

WCL 2352-01: World Cinema
Fall 2009

Connections with Others

Professor: Dr. Sharon Marquart

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Office: 620 Agnes Arnold

Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday, 2:30-4

Course Meets: T/TH 1-2:30

Location: FH 222A

Film Screenings:

Mondays at 2:30 in AH 204

In this course we will study important films from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East, and familiarize ourselves with the basic terminology of film analysis. In our study of the theme of “connections with others,” we will consider questions such as: What alienates different characters from the norms of their respective cultures? Do differences of race, class, gender, nationality, and sexuality affect the kinds of connections that characters establish with each other, and that viewers establish with those characters? If so, how? How do cultural norms influence the kinds of relationships people have with each other? How does an alienating experience change the way people relate to others and to films?

Our readings will familiarize us with formal aspects of filmmaking and film analysis, will guide us in the writing practices particular to film studies, and will provide models for the critical analysis of films.

Films

Tomas Alfredson, *Let the Right One In* (2008)

Pedro Almodóvar, *All About My Mother* (1999)

Jacques Audiard, *The Beat that My Heart Skipped* (2005)

Claire Denis, *Chocolat* (1988)

Ari Folman, *Waltz with Bashir* (2008)

Wong Kar Wai, *In the Mood for Love* (2000)

Akira Kurosawa, *Rashomon* (1950)

Gillo Pontecorvo, *Battle of Algiers* (1966)

Mani Ratnam, *Bombay* (1995)

Andrés Wood, *Machuca* (2004)



Required Text (available at the UH bookstore):

Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, 6th or 7th ed. (listed as Corrigan in syllabus)

Required Readings Available on Webct

All assigned chapters of David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (listed as *Film Art* in syllabus)

Robert Stam and Louise Spence, "Colonialism, Racism, and Representation: An Introduction"
François Truffaut, "A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema"

Other readings will be posted throughout the semester

Grade

Participation: 15%

Quizzes (lowest dropped): 15%

Paper One (3-4 pages, due September 22): 20%

Urban Space Project: 25%

Paper Two (4-5 pages, due December 8): 25%

Grading Scale

93-100	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-
87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	0-59	F

Grading and Policies

Please note: Course policies are subject to change. Any changes will be posted on our Webct site and announced in class. Students are responsible for staying up to speed on any changes.

Films and Readings

You are responsible for viewing films and reading course materials outside of class. Because some of these films are not easily accessible in the United States, I have scheduled film screenings that are open to all students enrolled in this course. These screenings take place on Mondays at 2:30 PM. Your attendance at these screenings is not required; if you are unable to attend these screenings, at least **six copies** of all of the films for this course are also available on reserve in the Language Acquisition Center (on the 3rd floor of Agnes Arnold Hall; consult their website—<http://www.class.uh.edu/lac/>—for their hours). If you choose to view the films on reserve in the LAC outside of the screening times, plan accordingly, because you can only watch these films in the LAC. Don't wait until the day or night before class to watch the film, as a copy may not be available. Also keep in mind that you are sharing these copies with all of your colleagues in this course: you may wish to view these films with other students in this class to cut down on demand. This is also a great idea because it gives you a chance to discuss these films with others

before coming to class. Remember, both the films and the readings for this course count as homework, and you are unable to participate in class without preparing them. Be prepared and plan ahead!

Quizzes

Pop quizzes will be given regularly over the materials that you have been asked to prepare for class. If you watch our films and do the readings attentively and on time, these will be extremely easy for you. If not, your course grade will suffer. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Papers

Paper topics will be distributed in class and posted on our Webct site two weeks prior to their due dates. Papers must be submitted on time to receive full credit. Late papers will be lowered one letter grade for each day they are submitted past the due date (i.e. a “B+” paper submitted one day after the due date will be lowered to a “B”).

Please see the last page of this syllabus for a detailed guide to how paper grades are determined in this course. Papers are graded primarily on the basis of content and how clearly you communicate your ideas, but proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization, etc., are also needed to earn a good grade. If you have problems with these aspects of your writing, you may wish to make use of the University’s Writing Center. Your final paper will indicate your level of preparedness for writing more advanced critical work in film studies, in the World Literatures and Cultures Program, and in any upper-level humanities course.

Urban Space Project

In groups, students will present a film to the class and submit a short written analysis focused on how the film’s representation of urban space affects the connections that characters establish with each other and with their environments, and the connections that viewers are asked to establish with those same characters and environments. Each group must conduct research for the project and submit a bibliography of the sources they consult with their written analysis. Students will receive individual and group grades for their work. More details will be given throughout the semester.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is an act of intellectual dishonesty that consists of passing off another’s words as one’s own. Sanctions for infractions of plagiarism are serious, and may result in failing an assignment, failing a course, and being placed on academic probation. You may, of course, consult other sources for your papers in this course. However, you must cite all of those sources in a bibliography. If you use another person’s words or thoughts in whole or in part in your papers, be sure that your work clearly acknowledges your sources.

