COMM 3356: Film and Culture
Monday – Friday 12:30 – 2:45 pm
Anthropology Bldg. Room G-15

Professor: Stacy Barton
Email: sbarton@westga.edu
Office phone: (678) 839 – 4932
Office Location: Humanities 220
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 10:30am – 12:00pm (and most other times via email)
*If you choose to email vs. dropping by, please allow at least 24 hours for a response. You may also call during office hours in lieu of stopping by if you have a relatively brief issue.

Course Description:
In this course students will survey the fundamentals of film history, movie production processes, modes, and tools, as well as engage with aesthetic choice and cultural context. Topics include the invention of the medium, the roles of style and form in spectatorship, how movies create and perpetuate popular culture, and how hegemonic codes of representation shape societal and political norms. Students engage in the material through readings, lectures, screenings, discussions, presentations, written responses, and quizzes.

Course Learning Objective:
Movies and related audio/visual media saturate our society in many ways. They are central to how we communicate, make meaning, and understand the world around us. They not only convey culture, they define it. This course is dedicated to decoding movies through the examination of historical context, theoretical approach, and interactive cultural engagement. Additionally, by gaining an awareness of the various moviemaking processes, forms, and the technological tools involved, cultural consumers of the medium can begin to understand its function as a cultural vehicle. It is essential to see this system in new ways to be able to evaluate, critique, and change our culture(s) should it be, or become, necessary.

Course Learning Outcomes:
- Gain an awareness of American film history
- Learn some modes, processes, and tools of movie production
- Recognize how movies and spectatorship have strong impact on cultural communication and representation, including cultural norms and desires
- Articulate thoughts about various theories surrounding film history, production, and cultural consumption
- Begin to watch films and understand culture differently in your daily life
- Shift towards critical thinking
- Begin to understand how movies are commonly interpreted and why, which should carry over into the way students create their own movies

Textbook Requirement:
American Cinema / American Culture
4th edition, by John Belton (available at the bookstore)
Internet Requirement:
The quizzes (see below) require a reliable Internet connection, and therefore wireless connection is not recommended. For example, if you are in the middle of taking the quiz and your internet connection is lost, you won’t be allowed to retake it. Be sure that your computer won’t go to sleep while you are in progress and kick you off the Internet. It is your responsibility to make sure you have access to a computer and logged into CourseDen in a quiet location where you can concentrate for a maximum uninterrupted timeframe of 2 hours per quiz. Laptops and wired connections are available in the library until 11pm on weeknights.

Assignments & Grading (100 points):

Quizzes (70 points) – 7 times this semester, you’ll take a quiz administered through CourseDen based on that unit’s material only (not cumulative), including the assigned reading material, lecture, relevant discussion topics, as well as all clips and/or full films screened on those subjects. Open book, open note. The quiz will be available on the opening day from 3pm, and can be taken until midnight on closing day (as noted on the course schedule). Once you begin the quiz you are required to complete it in one sitting within a 2-hour time frame. Questions and multiple choice answers will be randomized, and therefore no two quizzes will be the same, thus working with a partner will not work. Budget your time accordingly, planning on an ABSOLUTE maximum of 12 minutes for each question to be able to complete it in the maximum time. These won’t be a “cakewalk” so be prepared to use your brainpower and logic as well as your memory, book, and notes.

Participation (15 points) – ACTIVE and VOCAL engagement in the class discussions on the topic at hand will be required to earn these points. Some days a brief handwritten response will be required at the end of class. Engagement with the material, quality of content, and grammar when applicable will constitute the students’ participation grade for the session.

Final Research Presentation (15 points) – Choose the weekly topic that interests you most and explore it further. Prepare a 3-minute clip from a movie of your choice (NOT one presented in class, in part or in full) that demonstrates strongly a cultural, historical, and/or technological phenomenon studied in class. Then, prepare a 4-5 minute visual presentation (images and text using presentation software such as Prezi, PowerPoint, or Keynote) outlining the relevance of the clip and related theory and how it is tied to society and culture. Practice the presentation ahead of time as you will be cut off at 5 minutes regardless if you finish or not. (Timed from the beginning of the visual presentation only, not counting the screened clip.) Finally, type and bring with you a 2-page, double-spaced summary of the presented ideas and related theory. A grading rubric will be provided.

