EXPRESSIVE CULTURE: FILM
[ V55.0750 ]

SPRING 2007

Professor: Bill Simon

Preceptors: Michael Dow
Derek Kane-Maddock
Jennifer Zwarich

Office Hours:
Tuesday, 10-12
room 604, 719 Broadway

TBA
TBA
TBA

Course Syllabus

Course Requirements:  

* 3 brief (1-page) response essays
* 2 brief (3-page) essays
* 1 Mid-Term essay exam
* 1 Final essay take-home exam (8-10 pages)
* Class participation

Grade Distribution:  

10%
20%
20%
40%
10%

Course Policies:

Attendance to all lectures and recitation sections is mandatory. We will take attendance in each class, and three or more unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade.

All work must be handed in on time except in the case of serious illness, medical emergency, or some other compelling mitigating circumstances. Failure to hand in work on time will result in the lowering of your grade. Incomplete grades and extensions will not be given without documented evidence of hardship (e.g., medical problems).

Plagiarism (quoting, presenting, or paraphrasing someone else’s ideas as if they were your own without appropriate footnote and bibliographic citation) will result in a grade of F. See last page of this syllabus for detailed definition.

Educational Objectives:

This course will examine a certain tendency in American narrative cinema during the 1960s and in the first half of the 1970s. This tendency can be generally defined as putting into dialogue two characteristics: 1) innovation in narrative structure and the use of genre; and 2) a critical perspective towards aspects of American culture and politics. The course is designed to provide an introduction to film as an art form and as an instance of cultural production as

Continued on next page
well as a case-study for understanding film in relation to historical, political, social and cultural discourses. In pursuing the study of film in this manner, the course proposes a central methodology for understanding film as well as other artistic and cultural products. The introductory function of the course includes developing an understanding of the specificity of film form and style and the critical vocabulary we use to understand film form, style, and narration.

The following book is required for the course and is available for purchase at the N.Y.U. Bookstore, 18 Washington Place:


All other readings listed below will be available on Blackboard.

Course Schedule

**January 17:**

Introduction to Course Subject Matter and Methodology

Film: *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)

Readings:


* For recitation sections on January 19:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 218-263, 201-202

**January 24:**

The Cold War and the Arms Race

Film: *Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Stanley Kubrick, 1964)

Continued on next page


• For recitation sections on January 26:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 74-109, 111-161

January 31:

Outlaws, Violence, and Radical Chic

Film: Bonnie and Clyde (Arthur Penn, 1967)


• For recitation sections on February 2:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 317-337, 397-401, 463-468

Assignment: Response essay

February 7:

The Western and the Vietnam War

Film: The Wild Bunch (Sam Peckinpah, 1968)


- For recitation sections on February 9:
  
  Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 162-217, 326-329

Assignment: Response essay

February 14:

Space, Evolution, and Radical Narrative

Film: 2001: A Space Odyssey (Stanley Kubrick, 1968)


- For Recitation Sections on February 16:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 264-303, 176

Assignment: 3-page essay

February 21:

Normalcy and Monsters

Film: Night of the Living Dead (George Romero, 1968)


Continued on next page
• For recitation sections on February 23:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 329-332

February 28:

Chicago 1968

Film: Medium Cool (Haskell Wexler, 1969)

Readings: Patterson, pp. 690-709.


• For recitation sections on March 2:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 338-381

Assignment: Midterm: 3-page essay

March 7:

The Mafia and Post-War America

Film: The Godfather, Part One (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972)


• For recitation sections on March 9:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 136, 229-230, 341

March 14: Spring Break

Continued on next page
March 21: The Outlaw Couple

Film: Badlands (Terence Malick, 1973)


Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 293-300

Assignment: Response essay

March 28: Private Eyes and Capitalism

Film: Chinatown (Roman Polanski, 1974)


- For recitation sections on March 30:

April 4: Paranoia and Conspiracy, I

Film: The Conversation (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974).


Ryan and Kellner, pp. 95-105.

- For recitation sections on April 6:

Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 291-292

Continued on next page
Assignment: 3-page essay

April 11:
Paranoia and Conspiracy II

Film: The Parallax View (Alan J. Pakula, 1974)


April 18: Assassination Complex, I

Film: Taxi Driver (Martin Scorsese, 1976)


- For recitation section on April 20:

Bordwell and Thompson pp. 464

Assignment: Final take-home essay exam

April 25:
Assassination Complex, II

Film: Nashville (Robert Altman, 1975)

Readings: "Robert Altman Seminar." Dialogue on Film vol. 4, no. 5, American Film Institute, pp. 2-24.


Bordwell and Thompson, pp. 332-336

- No recitation sections. Instead, preceptors will have additional office hours (times TBA) to discuss papers.