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Dabney 311

En/VC 161: The New Hollywood

This course examines the post-classical era of Hollywood filmmaking with a focus on the late 1960s through the mid-1970s, during what is often called Hollywood's "second golden age." This was a period of significant formal experimentation and development, especially in the representation of sexuality and violence, as a new ratings system fostered the exploration of more mature themes in cinema. We will study American culture and politics as well as films of this era, as we consider the relation between broader social transformations and the development of new narrative conventions and cinematic techniques. We will also attend to important changes in the film industry and their influence on this body of work.

This course also develops your knowledge of the techniques and vocabulary—the visual literacy—required to analyze films. As in other advanced English and visual culture courses you will continue to work on your skills as interpreters of texts and as writers of persuasive arguments about them. You will do this through in-class discussions of the films, short essays that require you to analyze and develop an argument about specific clips, a longer essay that invites you to explore your own thematic and/or stylistic interests, and through frequent participation in online discussions.

Written Assignments

- 2 short, focused analytic papers
- 1 longer analytic paper on film(s) and topic of your choosing
- proposal for final paper
- position paper to select a final film for the course
- weekly participatory writing assignments (via discussion board)

Two 600-word analytic papers: during the second and third weeks of term, you will be asked to analyze and develop an argument about a specific film clip. The purpose is to help you hone the skills necessary for close "readings" of visual language. Each paper will be due before the beginning of class on the day in which we discuss the film. These papers must be turned in on time.

1500-word analytic paper: this assignment is due at the end of term on a topic of your choosing about any one or two films on the syllabus, developed in consultation with the professor. Extensions must be requested in advance; significantly late papers (more than two days past deadline will receive minimal or no written comments).

100-word proposal for final paper: you will develop a topic and provisional thesis for the final paper in advance of our one-on-one meeting. The proposal must be turned in on time.

300-word paper on final film: students will choose a final film that relates to the themes, aesthetics, or other features covered during the course. Each student will make a case for the film they would like us to watch: why should we choose it? Students will select the film from a short list. The final film can be outside the New Hollywood period.

Participatory writing assignments: Over seven weeks you will be asked to share a short response to a film or to a classmates' writing. Prompts will be sent via email and posted on canvas. They may ask you to analyze or reflect on a moment in a film, post a compelling clip or shot, pose or answer discussion questions. There will be at least two options each week, but you need to complete only one (seven contributions total). I will not be grading these, but I will be reviewing contributions and making posts of my own.

Grading (see Grading Contract at the end of this document)

Laptops, etc.

Experience has taught me that it is better to ban laptops, ipads, etc. from the classroom rather than try to monitor relevant use. Research shows that hand-written notes result in better retention and a deeper understanding of material.

Special Accommodations

If you have a health issue or learning or physical disability that requires accommodation, please let me know immediately.

Outside Sources

Do not consult outside sources for the first two short papers, including books, articles, the internet, published or unpublished papers, etc. I am interested in how *you* see and interpret the assigned clips. You may use outside sources for the other assignments, with proper notation. You are *always* allowed to consult a source such as IMDB for information regarding character names, cast, and credits (but not for plot summary or analysis) and to look up various film terms ("sound off," "low-angle shot," etc.). I will also send you a **Film Terms** sheet with key terms to use in writing about film.

Hixon Writing Center

The Hixon Writing Center is an invaluable resource for student writers who are looking to improve their academic writing, either for a specific assignment or in general. Professional and peer tutors can help you work to develop your ideas, clarify arguments, refine thesis statements, write with greater precision and clarity, etc. For more information on the Hixon Writing Center, including scheduling an appointment, see <http://writing.caltech.edu/>

Films

There are two copies of each film available on reserve at Sherman-Fairchild Library, which also has portable dvd players that you can check out. I am working on having digital copies of the films made available as well.

Film and Assignment Schedule

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| March 29 | Introduction: Classical vs. Post-Classical Hollywood |
| March 31 | Old School: <i>The Maltese Falcon</i> (Warner Bros. 1941) |
| April 5 | The End of Classical Hollywood: <i>Psycho</i> (Hitchcock, 1960) |
| | 600-word paper due in class |
| April 7 | Movies that Changed Hollywood 1: <i>Bonnie and Clyde</i> (Penn, 1967) |
| April 12 | Movies that Changed Hollywood 2: <i>The Graduate</i> (Nichols, 1967) |
| | 600-word paper due in class |
| April 14 | <i>The Graduate</i> (continued) |
| April 19 | The Death of the Western: <i>The Wild Bunch</i> (Peckinpah, 1969) |
| April 21 | The Rebirth of the Western: <i>Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid</i> (Hill, 1969) |
| April 26 | Is War Hell? <i>MASH</i> (Altman, 1970) |

