

ART HISTORY (ARTHI) 2594-001 (1373)

Topics in Film: Cities in Cinema

SYLLABUS

Fall 2015

Tuesdays, 6:00 PM to 9:30 PM, Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State Street, Theater One (Second Floor)

Meets September 8 through December 15, with no class December 8 (critique week)

Instructor: Fred Camper, fcamper@saic.edu (and available for individual meetings by appointment)

This syllabus is subject to change during the semester.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course has three goals. First, it is a film course, and will try to show how films create feelings and express meanings through the materials of cinema, compositions and camera movements and light, rhythm and editing and sound. Second, it is a course on how cities are represented in cinema, and a variety of attitudes toward cities in different films will be explored, and those attitudes will be connected to the ways that humans think about cities. Finally, and mostly through the one required book, it will be about cities themselves, how we see them and navigate them and remember them, and how we might redesign them.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

It is expected that in this class you will (a) learn to view and analyze films as works of visual expression that speak through the unique language of cinema, understanding, for instance, the implications of a particular choice of camera angle for the meaning of that image and possibly for the whole film; (b) develop thoughts about how cities are represented in various films, and on what attitudes toward cities those representations might express or evoke; (c) develop some ideas about how humans perceive and navigate cities. Your final research paper should reflect thoughts in all three of these areas, but

especially the first two. The in-class exam on the reading should demonstrate your knowledge of (c), at least as the book deals with it.

TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THIS COURSE

You must read this syllabus carefully, and all emails and Canvas messages from the instructor.

1. Attendance

You must attend all class for the entire sessions, and be attentive during class, which means that except when used for note-taking during lectures all devices must be closed, no screens visible. You must view the films shown attentively and silently, and all screens, phones and computers and other devices, absolutely **must** be closed during screenings. You may miss class only for a “reasonable cause,” as defined below by the School below, and then do makeup work for that class.

SAIC policy states that students are expected to attend all classes regularly and on time.

Students should miss class only with reasonable cause. If a student needs to miss class with reasonable cause, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor to receive instruction for how to make up for the missed class. It is the instructor’s responsibility to give this information to the student as his/her/their schedule permits. Missing class for other than a reasonable cause may jeopardize the student’s academic standing in the class. In this course, short written make-up assignments will be provided for those who miss classes for a reasonable cause, assignments that will require outside reading and film viewing.

In art history courses, if a student misses **more** than two classes, whether or not for a reasonable cause, the student will fail the class. An exception can be made only for an exceptional reason, and only for missing three classes; more than three missed classes for

any reason is, by school-wide policy, an automatic no credit, if the student does not withdraw from the class prior to the deadline for withdrawal, which is Tuesday, November 3, 2015, with a grade of "W."

Reasonable cause for missing a class might include:

- Illness or hospitalization (the student should contact Health Services, who will relay information to the faculty in whose class the student is enrolled)
- Observation of a religious holiday
- Family illness or death

2. Required Reading

You are required to complete reading of pages 1 to 139 of the book *The Image of the City*, by Kevin Lynch, by the class of November 3. Additional reading will be required for the writing of your final paper.

3. Written Assignments

Three written assignments are due during the semester. There is a short written paper due Thursday, October 1, at 10:00 AM. A multiple choice exam on the required reading will be given in class on November 3. The second paper, a longer research paper, is due December 10 at 10:00 AM. Please note that this is critique week and our class will not meet that week. **All assignments must be submitted on time, and you must obtain a passing grade in all three assignments in order to get credit for the class.** In the case of the two papers, if you make a good faith effort to follow the assignments but the result is a bit below passing, you may be offered the opportunity to do a rewrite.

Details on the assignments follows.

1. Write a short descriptive and analytical paper on one of the feature-length films shown in class. It is probably best to choose one of the films shown the first four weeks; you can choose a film being shown later, if you see it in advance, but you may not do as well without the benefit of a class discussion. Plan on viewing this

film at least twice. The core of your paper should be a discussion of how certain cinematic techniques create emotion, meaning, or both. It might be best to choose a single scene, or moment, or a single technique used in several different places. Do not summarize the plot. Do not explain why you did or did not like the movie. Instead, demonstrate an ability to try to understand how cinema works. You should give specific examples, with DVD running times. Describe a composition, or a cut, or a camera movement. You can discuss the use of sound but only if it's an unusual and creative use. Do not tell us how the music enhances the mood. Do not discuss acting or the script, except briefly if either is related to the visual techniques you are analyzing. Each argument in your paper should take the form of discussing and describing a shot or technique, and then suggesting its possible effects. It should demonstrate your ability to discuss how the language of cinema creates expression and meaning in a film. Length: 500-750 words. Due Thursday, October 1, at 10:00 AM. Submit all papers electronically, on Canvas.

