**Spring 2021**

**Birmingham-Southern College**

**Media & Film Studies**



**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Lectures: Monday/Wednesday, 12:30 – 1:50pm, HC 112

Screenings: Monday, 5:00 – 7:00pm, Library Screening Room

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Professor: Dr. Teddy Champion

Office: Humanities Center 121

Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:00pm – 4:00pm in person

Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 – 11:00am via Teams, and by appointment

Contact: [rtchampi@bsc.edu](mailto:rtchampi@bsc.edu)

205-226-7841

I will often send out email announcements or lecture supplements via email. Plan on checking your bsc.edu email account frequently during the semester. We may also use Moodle to send out class emails.

*OFFICE VISITS ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED!!*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is an intermediate-level course designed to familiarize you with the fundamental concepts and tools of film analysis. The course will examine formal aspects of style and storytelling with an emphasis on Hollywood narrative cinema, the development of the medium as a business and as a mode of artistic expression, its major movements and genres, and the work of significant filmmakers.

**PREREQUISITES**

None

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

* be familiar with key vocabulary used in film analysis and production
* be able to isolate, describe, and analyze stylistic elements used in films, including mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound
* have a general understanding of major movements and genres in American and world cinema history
* have an appreciation for a variety of styles and perspectives in filmmaking

MFS 210 is also an IA course (Interpretation and Analysis), which has the following learning outcomes:

* Apply appropriate strategies or theoretical frameworks for solving a problem
* Develop a plausible understanding/interpretation/analysis in relation to relevant observations, existing knowledge, and recognized theoretical (or conceptual) perspectives
* Communicate the understanding/interpretation/analysis in a format appropriate to the discipline

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

*Film Art: An Introduction* (12th Edition)

by David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith

(see Bookstore for specific instructions on acquiring the required electronic version of the text)

Additional Readings on Moodle

**FILM SCREENINGS**

All films will be shown on DVD or Blu-ray discs in class or in weekly screenings in the Library Screening Room. There will be no other official screenings of the films, but the videos will remain on reserve at the BSC Library desk.

Some films and supplemental video material may be found free online or through streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime.

A few of the films last more than 2 hours. ***Please plan accordingly.***

**GRADING**

Participation/Professionalism 5%

In-class Quizzes 5%

LearnSmart Reading Assignments 15%

Letterboxd Entries 10%

Final Response Paper 5%

Exam #1 10%

Exam #2 10%

Exam #3 10%

Exam #4 10%

Final Exam or Final Paper 20%

100%

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course requires attendance, participation, and in-class quizzes at class lectures and screenings; reading assigned chapters from the online textbook (and occasional handouts); writing film responses; and taking four in-class examinations and a final exam.

**Participation/Professionalism** is a purely subjective grade based on your willingness to show enthusiasm in class and participate in class discussions. Diligent attendance is absolutely required, both in lecture and for the screenings. Tardiness is not tolerated. Absences, tardiness, sleeping, checking phones, etc., will all be noted and will affect your grade. Simply being present in class is not sufficient to receive an excellent participation grade. In addition to being present, you must also make informed, meaningful, and consistent contributions to class discussion. Watching and discussing films are group activities, and your conscientious participation will be factored into your final grade.

**In-class quizzes** are designed to encourage participation and are generally easy if you attend class, watch the scheduled film screenings, and read the text pages before the assigned lecture date. You are allowed to drop your two lowest quiz grades. This policy therefore allows for two absences.

There will be no excused absences except for medical and family emergencies or excused college events, such as athletic events.

**“LearnSmart” textbook readings** are available through McGraw-Hill’s “Connect” subscription website. The readings are accompanied by practice questions that you must complete in order to get credit for the assignment. Reading assignments must be completed before the class time that they are assigned.

**Letterboxd entries** are short written reviews of the films we watch in screening lab. Your writing should address the filmmaker’s creative decisions as well as your personal reactions. Specific guidelines will be given in class. These posts must be entered weekly, not at the end of the semester.

**The final response paper** is a short paper to assess your understanding of analysis and interpretation. Specific guidelines will be given in class.

**The four in-class exams** will be composed of multiple choice, matching, true-false, and ordering questions covering material from lectures, screenings, and assigned readings.

Students will have an **option** to take a **cumulative final exam** or write a **final paper**. The final exam will have similar format as the previous exams. For the paper option, students will write a critical evaluation of a specific film assigned by the instructor. More details will be given in class.

**Late or Missed Assignments:** All assignments and exams must be submitted when specified. The LearnSmart deadlines are firm and cannot be altered. Plan to complete all reading well in advance of the due date.

