

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

433.36 Film

3 credit hours

Winter 2011

Dr. Nicholas P. Greco

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Friday, 12:40-3:15.

Office Hours: Wednesday, 8:30-11:30, or by appointment.

SYLLABUS

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the history of cinema and fundamental ideas in the theory of film. It examines how consumers of film engage with this very important and influential cultural product. A large part of this course is dedicated to the notion of film literacy, and emphasizes a critical perspective on communication as a cultural process.

Over the course of the semester, we will watch film clips, as well as some full feature films. Note that these films might contain scenes of violence, coarse language and scenes of sexuality, which some might find offensive. This course is not meant to be an exercise in polemics, but rather an opportunity to develop a sense of critical consumption. Through this course, it is hoped that a Christian approach to the consumption of popular culture texts be developed.

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through participation in lectures, classroom discussion and completion of the course requirements:

1. The student will be familiar with the major elements of the field of film studies;
2. The student will understand the various ways in which film might be discussed, within the realm of communication theory;
3. The student will be able to engage with cinematic cultural products in a critical manner;
4. The student will have a basic understanding of how a film is created.

C. COURSE TEXTS

Required: Monaco, James. *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media and Beyond*. 4th Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

D. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance, participation and reading of the course text: It is only in the best interest of the student if he or she attends each class and, in fact, consistent attendance is required. Each student is expected to read the assigned course texts and be prepared to contribute to a meaningful discussion based on those readings. It is on this participation that a portion of the final grade is based. Each student is expected to arrive to class promptly for its beginning.

2. Readings Quizzes: There will be unannounced quizzes throughout the semester, consisting of short answer and multiple choice questions. These quizzes will be based on the readings. A student will receive no marks for quizzes missed, nor will they be able to write them at a later date.

3. Film Review: Watching movies is a requirement for this course. The student is required to submit a 5 page review of any movie that the student chooses. The student should consider more than simply the question of whether the movie is “good” or not. One of the purposes of this assignment is to allow the student to begin to write about what is going on in a film and how one responds to the medium. The student is required to consult external sources in his or her review.

4. Major Paper: The Major Paper (8-10 pages) should demonstrate a critical engagement with a particular film and must demonstrate the integration of course materials and concepts. The student is free to choose whatever film he or she wishes to discuss, and the student is free to explore any element of the film for discussion. The paper must draw from 5-8 academic sources, including the course textbook. Failure to do so will result in a loss of marks.

5. Film Project: The student must create a short film (5-8 minutes in length). The film must be submitted on DVD, along with a 4 page written portion detailing what was done in the film and why. The student must consider course materials in justifying the content and form of the film project.

E. GRADING SUMMARY

Attendance/Participation:	10%
Readings Quizzes:	15%
Film Review:	15%
Major Paper:	30%
Film Project:	30%

Excellent	A+	4.0	91-100	Satisfactory	C+	2.5	67-69
	A		85-90	Adequate	C	2.0	63-66
	A-		80-84		C-		60-62
Very Good	B+	3.5	77-79	Marginal	D+	1.0	57-59
Good	B	3.0	73-76		D		53-56
	B-		70-72		D-		50-52
				Failure	F	0.0	<50

F. COURSE POLICIES

Full text to the academic policies, procedures and regulations of Providence College can be found online in the Student Handbook (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/student_life/) and the College Academic Calendar (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/programs/registrars_office/calendar/).

1. **Class Attendance Policy:** Attendance is mandatory. Missing more than 5 classes **for any reason** will result in a failing grade in the course.
2. **Late Assignment Policy:** Assignments are due immediately at the beginning of class on the date on which they are due. Assignments not remitted at that time will be accepted by hand or in my mailbox with a 10% penalty only until 4:30pm on the day that the assignment is due. Any assignments turned in after 4:30pm of the due day will be accepted but will receive a grade of 0. As there will be no extensions granted for any assignments, please note their due dates.
3. **Written Assignment Format Policy:** All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, using Times New Roman font (12-point only), with 1-inch margins on all four sides of the page, and include proper pagination. In addition, the text must be left-justified. The paper must follow Turabian style. Written assignments may be double-sided. The text should also be free of errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. The paper should be stapled together at the top left corner, without any type of plastic or paper binding. **Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a**

loss of marks. Papers without a proper bibliography or any proper citations will receive a mark of 0, unless otherwise exempted by the professor.

4. Plagiarism: Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all its various forms, and will be held accountable for doing so by the policy on Academic Conduct in the Student Handbook (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/student_life/). One particularly problematic breach of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is stealing from the ideas and writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. For an elaboration of the nature, types, and prevention of plagiarism, see the Providence College document entitled "Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing," in the Providence College Academic Formation Guide available in the Bookstore.

5. Information and Communication Technologies in the Classroom: **Student use of information and communication technologies for purposes other than class note-taking is not allowed in the classroom, as students are expected to give their total attention to class activities.** Use of cell-phones or iPods is never appropriate in the classroom, and use of laptop computers to play games, chat with others, browse the internet, or engage material not related to the class is always distracting to classmates and disrespectful to the instructor. Unlike some other post-secondary institutions, Providence has not yet found it necessary to ban laptops from the classroom, or prevent wireless internet access in classrooms. Only judicious use of them will keep it that way.

This is a Communications and Media class. As such, the exploration of new communication technologies is encouraged. However, unauthorized use of laptops and other information and communication technologies in this class will not be tolerated.

G. COURSE OUTLINE

January 14: Introduction; Film

January 21: Thinking about film
Kevin Kelly, "Idea Lab: Becoming Screen Literate," *The New York Time* (21 November 2008), <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/23/magazine/23wwln-future-t.html?scp=1&sq=kevin%20kelly%20film&st=cse>>
Film as an Art
Monaco, 24-73.

January 28: Technology of film
Monaco, 76-167.

- February 4: Film Language: Signs and Syntax
Monaco, 170-249.
The Royal Tenenbaums (Wes Anderson, 2001)
- February 11: Film History: Economics and Politics
Monaco, 252-317.
- February 18: Science Fiction
Children of Men (Alfonso Cuarón, 2006)
- February 25: Film History: Esthetics
Monaco, 318-431.
Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1983)
Guest Lecture: Rob Haacke
- March 4: Film Theory
Monaco, 434-477.
Film Review DUE
- March 11: **READING WEEK**
- March 18: Film in the context of other media.
Monaco, 480-575.
- March 25: Animation
Spirited Away (Hayao Miyazaki, 2001)
- April 1: Multimedia
Monaco, 578-637.
- April 8: Film Festival/Conclusions
Film Project DUE