ENGLISH 3344 – AMERICAN CINEMA
Spring 2021

“The screen is a magic medium. It has such power that it can retain interest as it conveys emotions and moods that no other art form can hope to tackle.”

Stanley Kubrick

“A film is never really good unless the camera is an eye in the head of a poet.”

Orson Welles

“There never was an American cinema...”

Paul Schrader

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Chris Ellery
OFFICE: A021B
HOURS: 10-12 MWF, 3-4 MW, 8:30-9:30 TR, and 2-3 TR

PHONE: 486-6142
EMAIL: cellery@angelo.edu

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

A study of the cinema of the United States--history, auteurs, genres, masterworks--as a cultural phenomenon reflecting and shaping the American identity while expressing national ideals, aspirations, conflicts, and anxieties.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Over the course of the semester, students should

- develop sufficient knowledge of the elements of film to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and better appreciate the art of cinema;
- trace the emergence of the classic Hollywood style and understand major developments in American film history;
- understand, analyze, and appreciate American cinema as a modern art form with the power both to influence and to reflect American experience and identity.

REQUIRED TEXT

ISBN: 978-0-07-351429-1

Annenberg Lerner, American Cinema www.learner.org/series/american-cinema/
FILMOGRAPHY

Casablanca (Michael Curtiz, 1942)
Citizen Kane, (Orson Welles, 1941)
The Dirty Dozen (Robert Aldrich, 1967)
Dr. Strangelove (Stanley Kubrick, 1964)
Get Out (Jordan Peele, 2017)
The Great Train Robbery (Edwin S. Porter, 1903)
High Noon (Fred Zimmerman, 1952)
Singin’ in the Rain (Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly, 1952)
Sullivan’s Travels (Preston Sturges, 1941)
Taxi Driver (Martin Scorsese, 1976)
Unforgiven (Clint Eastwood, 1992)
Zero Dark Thirty (Kathryn Bigelow, 2012)

SELECTED ONLINE SITES

- AMC Filmsite http://www.filmsite.org/
- American Film Institute http://www.AFI.com
- Film Reviews (Rotten Tomatoes): www.rottentomatoes.com
- Interesting Film Sites: www.d.umn.edu/~tisbell/FilmSites.html
- Internet Movie Database: www.imdb.com
- RogerEbert.com http://www.rogerebert.com/
- Screenplays on line: www.script-o-rama.com

GRADING

Daily Work 25%
Screening Reports 25%
Midterm Exam 25%
Final Exam 25%

- Daily work includes frequent reading quizzes, group activities, and miscellaneous assignments.
- Students will submit a 1-2-page screening report on each of the required films.
- The two exams will be a mix of objective and essay questions.
ATTENDANCE AND MAKE-UP POLICY

The following policy is consistent with ASU OP 10.04 ("Academic Regulations Concerning Student Performance").

- **This is a face-to-face class.** Our classroom is large enough to follow COVID-19 mask and social distance protocols and still accommodate all students every day. You are expected to be in the classroom for class unless quarantined or unable to attend for a medical reason or other necessity, such as university-sponsored travel.
- **Regular attendance is essential for success in the class.** If unable to attend in person, you should provide documentation (such as a physician’s note) and attend on Blackboard via synchronous streaming.
- **Roll will be taken at the beginning of every class period.** If you who arrive late or do not answer the roll, you should inform the instructor after class to be sure you are counted present. Students who enter during a quiz or activity cannot be given extra time to complete it and may receive only partial credit.
- **Do not come to class if you are ill, especially if you are or might be infectious.**
- **Notify your instructor if you believe an absence should be excused.** Be prepared to provide documentation if you request a waiver of the penalty for late work.
- **Be prepared for class each day.** An absence does not excuse the student from doing assignments and being prepared for the next class.
- **Assignments submitted after the deadline will receive a zero unless excused by the instructor.** Most reading quizzes will be posted on Blackboard and will be due before the beginning of class. Other daily grades, such as in class discussions or group work, are due when called for. Two daily grades will be dropped at the end of the term.

If there's specific resistance to women making movies, I just choose to ignore that as an obstacle for two reasons: I can't change my gender, and I refuse to stop making movies.

—— Kathryn Bigelow ——

AZ QUOTES
PERSONAL CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In this and all college courses, you should conduct yourself with professionalism and collegiality, and you should take responsibility for your own learning and performance. Excellent students are motivated, dedicated, and self-reliant; they have a positive attitude and a good work ethic. You will improve your chances of succeeding in this class by following these rules:

- **Stay focused.** Attend class and be actively involved as often and as much as possible. Pay attention and participate in discussions. Ask questions when you have them and consult your professor when you have concerns.
- **Commit to learning.** Keep up with your work. Critically read all assigned readings. Conscientiously complete written assignments. Review and study daily.
- **Follow instructions carefully,** especially those on assignment prompts, and prepare assignments according to the guidelines provided.
- **Encourage learning and collaborate** with classmates and support the instructor in the goal of learning.
- **Be courteous.** To avoid distracting others, arrive on time. Avoid talking in class except when appropriate. While it is sometimes acceptable and even desirable to question opinions and even facts offered by others (including the teacher), you should do so respectfully and thoughtfully, with learning goals in mind.
- **Use cell phones and other personal electronic devices only for class purposes.**
- **Take good care of your body and mind.** Keep yourself nourished and rested.

COVID PROTOCOLS

As a member of the Texas Tech University System, Angelo State University has adopted the mandatory [Facial Covering Policy](#) to ensure a safe and healthy classroom experience. Current research on the COVID-19 virus suggests there is a significant reduction in the potential for transmission of the virus from person to person by wearing a mask/facial covering that covers the nose and mouth areas. Therefore, in compliance with the university policy students in this class are required to wear a mask/facial covering before, during, and after class.

Faculty members may also ask you to display your daily screening badge as a prerequisite to enter the classroom. You are also asked to maintain safe distancing practices to the best of your ability. For the safety of everyone, any student not appropriately wearing a mask/facial covering will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. The student will be responsible to make up any missed class content or work. Continued non-compliance with the Texas Tech University System Policy may result in disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct.

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs
or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA) and subsequent legislation.

Student Disability Services is located in the Office of Student Affairs, and is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting an employee of the Office of Student Affairs, in the Houston Harte University Center, Room 112, or contacting the department via email at ADA@angelo.edu. For more information about the application process and requirements, visit the Student Disability Services website at www.angelo.edu/ADA. The employee charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing accommodation requests is:

Ms. Dallas Swafford  
Director of Student Disability Services  
325-942-2047  
dallas.swafford@angelo.edu  
Houston Harte University Center 112

TITLE IX

Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. In accordance with Title VII, Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE), and other federal and state laws, the University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. The term includes sexual harassment, nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence or dating violence), sexual violence, and any other misconduct based on sex.

You are encouraged to report any incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator, Michelle Boone, J.D. You may submit reports in the following manner:

Online: www.angelo.edu/incident-form  
Face to Face: Mayer Administration Building, Room 210  
Phone: 325-942-2022  
Email: michelle.boone@angelo.edu

Note, as a faculty member at Angelo State, I am a mandatory reporter and must report incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you wish to speak to someone
in confidence about an issue, you may contact the University Counseling Center (325-942-2371), the 24-Hour Crisis Helpline (325-486-6345), or the University Health Clinic (325-942-2171).

For more information about resources related to sexual misconduct, Title IX, or Angelo State’s policy please visit: www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required. See ASU Operating Policy 10.11 Grading Procedures for more information.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the Student Handbook.

See www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a serious topic covered in ASU’s Academic Integrity policy in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking someone else’s work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one’s own. Plagiarism is literary theft.

In your discussions and/or your papers, it is unacceptable to copy word-for-word without quotation marks and the source of the quotation. It is expected that you will summarize or paraphrase ideas giving appropriate credit to the source both in the body of your paper and the reference list.

Papers are subject to be evaluated for originality via Turnitin. Resources to help you understand this policy better are available at the ASU Writing Center.

COPYRIGHT POLICY

Students officially enrolled in this course should make only one printed copy of the given articles and/or chapters. You are expressly prohibited from distributing or reproducing any portion of
course readings in printed or electronic form without written permission from the copyright holders or publishers.

OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

“A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.” (See ASU Op 10.19.)