Failure to take a scheduled exam or quiz will result in an automatic grade of zero. Make-up exams are given only if arrangements are made in advance of the scheduled exam. If for any reason you cannot take an exam on the date and time scheduled, contact me before the time of the scheduled exam to schedule a make-up exam.

Additionally, make-up exams must be taken within one week of the scheduled exam. After that allotted time, an automatic grade of zero will be entered for the missed exam. The student is responsible for coordinating with me to take the make-up exam and must provide the official and proper paperwork (e.g., medical notice, letter from student athletics) before their test will be scored.

As a general rule, missed in-class quizzes may **NOT** be made up. There are only two exceptions to this policy: medical emergencies and officially sanctioned events (e.g., athletics). Students **MUST** provide documentation before taking a missed quiz.

**CLASSROOM POLICIES**

Our policies are in place in order to limit distractions and allow your fellow students to get the most out of our time together.

* No food is allowed in class. Drinks are allowed, but do not drink anything noisy or messy in our lecture hall or screening room. Be sure to check for policies for our screening lab location.
* There should be no talking during our screenings. Students enrolled in this class deserve the best screenings that this department can offer, so please be respectful.
* You may **not** use laptops, cell phones, or other electronic devices in lecture or in the screenings, except when explicitly allowed by Dr. Champion. Plan to take notes on paper, then retype notes later.
* During lectures, I encourage student responses, questions, and dialogue, but please refrain from interrupting your fellow classmates or the instructor.
* Respect the opinions of your classmates and instructor. Disagreements and debates may occur, but do not engage in personal attacks and argumentative tones, in or outside of class.
* Other policies related to the COVID-19 pandemic will be discussed in class.

**MOODLE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)**

Birmingham-Southern College uses the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). Students are responsible for checking Moodle for course readings, assignments, and announcements. Work that is submitted late because of not checking Moodle is the responsibility of the student.

**Logging into Moodle**

1. Log onto the BSC access point by going to: [moodle.bsc.edu](https://moodle.bsc.edu/).
2. Enter your BSC username and password.
3. The Moodle dashboard will open, and your courses will be displayed in the middle of the screen.
4. Select your course to begin.
5. The course welcome page will open. Read the welcome section and follow the instructions for getting started.

If you do not have your User Name, contact the IT Help Desk at 205-226-3039 or[helpdesk@bsc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@bsc.edu).

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

I do not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic misconduct (this includes conferring with classmates on graded assignments or exam answers, creating of “cheat sheets,” etc.). No electronic devices are allowed in class, especially during exams and quizzes. All suspected cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the Honor Council, and consequences may result in failed assignment grades, an overall grade of “F” for the semester, and suspension and probation from BSC. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse.

Adhere to the Honor Code at all times: “As a member of the student body of Birmingham-Southern College, I recognize my responsibility to the traditions of the institution, to my fellow students and to myself. I recognize the significance of the honor system. I pledge that I have read and understand the Constitution of the Honor Council, including the Honor Code, and agree to be bound by its provisions.”

Additional information on the Honor Code and violations can be found in the Birmingham-Southern [Student Handbook](%20Student%20Handbook) and on the BSC website: [https://www.bsc.edu/campus/studev/honor-council/ index.html](https://www.bsc.edu/campus/studev/honor-council/%20index.html)

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you are registered for accommodations/academic adjustments, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations that may be necessary. During this discussion, you are not expected to disclose any details concerning your disability, though you may discuss these details at your discretion. If you have a disability but have not contacted the Office of Accessibility at BSC, please call 205-226-7909, email [accessiblity@bsc.edu](mailto:accessiblity@bsc.edu), or visit Student Services on the second floor of the Norton Campus Center (office 225). An appointment is recommended.

**THE WRITING CENTER, in HUMANITIES 102**

The Writing Center offers in-person tutoring Sunday-Thursday 4-8 pm beginning September 6th. Tutors provide one-on-one consultations for any student at any point in the writing process. Tutors will assist students in addressing any potential writing issues, including content development, grammar usage, and citation formatting. Each tutorial is about 30 minutes long, free of charge, and available on a drop-in basis. In light of COVID-19, all students must bring digital copies of their assignments and any other relevant materials. All students must abide by BSC guidelines and wear a mask in the Writing Center. Questions? Contact Laura Tolbert ([letolber@bsc.edu](mailto:letolber@bsc.edu)) or MK Foster ([mkfoster@bsc.edu](mailto:mkfoster@bsc.edu)).

