Laptops/tablets will be permitted during lecture, but only on a probationary basis: if the instructor is distracted two times during the semester by non-note-taking/internet laptop use, the instructor will ban ALL use of laptops/tablets for the remainder of the year. In addition, be sure to turn off cell phones and refrain from text messaging during class. This counts as disruptive behavior and will lower your final participation grade.

**Discussion Leading:** Working with a small group of your fellow classmates, you will lead discussion at least once during the term on the weekly screenings. I will provide a list of guidelines and tips, but each discussion leader will be responsible for presenting a specific question about the film and/or the course readings as well as engaging your fellow students in a discussion about that element. You will need to coordinate with your group members in order to prepare and organize the discussion questions/material, and in most cases I will assess the group as a whole based on the overall quality of the discussion leading.

**Quizzes and Exams:** There will be two 1-hour exams during the term and one comprehensive (3-hour) final exam for the course. The first exam will be administered at the beginning of the screening session on Monday October 1 and t

exam is a comprehensive exam, but it will emphasize course material since the second exam. Finally, there may be periodic *unannounced* reading quizzes given at the beginning of Wednesday lecture sessions; the grades from these quizzes will be calculated into the final Participation and Attendance grade.

**Paper Assignments:** During the term, you will focus your two writing assignments on *one* film made in the United States that is listed on the assignment sheet. The list includes films that will *not* be screened in class but that are relevant to the overall course material. The films will be drawn from the period of 1928-1959. You are encouraged to meet with me about these assignments at any point, especially when expanding on the first paper to write the marketing and reception analysis. The two paper assignments for each term are:

1. **Film Analysis (1500 words min.)** [15%]  
*Due Wednesday October 24 in class*

2. **Marketing and Reception Paper (1500 words min.)** [15%]  
*Due Wednesday December 5 in class*

**\*\*While daily late penalties apply (see below), papers that are over ONE week late will automatically receive a zero. Both paper assignments must also be submitted or you will automatically fail the final exam and the overall course\*\***

**Late Work:** Course papers must be turned in complete and on time. In order to be fair to the entire class, I will not grant individual extensions on paper assignments, so be sure to budget your time accordingly. Late papers will be penalized 5% points per day late (including weekends), except in the case of *properly documented* medical emergencies or illnesses (see below).

**Note on Screenings:** You are *required* to attend weekly screenings on Monday afternoons at 4:30 pm (attendance will be taken). Be sure to arrive to the screenings on time and to follow traditional screening etiquette (turn off cell phones, no talking, no laptops, etc.). If you are ill or have a legitimate excuse, you should set up an appointment to view the film in the study center [UC 1126] sometime before Wednesday's lecture. You may contact the Film Library Assistant, Rebecca Nguy (rnguy3@uwo.ca) (Phone: x85730), to do so.



**Week 7—Oct. 22/24—The MGM Musical**

**Screening:** *Meet Me in St. Louis* (Vincente Minnelli, 1944, 108 min.)

**Reading:** [Lewis]: Pgs. 147-161; 180-90  
& [OWL]: Dyer, “The Perfection of *Meet Me in St. Louis*”  
& [OWL]: Schatz, “Hollywood: The Triumph of the Studio System”

***\*Film Analysis Paper Due Wednesday Oct. 24 at the Beginning of Class\****

**Section III: POSTWAR CRISES and the DECLINE of the STUDIO SYSTEM****Week 8—Oct. 29/31—Realism and the Returning Vet**

**Screening:** *The Best Years of Our Lives* (William Wyler, 1946, 172 min)

**Week 12—Nov. 26/28—Juvenile Delinquency in Widescreen**

**Screening:** *Rebel Without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray, 1955, 111 min.)

**Reading:** [Lewis]: Pgs. 233-243; 247-258; 266-272  
& [OWL]: Belton, “Glorious Technicolor”  
& [OWL]: Noriega, ““Something’s Missing Here!””

**Week 13—December 3/5—Melodrama and the Civil Rights Era**

**Screening:** *Imitation of Life* (Douglas Sirk, 1959, 125 min.)

**Reading:** [OWL] Fassbinder, “Six Films by Douglas Sirk” (excerpt)  
& [OWL] Fischer, “Three-Way Mirror: *Imitation of Life*”

**\*\*Marketing & Reception Analysis Due Wednesday Dec. 5 in Class\*\***

**\*\*FINAL EXAM: SEE SCHEDULE for DATE and TIME\*\***

papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). You should register immediately as a new user by going to <http://www.turnitin.com>. I will provide you with the Class ID # and password as soon as possible. Assignments not handed in to turnitin.com will receive a 0.

**Prerequisites:** Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:** Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and or assignments must apply to their Academic Counseling Office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. *Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Official accommodation is also required for ALL missed assignments (including quizzes).*

Please go to the following site for information on the university Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness: (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>)

For information on the examination services provided by the Student Development Centre, please visit [www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd)

**Mental Health:** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.  
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>

**Disabilities:** Please consult with me during the first three weeks of class regarding disabilities that might require special accommodations.

**Complaints:** If students have a complaint concerning a course in which they are enrolled,

## **GRADING CRITERIA**

### **A+ (90-100):**

**Argument:** Clear development of a specific, challenging and original thesis. The writer has taken significant risks successfully; in the resulting piece, distinctive ideas and content have discovered their necessary distinctive form. Detailed reference to appropriate texts, with evidence of individual response. Ability not only to expound subject but to see it around—subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

**Presentation, structure:** Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. Almost no typographical errors.

**Language Skills:** Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex), with full range of punctuation (including semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses). Graceful style, neither po



**C (60 to 69):**

**Argument:** Reasonably clear development of a thesis, with proper paragraphs. Basic ability to expound ideas, whose development might be rather thin. Effort to support