SENIOR PORTFOLIOS

Candidates for the Bachelor of Arts in English are required to complete a portfolio to be eligible for graduation. Students may submit this portfolio after completing all major requirements or in the semester immediately prior to graduation. The portfolio grade will not affect GPA, but will be part of the student's record.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The schedule below indicates reading and viewing assignments for the semester. The material listed beside the date indicates the material due at the beginning of the period on that date. Assignments (including films for study) are subject to change.

- ACAC = American Film / American Culture
- FW = Film of the Week

**Week 1**

FW: *The Great Train Robbery* (Edwin S. Porter, 1903)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 1/25</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>W 1/27</td>
<td>ACAC Preface, Introduction, and Ch. 1 (“Emergence of Cinema as an Institution”)</td>
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<td>F 1/29</td>
<td>ACAC Ch. 2 (“Classic Hollywood Cinema: Narration”), pp. 21-29</td>
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**Week 2**

FW: Orson Welles (*Citizen Kane*, 1941)

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<tr>
<td>M 2/1</td>
<td>ACAC Ch. 3 (“Classic Hollywood Cinema: Style”)</td>
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<td>W 2/3</td>
<td>Screening Report: <em>Citizen Kane</em></td>
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<td>F 2/5</td>
<td>ACAC Ch. 4 (“The Studio System”)</td>
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**Week 3**

FW: *High Noon* (Fred Zimmerman, 1952)

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<tr>
<td>M 2/8</td>
<td>ACAC Ch. 5 (“The Star System”)</td>
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<td>W 2/10</td>
<td>Screening Report: <em>High Noon</em></td>
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<td>F 2/12</td>
<td>ACAC Ch. 13 (“Hollywood and the Cold War”)</td>
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**Week 4**

FW: *Dr. Strangelove* (Stanley Kubrick, 1964)

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<tr>
<td>M 2/15</td>
<td>ACAC Ch. 14 (“Hollywood in the Age of Television”)</td>
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<td>W 2/17</td>
<td>Screening Report: <em>Dr. Strangelove</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>F 2/19</td>
<td>ACAC Ch. 15 (“The 1960s: The Counterculture Strikes Back”)</td>
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**Week 5**

FW: *Zero Dark Thirty* (Kathryn Bigelow, 2012)

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<th>Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>M 2/22</td>
<td>ACAC Ch. 16 (“The Film School Generation”)</td>
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<td>W 2/24</td>
<td>Screening Report: <em>Zero Dark Thirty</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>F 2/26</td>
<td>ACAC Ch. 17 (“Into the Twenty-First Century”)</td>
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Week 6  FW: *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942)

M 3/1  ACAC Ch. 6 (“Silent Film Melodrama”)
W 3/3  Screening Report: *Casablanca*
F 3/5  Discussion

Week 7  FW: *Singin’ in the Rain* (Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly, 1952)

M 3/8  ACAC Ch. 7 (“The Musical”)
W 3/10 Screening Report: *Singin’ in the Rain*
F 3/12 Discussion

Week 8  M 3/15 Review
W 3/17 Review
F 3/19 **Mid-Term Exam**

Week 9  FW: *Sullivan’s Travels* (Preston Sturges, 1941)

M 3/22 ACAC Ch. 8 (“American Comedy”)
F 3/26 Discussion

Week 10 FW: *Booksmart* (Olivia Wilde, 2019)

M 3/29 American Comedy, cont.
W 3/31 Screening Report: *Booksmart*
F 4/2  **HOLIDAY**

Week 11 FW: *The Dirty Dozen* (Robert Aldrich, 1967)

M 4/5 ACAC Ch. 9 (“War and Cinema”)
W 4/7  Screening Report: *Dirty Dozen*
F 4/9  Discussion

Week 12 FW: *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976)

M 4/12 ACAC Ch 10 (“Film Noir”)
W 4/14 Screening Report: *Taxi Driver*
F 4/16 Discussion
Week 13  FW: *Unforgiven* (Clint Eastwood, 1992)

M 4/19  ACAC Ch. 11 (“The Making of the West”)
W 4/21  Screening Report: *Unforgiven*
F 4/23  Discussion

Week 14  FW: *Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2017)

M 4/26  ACAC Ch. 12 (“Horror and Science Fiction”)
W 4/28  Screening Report: *Get Out*
F 4/30  Discussion

Week 15

M 5/3  TBA
W 5/5  Review
F 5/7  Review

M 5/10  FINAL EXAM (1:00-3:00 PM)