

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Many significant films have been regarded as “experimental”, “avant-garde”, “visionary”, “modernist”, “underground”, and even “postmodern” — labels that often overlap but may not necessarily be synonymous. Oftentimes these films are also viewed as interlocked in struggle

COURSE MATERIALS

1. Sitney, P. Adams. Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. (available at UWO Bookstore)
2. O'Pray, Michael. Avant-Garde Film: Forms, Themes, and Passions. London: Wallflower, 2003. (available at UWO Bookstore)
3. Additional readings will be posted on OWL.
4. **Course Calendar / List of films to follow**

A NOTE ON "SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS": You will find some readings listed as "Supplementary Readings" in the course calendar. These are just that: supplementary, meaning they may be helpful to read if you have interest or time. These may also be used as material for deepening your own knowledge in preparation for the Oral Exam or Critical Essay. They will NOT be included in any tests, quizzes, or examinations.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

1. A stable internet connection for weekly asynchronous viewing (

A. Class Participation and Attendance

All students are expected to (1) complete all reading assignments and (2) participate in class discussions. Being a critical reader and film viewer, manifested in the ability to dialogue with assigned texts and formulate informed questions or opinions, is a skill that this class will try to foster. Remember that ATTENDANCE IS NOT PARTICIPATION.

Attendance, or physical presence throughout the entire class time, is mandatory and thus will be regularly checked. If you are not in class, you cannot participate in class discussions. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs. University policy on absences and accommodations for legitimate reasons will be observed.

Participation refers to meaningful immersion with the course material, demonstrated through thoughtful, consistent, and collegial engagement in class discussions, group activities, office hour consultations, and other instances where critical thought can be observably performed. This is a Film Studies course and it is therefore a reasonable expectation that you verbalize your insights around the films in discussion-based formats. Unless you have a documented speech disability or a case of debilitating social anxiety recognized by your academic counselor, I expect your engaged participation in each class.

B. Oral Exam

The Oral Exam will be a brief dialogue (30 minutes, give or take) between a small group of students and the instructor on predetermined topics. While the format is a roundtable conversation, each student will be marked individually. The topics will vary from week to week, and may come in the form of defining terms, synthesizing concepts, contextualizing an image, explaining a quote or statement, elaborating on a discussion point, etc. The Oral Exam will take place on time slots that students will sign up for at their convenience and will be ongoing throughout the term.

C. Response Papers

In pairs, students will write two short papers of around 1,000 words each. Students will be assigned to TWO random weeks when they are expected to write their papers.

Students will be asked to analyze clips and/or images related to the assigned films, following a critical prompt based on the week's readings. Students can discuss the overall effect of the audio-visual signifiers, use of craft and technical film aspects, interpret the narrative (if present), etc. A grounding in both film analysis, critical theory, and prior knowledge must be demonstrated to support their response.

D. Critical Essay

In pairs, students will co-author a 3,000-word max. critical essay. You will be provided a number of prompts of which you have to pick one to respond to. have two options in writing this paired essay assignment.

OPTION 1: Students discuss two films (the films may come from a prescribed list or otherwise pre-approved) that combine elements of aesthetic/semiotic/formal/discourse analysis in relation to theoretical concepts discussed in class. Students can discuss points of intersection, convergences vs. divergences, unity or disunity, etc.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Academic Integrity Tutorial

All students are required to enroll in and complete the Centre for Teaching and Learning's Academic Integrity

The full policy is set out here: