Syllabus

Course Goals: This is a 300-level course with a substantial number of film screenings and readings that is an intensive study of the history and styles of the film noir genre focusing upon films with female protagonists. Students not able to undertake the serious demands required by the pace of the film screenings, the reading list as well as the upper division level expectations for the writing assignments should re-consider enrollment in this class. This course would be very difficult for a student who has not had a previous film studies course. The critical methodologies of the course include genre and gender studies, historical examination, cultural studies analyses, psychoanalytic emphases, and analyses of directors’ filmmaking techniques and styles. This course fulfills a course for the Film Studies Minor (for information, about the Minor, please see Dr. McCormack), a literature or writing elective for English majors and minors, and a general elective for students with all other majors and minors.

Books for the course (**NOTE: Use the editions of these texts in the University Bookstore**)

1. Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art: An Introduction (Seventh Edition)
3. Coursebook (includes directors’ biographies and critical essays)—purchase at Central Reproduction—Monroe 236
4. Film Buffs Fall Film Schedule: see screening dates and times as well as summaries of assigned films
5. Videotapes of all films in the course are on reserve in the library for this course for your convenience. They cannot be taken out of the library.
6. Bordwell and Thompson is also on reserve in the library, but you are required to buy and bring Bordwell and the Coursebook on days we will discuss them.

Screenings for the Course:

Attendance at the screenings is not required; these screenings are provided to you so that you can see the films projected and in Surround Sound quality. You are required to have studied each film by the date on which it will be discussed.
Schedule of Films, Readings, and Written Assignments:

NOTE: Bordwell assignments are complete chapters, unless otherwise indicated

8-31: Introduction to the course
9-1: Screening: Double Indemnity; BO 214; 7:30 (all screenings are in BO 214 at 7:30 unless otherwise indicated on syllabus)
9-2: Discussion of Double Indemnity and Kaplan: “Women in Film Noir,” “Double Indemnity”; Coursebook: “World War II and Film Noir”

9-6: Labor Day holiday: no screening or class
9-7: Bordwell, “The Significance of Film Form” and “Film Genre,” 107-118 as well as cont’d. discussion of Thursday’s film and readings

9-8: Screening: The Lady from Shangai
9-9: Discussion of The Lady from Shangai and readings: Kaplan: “The Dark Continent of Film Noir” (183-186 & 193-196); Bordwell, “Narrative as a Formal System”
9-13: Screening: Gilda
9-14: Discussion of Gilda and readings: Kaplan: “Gilda Didn’t Do Any of Those Things You’ve Been Losing Sleep Over,” (202-211 & 214-218: appendix optional); Coursebook: “Gilda as Epistemological Striptease”
9-16: Readings: Coursebook: Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” and discussion of “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” and of Gilda from America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies
9-20: Screening: Mildred Pierce
9-21: Discussion of Mildred Pierce and Kaplan, “Duplicity in Mildred Pierce”
9-22: Screening: All About Eve
9-23: Discussion of All About Eve and Bordwell, “The Shot: Mise en Scene” as well as cont’d. discussion of Tuesday’s film and readings
9-27: Screening: Sunset Boulevard
9-28: Discussion of Sunset Boulevard and Bordwell, “The Shot: Cinematography”
10-4: Screening: Vertigo
10-5: Discussion of Vertigo and Coursebook: Modeleski, “Femininity By Design” and Doane, “Film and Masquerade” (two chapters), and examine stills only (no reading) from Doane’s chapter, “Veiling Over Desire: Close-ups of the Woman”
10-11: Screening: Bonnie and Clyde
10-12: Discussion of Bonnie and Clyde and Bordwell, “The Relation of Shot to Shot: Editing”
10-14: Cont’d. discussion of Tuesday’s film and readings **Optional first paper due: scene analysis from one film utilizing a minimum of one theory essay and two references to Bordwell (5-6 pp.)**; see sample essay on The Shining and Poltergeist for scene analysis, use of theory and use of Bordwell
10-18, 10-19: Fall Holidays: no classes or screenings
10-20: Screening: Chinatown
10-21: Discussion of Chinatown and Bordwell, “Sound in the Cinema”
11-1: Screening: *Body Heat*
11-2: Discussion of *Body Heat* and Bordwell, “Style as a Formal System”
11-3: Screening: *Fatal Attraction*
11-4: Discussion of *Fatal Attraction* as well as cont’d. discussion of Tuesday’s film and readings
11-8: Screening: *The Grifters*
11-9: Discussion of *The Grifters*
11-10: Screening: *The Last Seduction*
11-11: Discussion of *The Last Seduction*
11-15: Screening: *To Die For*
11-16: Discussion of *To Die For* as well as cont’d. discussion of Thursday’s film and readings
11-17: Screening: *Bound* (optional screening)
11-18: Cont’d. discussion of Tuesday’s film and readings (class attendance required, not optional as with *Bound* screening)
11-22 to 11-26: Thanksgiving holidays; no film noir classes or screenings
11-29: Screening: *Monster*
11-30: Discussion of *Monster*
12-1: Screening: *Aileen: The Selling of a Serial Killer* (optional screening)
12-2: Cont’d. discussion of Tuesday’s film
12-6: Screening: *The Cooler*
12-7: Discussion of *The Cooler** Major paper due: thematic analysis of two-four films with substantial use of Bordwell and film theory (7-11 pp.)** See sample essays on *Silence of the Lambs* and *Requiem for a Dream* for thematic analyses, use of Bordwell, and use of critical theory. **Distribution of take home essay final exam: Due in my mailbox by Tuesday, Dec. 14** No emails, please. Early exams looked upon favorably.