April 28	Cinema without Rules: <i>A Clockwork Orange</i> (Kubrick, 1971)
May 3	Male Fragility: <i>Deliverance</i> (Boorman, 1972)
May 5	New Classical Hollywood: <i>The Godfather</i> (Coppola, 1972)
May 9	300-word paper on choice for final class film
May 10	Neo-Noir: <i>Chinatown</i> (Polanski, 1974)
May 12	Woman's Picture: <i>Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore</i> (Scorsese, 1974)
May 17	The Post-Classical Musical: <i>Nashville</i> (Altman, 1975)
May 19	Paranoid Cinema: <i>Taxi Driver</i> (Scorsese, 1976)
May 24	<i>Taxi Driver</i> (continued)
	The End of New Hollywood: <i>Jaws</i> (Spielberg, 1975)
May 26	<i>Jaws</i> (continued)
May 27	100-word final paper proposal due
May 30	Meetings (seniors) to discuss final papers
May 31	Final Film: Class Choice
June 2	Meetings (non-seniors) to discuss final papers
June 3	1500-word essay due (seniors)
June 10	1500-word essay due (non-seniors)

Grading Contract

I am trying something different with grading for this course. I will read all your written work and comment extensively on analytic papers (something I am well known for anyway), but I will not be assigning grades for individual assignments. Your grade will primarily reflect the amount of work you do for the course. There are a couple of goals. The first is to encourage you to focus on substantive feedback—the comments that can help improve your prose, your selection and use of evidence, and the development of persuasive arguments—rather than on a not very meaningful, letter-grade reveal at the end. The other goal is to allow you to relax and take more chances with your writing.

The Contract

--students will attend class (unless illness or personal emergency intervenes—please notify professor in advance) and one-on-one meetings and participate in class. Participation means showing up having watched the film, prepared to contribute to our discussion.

--students will complete participatory writing assignments on time.

--students will complete all papers and the proposal. Papers will be turned in on time or, for the final paper, under the extension policy laid out in the syllabus. All but the final paper is designed to facilitate class participation or to help you prepare for writing the final paper--these need to be submitted on time.

--all papers and the proposal must meet minimum standards. These standards will be laid out in advance of the assignments.

If you meet these expectations, you will receive a final course grade no lower than a B+.

Grade	Number of Unexcused Non-Participation Days	Number of Missed Participatory Writing Assignments	Number of Papers Below Minimum Standards*	Number of Missed Papers/ Proposal
B+	≤1	≤1	0	0
B	≤1	≤2	0	0
B-	≤2	≤2	0	0
C+	≤3	≤2	0	0
C	≤4	≤2	0	0
F	≤4	≤3	≤1	≤1

*Papers that don't meet minimum standards can be revised and resubmitted.

Students must meet all requirements in a row to earn that grade. A student taking the course pass/fail must meet the requirements for a C to pass the course.

Recording participation:

At the end of each week you will assess your participation level for that week.

Earning a higher grade:

A student who achieves a B-range grade can earn an A-range grade by:

--submitting drafts of both 600-word papers and submitting revised final versions that respond to feedback (as opposed to correcting small errors only). Submitting drafts are worth the effort it takes, because revision is the best way to improve writing;

and/or

--outstanding participation. Outstanding participation means attending class (no more than two absences, whether excused or unexcused), having watched the assigned film for that day, making frequent contributions to class discussion, and preferably engaging with the comments/questions of your peers as well as the professor. Perfunctory contributions to participatory writing assignments on canvas will jeopardize a record of outstanding participation. I value participation highly because it reflects both effort and understanding of the course material and improves the experience of everyone in the class including me.

A student who achieves a C-range grade can earn a B-range grade by:

--submitting drafts of both 600-word papers and submitting revised final versions that respond to feedback (as opposed to correcting small errors only);

and

--missing no more than four classes, whether excused or unexcused.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Every assignment must represent independent work. Plagiarism is the wrongful use of another person's ideas by representing them as one's own. Plagiarism occurs when the general thoughts of another person and/or specific sentences and passages from another writer's work are appropriated without proper

attribution in the form of a footnote or endnote. Plagiarism applies to unattributed material that is lifted from unpublished as well as published work and material from the internet. You may discuss the topics with other class members—indeed, I encourage you to do so because it's fun to talk about films—but written assignments must be your own. Plagiarism is considered a violation of the grading contract; plagiarized papers cannot be rewritten.