Grading Scale:
100 – 88.5 = A; 88 – 78.5 = B; 78 – 68.5 = C; 68 – 58.5 = D; 58 and Below = F
**Attendance & Late Work Policy:**

If you miss more than 5 class sessions you WILL fail the course. Excessive tardiness will ALSO result in grade reduction, at my discretion. You are considered tardy if I have already taken roll at the beginning of class. Be present and be on time to have any shot at achieving a satisfactory grade.

Please do NOT email me when you are absent. In fact, there’s no need to mention it. If you know a **day or more** ahead of time you will have to be absent for a scheduled discussion period, contact me and I will provide you with a topic to explore on your own, and you will need to submit a 2 page, double-spaced written response PRIOR to the beginning of the missed class session. Screening days cannot be made up for a participation grade.

Each project or written response will be completed and turned in on time in the correct format and follow all guidelines as outlined to achieve an A. If expecting an A, don’t turn in late work. Projects turned in “next class period late” will start with a 25% reduction in the total points possible, or from a C. Projects turned in after this time will not receive a passing grade. No partial participation points will be given.

**Other Course Policies:**

**Students with Disabilities:**
To ensure students with disabilities (temporary or permanent) can meet all course objectives and requirements, appropriate accommodations will need to be agreed upon by Professor and student. Please provide me with a copy of your packet from Student Services after contacting UWG Accessibility Services (678) 839-6428. Arrange to speak with me during office hours and we can discuss your particular needs.

**Conduct:**
The classroom will be a safe space for diversity and students must remain aware and accepting of each other. Comments of intolerance, including prejudice or bullying, will not be tolerated, nor will sexual harassment. See the student code of conduct for more information.

**Mature Content:**
Some examples used in this course may be explicit and therefore offensive to some. If you have an issue with this at any point in this semester, please speak with me privately.

**Plagiarism:**
It is assumed that all work will be created by you, and you only. Work that has been plagiarized in any way will be given a zero, and reported to the university for further consequences.

**Presentation:**
Because creative work is meant to be seen and talked about, you will be required to share your work with the class. This means you will be required to include your ideas in class discussion and must present your writing in class.
**Research:**
Screening a diverse variety of films, videos, and TV shows at home is necessary to learn to address the medium with a critical eye, and this research will carry over into your class work. Similarly, reading a lot and often is also necessary practice for a successful writer (and college student), so do it.

**UWG Email Policy:**
The University considers students’ MyUWG e-mail account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. It is the student’s responsibility to check email frequently for class, department, and University information.

**No Screens:**
Cell phones, tablets, laptops, and especially text messaging and social media of any kind are not allowed during class sessions. Focus and participate. Period.

**No Eating:**
Crunching and munching is very disruptive, as are delicious food smells. A beverage is acceptable as long as you don't spill it.
**Departmental Information:**

**Film and Video Production Concentration Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will gain an *awareness* of the established forms and modalities of film and video production, the associated technologies and methodologies, as well as the medium’s function as a means of communication and creative expression.

- Students will develop their *understanding* of the forms and modalities of film and video production, the associated technologies and methodologies, as well as the medium’s function as a means of communication and creative expression.

- Students will demonstrate their proficiency with the technologies, modalities and methodologies of film and video production in the *application* of analytical skills within the medium.

**Department of Mass Communications Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will demonstrate *awareness* of mass communications scholarship, i.e., theory/research; paramount economic, ethical, legal/policy, social, and technological issues; and the role of principle personalities and stakeholders within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of press, media competition, media convergence, diversity, and/or social responsibility. ACEJMC defines awareness as familiarity with facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.

- Students will demonstrate *understanding* of mass communications scholarship, i.e., theory/research; paramount economic, ethical, legal/policy, social, and technological issues; and the role of principle personalities and stakeholders within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of press, media competition, media convergence, diversity, and/or social responsibility. ACEJMC defines understanding as assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.

