INTRODUCTION TO FILM
FILM 103L

Instructor: Tobin Addington  
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Office Hours: Tues 10:30-12; Thurs 3:30-5:00 in McGill 230

Day & Time: T/R 8:00-10:20  
Room: Forestry 206

Readings:  
*Understanding Movies*  
Other readings will be posted on our Moodle page

Assignments:  
Weekly essay quizzes, take-home essays, a midterm exam, and an in-class comprehensive final exam. (See grading breakdown below.)

Course Goals/Objectives:  
This class requires students to assess film from three different perspectives:

1) Aesthetics & Conventions – Students will learn the conventions involved in putting together a narrative fiction film, as well as the aesthetic commitments and possibilities involved in using these conventions.

2) Ethics – Many, if not most, films have at their center some ethical issue or dilemma. Students will learn to identify, characterize, and write clearly about the filmic expressions of these dilemmas, separating the characters’ judgments and point of view from that of the films.

3) Politics – Students will learn to be critical viewers of film and to look for the social significance in the apparently neutral image and within the medium itself.

Grade Determination:  
*** Your grade will be determined out of a possible 250 points. ***
90 points . . . . . . . . . . . . Quizzes (9)  
40 points . . . . . . . . . . . . Midterm  
30 points . . . . . . . . . . . . Representation Essay  
30 points . . . . . . . . . . . . Genre Essay  
60 points . . . . . . . . . . . . Final Exam

Quizzes  
Students will take a brief, essay-question quiz the class period following most film screenings. Students may use their notes for these quizzes. NOTE: If students miss a quiz, they have one week to make it up (for 50% credit); any quiz not made up within a week of its original date will be graded as a zero.

Midterm  
Students will complete a midterm exam partway through the semester, consisting of fill-in-the-blank and essay questions. Students will NOT be allowed to use notes during this exam.

Representation & Genre Essays  
Students will complete written essays on two units during the course of the semester.

Final Exam  
Students will complete a comprehensive final exam at the end of the course.
Class Schedule:

I. Film Conventions and Aesthetics

1/23  Introduction
1/25  Terminology and Realism/Formalism
      Reading: Understanding Movies pg. 1-16

1/30  Winter’s Bone
      Reading: UM ch.7 – “Dramatization”
2/1   Quiz on Winter’s Bone
      Discussion

2/6   Alien
      Reading: UM ch. 2 – “Mise-en-Scène”
2/8   Quiz on Alien
      Discussion

2/13  The Limey
      Reading: UM ch. 4 – “Editing”
2/15  Quiz on The Limey
      Discussion

2/20  Pulp Fiction
      Reading: UM pg. 17-45; and ch. 9 – “Writing”
2/22  Quiz on Pulp Fiction
      Discussion – Putting it all together – Narrative, Cinematography, Editing, Mise-en-Scene

II. Ethics in Film

2/27  Gone Baby Gone
3/1   Quiz on Gone Baby Gone
      Discussion
      Readings: Ethics reading Moodle

3/6   Michael Clayton
3/8   Midterm: focused on Michael Clayton

III. The Politics of Representation - Contemporary Representations of American Slavery

3/13  Twelve Years a Slave
3/15  Quiz on Twelve Years a Slave
      Discussion
      Readings: Slavery in Cinema on Moodle
      Assigned: Essay on Politics of Representation

3/20  Django Unchained
3/22  Quiz on Django Unchained
      Discussion
      Readings: comparing Django and Twelve Years...

3/27 & 3/29  NO CLASS – Spring Break
IV. Genre

4/3  Introduction to Genre
   Introduction to “The Western”
   Readings: UM ch. 8 – “Story”
   Due: Essay on Politics of Representation
4/5  Stagecoach

4/10 The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford
4/12 Quiz on The Assassination of Jesse James…
   Discussion
   Assigned: Essay on Film Genre

   The Bourne Ultimatum
4/19 Quiz on The Bourne Ultimatum
   Reading: Spy Thriller reading on Moodle
   Discussion

4/24 Spy
4/26 Quiz on Spy
   Wrap-up Genre Discussion

V. Film and Affirmation

5/1   tbd
   Due: Genre Essay
5/3   Summary and Review

5/7   8:00-10:00 – Comprehensive Final Exam