Repetition of Papers Used in Other courses

Papers written for another class cannot be used to fulfill the requirements for this course. This will be considered an act of *academic dishonesty*. If you would like to incorporate fragments from a paper written for a different course, you need to obtain written authorization from the professor of that course and from me. For example, if you wrote a paper on Kurosawa’s *Rashomon* for a different film course, and you would like to re-use parts of that work for this class, you must obtain consent from both me and your

previous professor. If you do not comply with this regulation, you will be facing sanctions ranging from your grade on the paper being lowered to failing this class.

Submitting Papers and Turnitin.com

All students must submit a **hard copy** of their papers to me **AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS** on the due date. You must also **upload an electronic version** of this exact same paper to turnitin.com **BEFORE** the beginning of class on the paper's due date. Papers uploaded to turnitin.com after class time will be considered late, even if you submit a hard copy of your paper on time to me in class. You will not receive a grade for any paper until it is uploaded to turnitin.com.

Extensions for Papers

As a general rule, I only grant extensions for papers in cases of genuine emergency or for other extreme circumstances, and written documentation must be provided. Lack of preparation on your part does not constitute grounds for an extension.

Questions about Papers

Please come talk to me in my office hours if you need help developing ideas for your papers or structuring them. I am also happy to answer any specific questions that you may have about drafts of your papers. However, I will not read drafts of your papers and tell you what all of their problems are or if they are any good. This is unfair to every other student in this class, because it is asking me to unofficially grade your paper and allow you to resubmit it without any penalty to your grade.

I do not respond to questions about papers less than three days before their due dates; if you would like my help, you must plan ahead. I also do not respond to questions about papers on the day that they are returned to you. I am happy to discuss your grade with you, but you must first consider the comments I have already written on your paper. I put a lot of work into the comments that I write, and I do not like feeling that I have wasted my time and energy.

Email Policy

You are encouraged to email me with questions that you may have about our course material or requirements. However, I will not respond to emails asking for information that I have already announced in class or posted on our Webct site. Also, use common sense when sending me emails—I cannot give adequate responses to certain kinds of questions over email. Questions that require long responses should be asked either at the end of class or in my office hours, never by email.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what was covered from other students or from me **in my office hours**. I do not respond to emails asking about what was covered in class.

Participation

Active participation is essential in this course. This includes arriving to class on time, taking notes, asking thoughtful questions, advancing good critical ideas in class discussions, and listening to the ideas of others. Students who are disrespectful of others or disrupt class will receive low participation grades and may be dropped from the course. Disruptive behavior includes the use of cell phones or other electronic

devices that may disrupt the class, leaving class before it ends, sleeping in class, doing homework for other classes, and exchanging notes with other students. If you have a legitimate reason for leaving class before it ends, you should notify me at the beginning of class and sit near an exit so that you can leave quietly and discreetly. I do not hesitate to drop students who are consistently disruptive. For the relevant university regulation, I refer you to the following statement from the on-line undergraduate catalog:

“An instructor may drop students for any one of the following reasons:

- a. Lack of prerequisites or corequisites for the course listed in the latest catalog, but only through the last day for dropping courses. Students who have not met the prerequisites will be dropped without a tuition refund if the drop date is after the refund date. (Students who enroll in a course for which they are not eligible and then remain in the course knowingly misrepresent their academic records or achievements as they pertain to course prerequisites or corequisites and are in violation of the university's academic honesty policy.)
- b. Excessive absences, but after the last day for dropping courses only with the approval of the dean of the college in which the course is being offered.
- c. Causes that tend to disrupt the academic process (except those actions involving academic honesty, which come under the jurisdiction of the academic honesty policy), but after the last day for dropping courses only with the approval of the dean of the college in which the course is being offered. *Disruptive behavior includes the use of or the failure to deactivate cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices likely to disrupt the classroom.* Students may make timely appeal of charges through the office of the dean of the college in which the course is taught.

Also consult the section of the Student Handbook entitled "Disciplinary Code" (p. 68), as well as the section of the on-line undergraduate catalog entitled "Maintaining a Learning Environment."

Cell-free and wireless-free environment

Cell phone use of any kind is not permitted in class. If you use your laptop to take notes, you are not allowed to check your email during class, and must turn off your computer's wireless connection. Your participation grade for the semester will be lowered for every instance of unauthorized text messaging or email checking, or if your phone rings during class. If there is a good reason why you must leave your phone on during class (such as a family or personal emergency), please tell me before class begins. Excessive use of your cell phone or other wireless devices constitutes disruptive behavior. It is disrespectful to other students and to me, and may lead to you being dropped from this course.

In order to reference this course's Webct readings during class, you are encouraged to print them out or download them to your computer, or take detailed notes on them. You will not be allowed to use any wireless connections to retrieve these readings from our Webct site during class.

Attendance

You are allowed three unexcused absences in this course without any changes to your course grade. Your **course grade** will be lowered by one letter grade for every unexcused absence thereafter (i.e. if you have 5 unexcused absences and your course grade is a "B+," it will be lowered to a "B-"). Documentation must be provided for an absence to be excused. Please note that absences resulting from things such as family vacations, job interviews, or work are rarely excused. I am also extremely skeptical of excuses pertaining to dead grandparents, recurring car trouble, oversleeping, and alarm clocks and watches that fail to work.