- Students will demonstrate effective *application* of mass communications scholarship, i.e., relate and/or apply concepts, theory/research, and professional principles to analyze and synthesize information, create, develop, produce, and/or write for converging digital, multi-media, and traditional media. ACEJMC defines application as competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

**Common language for course syllabi:**
Please carefully review the following Common Language for all university course syllabi at this url:
http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf
It contains important material pertaining to university policies and responsibilities. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, university, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.
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<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mon. 6/6</td>
<td>Syllabus&lt;br&gt; <strong>Introduction to Film and Culture</strong></td>
<td>Buy Textbook&lt;br&gt; Read Chap. 1 pages 3 - 20</td>
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<td>Tues. 6/7</td>
<td><strong>The Emergence of Cinema</strong>&lt;br&gt;Short Films Screening</td>
<td>Read Chap. 2 pages 21 – 43</td>
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<td>Wed. 6/8</td>
<td><strong>Classic Hollywood Cinema: Story &amp; Structure</strong>&lt;br&gt;Screening: <em>Rear Window</em></td>
<td>Quiz 1 Open until Thursday night at midnight (Ch. 1 &amp; 2)&lt;br&gt;Read Chap. 3 pages 44 – 63</td>
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<td>Thurs. 6/9</td>
<td><strong>Classic Hollywood Cinema: Style</strong>&lt;br&gt;Film Language Group Work&lt;br&gt;Screen 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; half: <em>Citizen Kane</em></td>
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<td>Fri. 6/10</td>
<td>Screen 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; half: <em>Citizen Kane</em>&lt;br&gt;Discussion</td>
<td>Quiz 2 Open until Sunday night at midnight (Ch. 3 &amp; Handout)&lt;br&gt;Read Chap. 4 pages 64 – 85</td>
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<td>Mon. 6/13</td>
<td><strong>The Studio System</strong></td>
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<td>Tues. 6/14</td>
<td>Screening: <em>Sunset Blvd.</em>&lt;br&gt;Discussion</td>
<td>Read Chap. 6 pages 125 – 141</td>
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<td>Wed. 6/15</td>
<td><strong>Melodrama</strong>&lt;br&gt;Screening: <em>Far from Heaven</em></td>
<td>Quiz 3 Open until Thursday night at midnight (Ch. 4 &amp; 6)&lt;br&gt;Read Chap. 8 pages 163 – 194</td>
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<td>Thurs. 6/16</td>
<td><strong>American Comedy</strong>&lt;br&gt;Clips Screening</td>
<td>Read Chap. 10 pages 221 – 242</td>
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<td>Fri. 6/17</td>
<td><strong>Film Noir</strong>&lt;br&gt;Clips Screening</td>
<td>Quiz 4 Open until Sunday night at midnight (Ch. 8 &amp; 10)&lt;br&gt;Read Chap. 13 pages 299 – 321</td>
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<td>Mon. 6/20</td>
<td><strong>Hollywood &amp; the Cold War</strong>&lt;br&gt;Screening: <em>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</em></td>
<td>Read Chap. 11 pages 243 – 271</td>
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<td>Tues. 6/21</td>
<td><strong>The Making of the West</strong>&lt;br&gt;Clips Screening</td>
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<td>Wed. 6/22</td>
<td>Screening: <em>3:10 to Yuma</em></td>
<td>Quiz 5 Open until Thursday night at midnight (Ch. 11 &amp; 13)&lt;br&gt;Read Chap. 12 pages 272 – 295</td>
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<td>Thurs. 6/23</td>
<td><strong>Horror and Science Fiction</strong>&lt;br&gt;Screening: <em>Dark City</em></td>
<td>Read Chap. 15 pages 341 – 363</td>
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<td>Fri. 6/24</td>
<td><strong>Counterculture: The 1960’s</strong>&lt;br&gt;Clips Screening</td>
<td>Quiz 6 Open until Sunday night at midnight (Ch. 12 &amp; 15)&lt;br&gt;Read Chap. 16 pages 364 – 386</td>
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<td>Mon. 6/27</td>
<td><strong>The Film School Generation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Clips Screening</td>
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<td>Tues. 6/28</td>
<td>Screening: <em>Taxi Driver</em></td>
<td>Read Chap. 17 pages 387 – 421</td>
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<td>Wed. 6/29</td>
<td><strong>21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Century Cinema</strong>&lt;br&gt;Screening: <em>Tangerine</em></td>
<td>Quiz 7 Open until Thursday night at midnight (Ch. 16 &amp; 17)</td>
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<td>Thurs. 6/30</td>
<td>Final Presentations</td>
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