**TITLE IX**

Birmingham-Southern College is committed to the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment for students and the campus community. The College forbids any type of sexual or gender-based misconduct among its students, faculty, and staff. The College encourages all members of the academic community to report suspected sexual and gender-based misconduct to the appropriate authorities so that it can be investigated, remedied, and eliminated. Such misconduct is prohibited whether the actor is a student, faculty member, staff member, contractor, visitor, or another member of the College community. BSC forbids retaliation against any person who has opposed, reported or participated in an investigation concerning sexual or gender-based misconduct.

In accordance with federal policy, all College employees are required to report information related to discrimination and harassment which includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual harassment. For this reason, if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the Title IX coordinator. As a student, you can report allegations of sexual misconduct to officials in Student Development (Assistant Dean of Students, Dana Bekurs; Associate Dean of Students, W. David Miller; Vice President for Student Development, David Eberhardt), Campus Police, or confidential resources in Counseling Services, Health Services, and Religious Life. Please refer to the [Title IX section](https://www.bsc.edu/titleix/index.html) of the BSC website for more information on filing a report and available resources.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Inclement weather or other events beyond the control of the College that might cause risk or danger to students, faculty, and staff may occasionally result in changes to normal College operations, including cancellation of classes or events; the calendar schedule may be adjusted.

###### COURSE CALENDAR

\*Our Course Calendar is subject to change as instructor’s discretion. Please stay on alert for changes.

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| **WEEK** | **DATES** | **Class Subject & Objectives** |
| 1 | Feb. 2 | Introduction to course – Why we study movies  Getting setup with “LearnSmart” |
| 2 | Feb. 7 | Introduction to film industry, technology, and terminology  Reading: Chapter 1  Lab Screening: *North by Northwest* (1959), directed by Alfred Hitchcock |
| Feb. 9 | Industry, technology, and terminology (continued) |
| 3 | Feb. 14 | Narrative Form  Reading: Chapter 2  Lab Screening: *Citizen Kane* (1941), directed by Orson Welles |
| Feb. 16 | Narrative Form (continued)  Reading: Chapter 3 |
| 4 | Feb. 21 | In-class Screening: *One Week* (1920), directed by Buster Keaton  Lab Screening: *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), directed by Howard Hawks |
| Feb. 23 | **EXAM #1** |
| 5 | Feb. 28 | Mise-en-Scene  Reading: Chapter 4  Lab Screening: *The Graduate* (1967), directed by Mike Nichols |
| March 2 | Mise-en-scene (continued) |
| 6 | March 7 | Cinematography  Reading: Chapter 5  Lab Screening: *Do The Right Thing* (1989), directed by Spike Lee |
| March 9 | Cinematography (continued) |
| 7 | March 14 | Editing  Reading: Chapter 6  Lab Screening: *Breathless* (1960, French), directed by Jean-Luc Godard |
| March 16 | **EXAM #2** |
|  |  | **SPRING BREAK (March 19-27)** |
| 8 | March 28 | Sound  Lab Screening: *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012), directed by Wes Anderson |
| March 30 | Sound (continued)  Reading: Chapter 7 |
| 9 | April 4 | Film Genre and Auteur Study  Lab Screening: *Fargo* (1996), directed by Ethan and Joel Coen |
| April 6 | Film Genres/Auteur (continued)  Reading: Chapter 9 |
| 10 | April 11 | Film Genres/Auteurs (continued)  Lab Screening: *Stagecoach* (1939), directed by John Ford |
| April 13 | **EXAM #3** |
| 11 | April 18 | Documentary  Lab Screening: *The Thin Blue Line* (1988), directed by Errol Morris |
| April 20 | Documentary (continued)  Reading: Chapter 10 |
| 12 | April 25 | Historical Movements  Lab Screening: *There Will be Blood* (2007), directed by Paul Thomas Anderson |
| April 27 | Historical Movements (continued)  Reading: Chapter 12 |
| 13 | May 2 | Historical Movements (continued)  Lab Screening: *Chungking Express* (1994, Chinese), directed by Wong Kar-Wai |
| May 4 | **EXAM #4** |
| 14 | May 9 | Final Exam Review  Reading: Chapter 8 and 11  **FINAL RESPONSE PAPER DUE** |
| May 12 (Thur) | **FINAL EXAM: 9:00am – 12:00pm** |

**IMPORTANT DATES**

February 15th – Last Day to Add a Course, to Select “S/U”

February 22nd – Last Day to Withdraw with Tuition Adjustment

March 1st – Last Day to Drop a Course Without a Grade

March 16th – Midterm Assessments Due

March 19th-27th – Spring Break

March 29th – Last Day to Drop a Course With a Grade of “W”

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**Assignment: Letterboxd Responses**

During the course of our semester together, we will officially watch 12 feature films in our screening lab plus a few short films and dozens of clips during class. Part of your responsibility is to carefully watch each of these films.

