



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
MĀNOA

Summer Session 2014

POLS 343 - THE POLITICS OF FILM - ONLINE COURSE

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I. Course Description

In an age in which films permeate our daily lives – many of us spend much of our time watching movies in the theatre, at home, on our laptops and online spaces such as Netflix, for example – it is ordinarily assumed that films are political when they explore the relationship between persons and recognized political arrangements and situations. However, in this course we will approach cinema as an art and as a form of politics not only due to its content when it references familiar political institutions but mainly because of the way it challenges familiar senses of reality through the way it composes images, words and sounds. Accordingly, to begin to approach cinema as political thinking requires attention to film form, which delivers the way films think. Therefore, course will emphasize the ways in which film form creates the conditions of possibility for political thinking. Thematically, the focus in the readings and films treated in the course is on the citizen-city and citizen-nation state relationship. Readings other than those in the books ordered for the course, will be sent out via email to the class.

Course requirements:

I grade on the basis of “presence” to the course. You begin with an A grade and keep it as long as you maintain presence - showing up in class, sending in reactions to the class discussion site, and making a reasonable effort on your final project.

Those registered in the course must write a weekly reflection paper on both the film we watched the previous session and the reading for that week. It should be submitted to the class discussion file in Laulima’s Political Science 343 site by 8pm on Sunday before the class. The “reflection” can consist of an interpretation of or question about the film and a reaction to the readings.

This is a writing-intensive course; therefore the process/art of writing is taken very seriously. Writing can be as difficult and as rewarding as life itself: it can be seen to address, simulate, and work out life’s central concerns. Like life, writing requires nothing less than the risk of submitting our unique vision of the world publicly, while presenting that vision so that others will understand and appreciate its value. In turn, this requires understanding and appreciating the value of others' perspectives, their criticisms and contributions to our own work. Writing asks us not only to see the world but also to envision how the world sees us; to be both subject and object to ourselves.

Structure:

The course is composed of 15 sessions. Each session will normally take up two one-hour classes (depending on the length of films/choice of readings). Specific dates for each session will be indicated on the first day of class. You are expected to read the required texts assigned for each one of them and actively participate in the discussions.

II. Evaluation and Requirements

Your grade in this course will be based on class participation, reaction papers a midterm, and a final take- home

exam. The breakdown is as follows:

- Attendance and Participation _____ 20%
- Reaction Papers _____ 50%
- Final Project _____ 30%
- At the end of the semester, your grade will be assigned according to the following scale: A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D (60-69), and F (below 59).
- **Attendance and In-Class Assignments**

This course relies for its success upon your faithful attendance and your regular contribution to our discussion. Extended absences for reasons of illness or family emergency will be arranged on a case-by- case basis. Should there be any circumstance that makes it difficult for you to participate in class discussions, please feel always feel free to approach me about it. We will work together to find a solution.

- **Final Project**

The final project will consist of your analysis of one film AND text of your choice (fiction or non-fiction). This analysis can be delivered in written and/or alternative/creative format such as a blog, video, photographic account, drawing, oral presentation, etc. I am more than happy to help you choose the texts/films and approach them.

- **Reaction Papers**

All papers must be: double spaced, spell-checked, proof-read, edited for punctuation, grammar and coherence and turned in by the dead-line; late papers will be assessed a grade cut. We will hold a pocket reaction paper & writing workshop to assist you in your writing, both for reaction papers and exams.

Late Policy

All assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be penalized.

- **Academic Integrity**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Serious sanctions may result from academic dishonesty of any sort. Should you have any questions or concerns about plagiarism, please consult the UHM Student Conduct Code: http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code. When you quote from a text, you must indicate that you have done so (failure to do so constitutes plagiarism), either in the body of the text or in footnotes. Please be consistent with your chosen to cite your sources. For more examples and information on how to cite different kinds of sources, consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers or the Chicago Manual of Style.

- **Disability Access**

If you have any difficulties in getting to class or taking the course, please talk with me about how I can make it more accessible to you. I will be happy to make any appropriate accommodations. You may also wish to contact the KOKUA Program Office at 956-7511 or to visit the office website online at <http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua>

III. Schedule and Films/Readings

The course is composed of 15 sessions. Each session will take up one or two one-hour classes, depending on the length of films, topics/readings. Specific dates for each session will be indicated on the first day of class. You are expected to read the required texts assigned for each one of them and actively participate in the discussions.

Core texts

The following are required texts which will permeate all sessions. You are expected to read them as well as the assigned books for each session.

Agamben, G. *What is an apparatus? and other essays*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. 1981.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema I* and *Cinema II*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Rancière, Jacques. *Film Fables*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Shapiro, Michael. *Studies in Transdisciplinary Method: After the Aesthetic Turn*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Shapiro, Michael. *The Time of the City*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Session 1

Modern Times. 1936. Charles Chaplin.

Chaplin, Charlie. Edited by Hayes, Kevin. *Charlie Chaplin: Interviews*. Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 2005.

Session 2

Blade Runner

Dick, Philip K. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. Ballantine Books, 1968.

Session 3

Moonrise Kingdom. 2012. Wes Anderson.

Salinger, J.D. *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters!* and *Seymour, an Introduction*. Penguin Books, 1953.

Session 4

There Will Be Blood. 2008. Paul Thomas Anderson.

Eugenides, Jeffrey. 'The Great Experiment'.

Session 5

Breakfast at Tiffany's. 1961. Blake Edwards.

Enloe, C., *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. London: Pandora Books, 1989.

Session 6

Ivan's Childhood. 1962. Andrei Tarkovsky.

Dyer, Geoff. *Zona: A Book About a Film About a Journey to a Room*. 1997.

Session 7

The Grandmaster. 2013. Wong Kar-wai.

Xiaolong. Qiu. *When Red is Black*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2004.

Session 8

Harvey Krumpet. 2003. Adam Elliot.

Session 9

Miss Bala. 2010. Gerardo Naranjo.

Guimaraes, Julia. *The United States' discourse on the 'war on drugs': the film Miss Bala.*

Session 10

Spirited Away. 2002. Hayao Miyazaki.

Murakami, Haruki. *1Q84*, 2011.

Session 11

The lives of others. 2006. Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck

Binet, Laurent. *HHhH: a novel*. Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. 2012.

Session 12

City of God. 2002. Fernando Meirelles.

Scheper-Hugues, Nancy. *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992.

Session 13

Talk to Her. 2002. Pedro Almodóvar.

Shapiro, Michael. *For Moral Ambiguity: National Culture and the Politics of the Family*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001. Ch.1, Ch.5 and afterword.

Session 14

Up. 2003. Pixar.

Salinger, J.D. 'For Esmé with love and squalor' in *Nine Stories*.

Session 15

Inception. Christopher Nolan, 2010.

Mitchell, David. *Cloud Atlas*, 2008.

**Final Project Due*