Syllabus

****Please note:** The information in this syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be posted on our Webct site and announced in class. Students are responsible for staying up to speed on any changes.**

Week One: Introduction to World Cinema

Tuesday August 25	Course Introduction
Thursday August 27	In-class screening: Cristian Mungiu, <i>Four Months, Three Weeks, and Two Days</i> (sequence) Corrigan, Ch. 1 and Ch. 2

Part One: Alienation

Week Two:

Monday August 31	Film Screening: <i>Let the Right One In</i>
Tuesday September 1	<i>Let the Right One In</i>
Thursday September 3	<i>Film Art</i> , Ch. 2: The Significance of Film Form

Week Three:

Monday September 7	NO CLASS—LABOR DAY
Tuesday September 8	<i>The Beat that My Heart Skipped</i> François Truffaut, “A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema”
Thursday September 10	<i>Film Art</i> , Ch. 3: Narrative as a Formal System

Week Four:

Monday September 14	Film Screening: <i>Machuca</i>
Tuesday September 15	<i>Machuca</i>
Thursday September 17	Corrigan, Ch. 3

Part Two: Connections

Week Five:

Tuesday September 22 ****PAPER ONE DUE****
In-class film screening

Thursday September 24 Readings TBA

Week Six:

Monday September 28 Film Screening: *In the Mood for Love*

Tuesday September 29 *In the Mood for Love*

Thursday October 1 *Film Art*, Ch. 4: The Shot: Mise-en-Scene

Week Seven:

Monday October 5 Film Screening: *All About My Mother*

Tuesday October 6 *All About My Mother*

Thursday October 8 *Film Art*, Ch. 5: The Shot: Cinematography

Week Eight:

Monday October 12 Film Screening: *Rashomon*

Tuesday October 13 *Rashomon*

Thursday October 15 *Film Art*, Ch. 6: The Relation of Shot to Shot: Editing

Week Nine:

Monday October 19 Film Screening: *Bombay*

Tuesday October 20 *Bombay*

Thursday October 22 *Film Art*, Ch. 7: Film Sound and Ch. 8: Summary: Style as a
Formal System

Week Ten: Urban Space Presentations

Tuesday October 27 Group Presentations

Thursday October 29 Group Presentations

Part Three: Others

Week Eleven:

Tuesday November 3	**<u>URBAN SPACE PROJECT DUE</u>** In-class film screening
Thursday November 5	Readings TBA

Week Twelve:

Monday November 9	Film Screening: <i>Battle of Algiers</i>
Tuesday November 10	<i>Battle of Algiers</i>
Thursday November 12	Robert Stam and Louise Spence, “Colonialism, Racism, and Representation: An Introduction”

Week Thirteen:

Monday November 16	Film Screening: Film TBA
Tuesday November 17	Film TBA
Thursday November 19	Readings TBA

Week Fourteen:

Monday November 23	Film Screening: <i>Waltz with Bashir</i>
Tuesday November 24	<i>Waltz with Bashir</i>
Thursday November 26	NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Fifteen:

Monday November 30	Film Screening: <i>Chocolat</i>
Tuesday December 1	<i>Chocolat</i>
Thursday December 3	Readings TBA Conclusions

****Final Paper Due Tuesday, December 8 by 5 PM****

Grade Guide for Papers

A Offers an original and detailed argument that demonstrates that you have thoroughly understood the text(s)/film(s) you are writing about. The introduction attracts the reader’s attention, the ideas presented within the body paragraphs are specific and well-developed, these ideas make the reader think differently about the subject or the text/film presented, and the conclusion does more than summarize the contents of the paper. Transitions are fluid, ideas are presented directly and do not rely on generalizations, and there is no unnecessary verbiage that obscures meaning. Nothing is cliché in an “A” paper.

B Attests to a good, general understanding of the text(s)/film(s) you are writing about, and offers a plausible though uninteresting argument that lacks specificity or originality. Ideas need further development, and there are some structural or organizational problems (an introduction that isn’t clear, ideas that don’t always flow well), but these problems do not make any parts of the paper unreadable. Some vocabulary is used inappropriately. Overall, a solid piece of writing that lacks creativity.

C A lot of the ideas presented in the paper rely on clichés and generalizations to make their point, they aren’t well-developed, and/or they attest to a poor understanding of the text(s)/film(s) you are writing about. There is no argument or the argument presented is totally implausible. There are mistakes about important details in the text(s)/film(s). Problems with organization, with language use, or with structure make understanding the paper difficult.

D Shows that you didn’t understand the paper topic or the text(s)/film(s) you are writing about. The paper lacks cohesion, ideas are poorly developed, and grammar mistakes make the paper unreadable. Unacceptable work for a student at the university level.

F An offensive, unreadable, or incomplete paper.