**Components of the Course Grade:**

1. Brief, objective quizzes on films, directors’ entries, readings in Kaplan and the Coursebook given at the beginning of class (NO MAKE-UPS): 15%
2. Scene analysis paper (5-7 pp.): OPTIONAL--DUE OCT. 14. Scene analysis from one film using Bordwell and critical theory: 20% This paper is optional for students who wish to employ film analysis in a shorter essay so that I may provide feedback prior to and for the major paper. I will count this grade for students who exercise this writing option on essays that earn a “C” or higher.
3. Major paper (minimum length: 7-11 pp.): DUE DEC. 7. (See late paper penalties below): 50% You are encouraged to create an analytical paper topic examining one or several films in terms of genre, gender studies, stylistic, thematic, ideological, and/or any set of film elements that interest you and that you feel able to examine textually and with which you can employ substantial use of Bordwell and film theory. These are to be primarily analytical papers, not research papers that repeat other critics’ work.
4. Comprehensive final essay exam: distributed in class on Dec. 7 (DUE: DEC. 14 in my English Department mailbox—Bobet 318) ; same late paper penalties apply to final: 15%
5. The following component percentages apply for students who elect not to do the optional paper:
   Quizzes: 15%
   Major paper: 60%
   Final exam: 25%
6. Regular attendance and class participation increases final course grade by +4 points
7. Grading Scale: 8 point grading scale. e. g.: 93-100 = A

Rewrite Policy:

Your papers cannot be re-written since this practice encourages students to turn in poorly-written papers, take advantage of my editing skills, and re-write them to improve grade based on my editing.

Absence and Tardiness Policies:

1. I take roll at the beginning of class; if a student misses more than 3 classes FOR ANY REASON, each subsequent absence = 1 full letter grade deducted from final course grade.
2. Class starts at 3:30. If a student arrives after I have taken roll, that student is responsible after class to notify me to change your status from “absent” to “tardy.”
3. Tardiness = ½ absence.
4. A student who misses class is responsible to find out what the assignment was for that day and for the day that the student returns. Students who are absent should be prepared to be called upon on the day they return to class.
5. If a student is not prepared for class for any reason, that student receives ½ absence for lack of preparedness.
6. Each student is responsible to get the full names and phone numbers of 2 students in the class as contacts with whom you can check assignments if you’re absent.

Policy Regarding Late Papers:

In order not to disadvantage students whose papers are on time, late work will be penalized 1 letter grade for each late day. If you experience difficulty completing a paper, DISCUSS THIS WITH ME BEFORE THE DUE DATE. If you have not talked with me before the paper is due (the day it is due = too late to talk to me), the late penalties, in fairness to students who turn in their work on time, will be enforced.
Policy Regarding Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is understood as a very serious error. A student who does not properly cite paraphrased or quoted sources, especially internet materials, will receive “F” on that paper, risk failing the course, having the plagiarism reported to the Associate Dean, and having the plagiarism placed on her/his permanent Loyola academic record.

Please Note: Students with disabilities who wish to receive accommodations in this class should contact Disability Services at 865-2990 as soon as possible so that warranted accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. Disability Services are located in the Academic Enrichment Center, Monroe Hall 405.

*** PLEASE NOTE: I am always available to discuss any aspect of the course with you. See me during my office hours or schedule an appointment.