To enhance your viewing experience and share our thoughts with each other, you will used Letterboxd to log each film. Letterboxd is a social platform for movie fans to share their thoughts. If you don’t already have a Letterboxd account, sign up for one at <https://letterboxd.com>.

Find my profile and follow me: <https://letterboxd.com/tchampion/>. And try to follow each other as well.

You will write an entry for every feature film we watch in our screening lab. Entries are short reflections (at least 200 words) on the films we watch in our lab (Monday nights). Your posts should address the filmmaker’s creative decisions and your own opinion of the film, specifically about concepts we are discussing in class. The assignment is designed to motivate you to prepare properly for class, to help you practice the craft of critical writing, and to help me understand your interests and strengths.

Responses are your thoughts on the film and also on the readings and lectures of the week. What stands out to you the most, and why? How does this film relate to the topic we are discussing that week in our course, or previous topics we have discussed? What style and form choices did the director make, and how were they effective or ineffective? You may briefly cite an idea from another source, but this should not be more than one sentence. For example, you may want to respond to a review of the film or to the analysis in *Film Art*. If you do, be sure the source is clear.

NOTE: responses are NOT summaries. I do not want you to spend any time summarizing simply to take up space. But you can describe the scenes and concepts you are discussing in order to make a point.

And please don’t simply write bland sentences like “this was great” or “I like this film.” Be descriptive. Start the analytical process. And use my comments to make improvements in your posts each week.

You must post your entry BEFORE class time following the film screening—in other words, by Wednesday at 12:30 each week. If it is not posted before class, it will be counted late. Additionally, during class, be prepared to share your thoughts during class discussion.

Grading: Generally, you will get full credit for each post, but I will deduct points for failing to meet the minimum word-count (200 words each), for summarizing too much, for using repetitive phrases and ideas, for factual errors, and for using other people’s words and ideas. NOTE: this means plagiarism will not be tolerated.

This assignment is worth 10% of your grade, so each response is therefore 1% (I will drop the 2 lowest grades, or perhaps give you extra credit for doing all 12).

**Assignment: Extra Credit Written Review**

Each student may write up to 3 film reviews that critically evaluate a feature-length film or documentary exhibited on campus by a club or department or exhibited publicly as part of the Sidewalk Film Festival. Part of the goal of this assignment is not only to earn extra credit but to support local events and participate in communal viewings of films.

For each review, you may receive up to 1 point of extra credit added to your final grade.

Due Date: Within one week of the film showing. Students must show proof of attendance.

To submit, email a Word document of your review to Dr. Champion and post the review on the Moodle forum so your classmates can read it.

Format: Each critique must be at least 600 words, typed, double-spaced, 12 pt., Times New Roman font, with standard 1-inch margins. This comes out to about 2 full pages.

Use prose paragraphs and complete sentences. Do not make bullet points or fragments.

Illustrations are welcome.

Guidelines: Your critique may assess elements such as visual style, content, perspective, editing, and character. The most important goal for a critique is to give your opinion of the subject and to provide evidence and justification for your opinion.

In the first paragraph, give a context for the screening. What event was screening it? (for example, the Italian Club showed the 1960 Fellini classic, *La Dolce Vita*, at the Student Center last night). Briefly summarize the plot and give a general description of the important elements that stand out.

Otherwise, follow the same guidelines that we use for our Response Paper assignment.

\*Remember, give your opinion of the production based on the issues that you address, and let your reader understand why you have made your conclusions.

**Assignment: Final Response Paper**

As an Interpretation & Analysis course, Film Analysis should challenge you to think about filmmaking in a more critical manner than the average movie fan does. To assess the IA learning outcomes, you will write a short paper (600-800 words, Microsoft Word file) analyzing one or more films that we watch in our screening labs.

Using my feedback from your Letterboxd entries, your paper should address the filmmaker’s creative decisions and your own opinion of the film, specifically about concepts we have discussed.

Your response paper should represent your thoughts based on the film(s) and also on the readings and lectures. What stands out to you the most, and why? How does this film relate to the topics we have discussed? What style and form choices did the director make, and how were they effective or ineffective?

NOTE: response papers are NOT summaries. I do not want you to spend any time summarizing simply to take up space. But you should describe the scenes and concepts you are discussing.

You must post your response to the Turnitin link in Moodle (under the section “Final Response Paper”) by Monday, May 9th, at 11:59pm.

This assignment is worth 5% of your grade.

Grading: Generally, you will get full credit for your paper, but I will deduct points for failing to meet the minimum word-count, for summarizing too much, for using repetitive phrases and ideas, for factual errors, and for using other people’s words and ideas. NOTE: this means plagiarism will not be tolerated.