2. There will be a multiple-choice exam on the book, *The Image of the City*, pages 1-139, in class on November 3. This exam will test your knowledge of basic concepts in the book. There will not be questions requiring that you remember particular streets or buildings in Boston or Jersey City. However, you will have to read the book carefully to pass. This will be a closed book exam, with all devices closed, and with no earphones or headsets allowed. You will have ten minutes for ten questions. Passing will show you have acquired a basic knowledge of one set of ways, those of the author of this book, of looking at cities. Persons with a documented reason for missing class that day will be offered a make-up exam one week later that will require staying after class.
3. The final paper will be a research paper with several components. You will be asked to choose a feature film shown in the class, or a film from a short list to be added to this syllabus in a few weeks. You will be asked to fully analyze the film in the manner of assignment 1, but in more detail, and to use that analysis to also show how the city the film is set in is presented, and what attitude the film takes toward the presence of the city. This should be the longest portion of your paper; you can also analyze how the style of the film expresses themes other than the presence of the city. Finally, you will be asked to comment on the ways in which a plausible way of seeing a city, perhaps one suggested by the required reading or by another text on

cities that you might choose, differs from the way the city is shown in the film. This assignment will require you to read, and make reference to within your paper, at least three texts, two on the film and one on cities, though the last could be the required book. Texts on the films will be placed on the Canvas site. You may choose other texts, but they must be from a reputable source, such as a book or an edited Web site, and not from “Joe’s movie blog” or some cinema chat room. If you wish to write on one of the short films shown in class, contact the instructor for permission; You will likely be required to view additional related short films and include some in your paper. Length 2000-3000 words. Due Thursday, December 10, at 10:00 AM. Submit to Canvas.

Your two written papers will receive a numerical grade, based on how well you fulfill the assignment, the intelligence of your arguments, and the quality of your writing. Points will be deducted both for small language mistakes such as confusing “its” with “it’s” as well as for awkward word choices and poorly stated arguments. Please utilize the School’s Writing Center (see syllabus below) **in advance** of submitting your paper (you will need to make an appointment with them well in advance), if you know that you have problems writing in clear English. A grade of 75 or above is passing.

SCREENING LIST

Below are all the features and some of the short films that will be shown in class. The name of the director follows the film. Basic information on each film is easily obtainable on the Web. Additional short films will also be shown in the lecture portion. Except for the first week, note that each feature is also shown on the previous Saturday, giving you the opportunity to see it twice.

September 8: *The Man With the Movie Camera* (Vertov)

September 15: *Metropolis* (Lang)

September 22: *Man’s Castle* (Borzage)

Also three short films: *Rain* (Ivens) and *Halsted Street* (Nelson) and *Mirror Manhattan* (Frye)

September 29: *I Confess* (Hitchcock)

Also at least one short film: *The Wonder Ring* (Brakhage)

October 6: *Artists and Models* (Tashlin)

October 13: *Los Olvidados* (Buñuel)

Also at least one short film: *Visions of a City* (Jordan)

October 20: *Europa '51* (Rossellini)

October 27: *L'Argent* (Bresson)

November 3: *Le Joli Mai* (Marker)

November 10: *Pont du Nord* (Rivette)

November 17: *Early Spring* (Ozu)

November 24: *Collateral* (Mann)

Also at least one short film: *The Girl Chewing Gum* (Smith)

December 1: *Breaking News* (To)

Also at least one short film: *City Streaming* (Brakhage)

December 15: *Playtime* (Tati)

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

From the SAIC Student Handbook:

Academic misconduct includes both plagiarism and cheating, and may consist of: the submission of the work of another as one's own; unauthorized assistance on a test or assignment; submission of the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all instructors; or the failure to properly cite texts or ideas from other sources.

Academic integrity is expected in all coursework, including online learning. It is assumed that the person receiving the credit for the course is the person completing the work. SAIC has processes in place, including LDAP authentication, to verify student identity.

Specific procedures for faculty to follow in the case of academic misconduct are detailed in the Student Handbook.

Additional resources for students:

- Read "Plagiarism: How to Recognize It and Avoid It: a short [guide](#) prepared by the Faculty Senate Student Life Subcommittee in 2004.
- Read the Flaxman Library's [quick guide](#) titled "AVOID PLAGIARISM."

INSTRUCTOR'S STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

The statement above is official school policy. I want to add some thoughts of my own.

As an instructor, I read a paper optimistically, hopefully, looking for insights from the writer. When I discover that even a single sentence has been pasted in from some Web site or copied from a book without attribution, my heart sinks in disappointment. What I had thought was learning has become cheating. There is nothing wrong with using the ideas or the writing of others if you **cite your sources**. Text copied from others should be in quote marks, or set off with an indentation. Ideas from other sources must be accompanied by a citation. But also, your papers are required to be primarily based on your own ideas and observations. A great way to use an outside source, therefore, would be to disagree. Another way would be to use it to support your own observations, by providing different examples of the point made. **Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on your paper, and may also result in your failing the course.**

ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) to schedule an appointment. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to your instructors. This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC is located within the Wellness Center on the 13th floor of 116 S Michigan Ave. and can be reached via phone at 312.499.4278 or email at dlrc@saic.edu.

WRITING CENTER INFORMATION

The Writing Center

MacLean Center Basement, 112 S. Michigan Ave., B1-03

Fall and Spring Semester Hours Monday–Thursday 9:00

a.m.–7:15 p.m.

Friday 9:00 a.m.–5:15 p.m.

4:15–7:15 p.m. are designated as walk-in hours Monday–Thursday

SAIC offers free, hour-long writing tutorials at the Writing Center, which is located in the basement of MacLean. Tutors are available to assist all currently enrolled students with any stage of the writing process.

Appointments

To schedule an appointment with a Writing Center tutor, students first need to create an account through the online sign-up system:

<https://www.supersaas.com/schedule/saic/WritingCenter>.

Once students have set up their own account, they may sign up for appointments. Weekly standing appointments are available upon request. When students come to their tutoring appointments, they should make sure to bring their assignments with them and have any work printed out.

Online schedule instructions are available outside of the Writing Center suite (in the hallway outside of the MacLean Center B1-03).

Contact Information

Leila Wilson, Writing Center Coordinator: lwilson@saic.edu or 312.345.3588

Writing Center Suite: 312.345.9131 (Call to see if there are any last-minute openings.)