



MDST 1118-WDE Introduction to Film Studies

Winter 2023

January 9 - April 11

Instructor: TBD

E-mail: TBA

Class Hours: NA, web-based/D2L

Office Hours: TBA

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to a range of approaches to viewing and analyzing films from various genres, historical moments, and national traditions. We will build a critical vocabulary with which to think, talk, and write about the formal and stylistic features of film (such as narrative structure, mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing and sound). We will study the cinema as a social, historical, cultural, and ideological institution.

Course Objectives and/or Learner Outcomes

Students who have completed all the readings, watched all the films, attended all the lectures, submitted all the assignments, and consistently engaged with the course material should, by the end of the course, be able to:

- ✧ Think independently and critically about film, film production, and the study of film.
- ✧ Analyze the formal, political, and social issues raised by films and film studies as an institution.
- ✧ Read films in a variety of genres critically, and assess their rhetorical, ideological and aesthetic strategies.
- ✧ Analyse specific cinematic devices and explain how such devices contribute to the meaning of a film.
- ✧ Explain how a film is produced by, and produces, its historical, national, political, and/or cultural contexts.
- ✧ Explain the role of film in articulating and creating categories of identity (including race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, etc.).
- ✧ Analyse films from a variety of theoretical perspectives.
- ✧ Identify and assess the social, political, environmental and ethical themes presented in films.
- ✧ Identify the formal and stylistic conventions of a variety of genres, and identify ways in which individual films work within, or expand the definitions of, particular genres.
- ✧ Write well (grammatically correct, clear, effective prose).
- ✧ Write about film using a critical vocabulary.
- ✧ Communicate ideas effectively and coherently, in persuasive essays, and a



- variety of other forms.
- ✧ Use library resources to research a topic and use what is discovered to illuminate a critical reading of a cinematic text.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts:

Richard Barsam and Dave Monahan, *Looking at Movies*. 6th edition. New York & London: Norton, 2016 (packaged with access to InQuizitive)

Karen Gocsik, Richard Barsam, and Dave Monahan, *Writing About Movies*. 4th edition. New York & London: Norton, 2016

Both these texts have been made available as ebooks through the campus bookstore: <https://bookstore.lakeheadu.ca>

You will require access to InQuizitive in order to proceed in this course. If you purchase an older version of *Looking at Movies*, you will need to purchase separate access to InQuizitive through the campus bookstore.

Course Websites:

Desire2Learn (some additional readings will provided through D2L)
wwnorton.com/movies

Course Schedule

In preparation for each class, students are expected to have completed the assigned readings and viewed the assigned feature film before accessing the week's lectures and other recordings. It would also be beneficial to complete the weekly InQuizitive test *before* working through the class material.

The course is arranged into twelve weeks and each week's online material is the equivalent of 3 hours of in-class instruction. I strongly advise you to keep up with the course material—it is hard to catch up and students who failed the exam for this course previously did so because they had not completed the course's viewing and reading requirements.

Assessments and their due dates are listed below and are underlined.

Films that are available to stream through the library catalogue are listed in the schedule. Streaming is provided by two separate databases: COD (Criterion On Demand); Kanopy. *Get Out* is currently available through the streaming service Audio-Cine, to which the university currently has trial access. *Citizen Kane* is not available through university resources and access will have to be purchased through an alternative venue such as YouTube, Prime, etc.



WEEK ONE: FILM ART AND FILMMAKING

Assigned Film: *Mad Max: Fury Road* (George Miller, 2015, 120 min.) (Streaming, COD)

Assigned Reading: *Looking at Movies*: “Chapter 1: Looking at Movies” and “Chapter 11: Filmmaking Technologies and Production Systems” (only up to p. 427).

InQuizitive Test (Ch. 1) due TBD

WEEK TWO: FILM

Assigned Film: *La Jetée* (Chris Marker, 1962, 28 min.) (Streaming, COD)

Assigned Reading: *Looking at Movies*: Chapter 2: “Principles of Film Form”.

Writing About Movies: Chapter 2: “Looking at Movies” especially “The Importance of Taking Notes” and “What Are You Looking For”; Chapter 3: “Formal Analysis”

InQuizitive Test (Ch. 2) due TBD

WEEK THREE: MISE-EN

Assigned Film: *Ladri di biciclette (The Bicycle Thieves)* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948, 93 min.) (Streaming, COD)

Assigned Readings: *Looking at Movies*; Chapter 5: “Mise-en-Scène”

InQuizitive Test (Ch. 5) due TBD

Short Assignment: Mise-en-Scène Analysis (due TBD)

WEEK FOUR: NARRATIVE

Assigned Film: *Rashomon* (Akira Kurosawa, 1950, 88 min.) (Streaming, COD)

Assigned Readings: *Looking at Movies*; Chapter 3 (just the section entitled “The Idea of Narrative,” 68–71); Chapter 4: “Elements of Narrative”. Chapter 10 (just the section entitled “Japan,” 389–92)

InQuizitive Test (Ch. 4) due TBD

WEEK FIVE:

Assigned Film: *Moonlight* (Barry Jenkins, 2016, 110 min.) (Streaming, COD)

Assigned Readings: *Looking at Movies*; Chapter 6: “Cinematography”



Writing About Movies: Chapter 9: “Attending to Style.”

InQuizitive Test (Ch. 6) due by TBD

READING WEEK FIVE (USE THIS WEEK TO GET AHEAD ON READING, WATCHING FILMS, AND ASSIGNMENTS)

WEEK SIX:

Assigned Film: *City of God* (Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund, 2002, 130 min.), (Streaming, COD)

Assigned Reading: *Looking at Movies*; Chapter 8: “Editing”
Writing About Movies: Chapter 4, “Cultural Analysis” (especially pp. 56–76)

InQuizitive Test (Ch. 8) due TBD

Short Assignment: Shot to Shot Analysis (due TBD)

WEEK SEVEN: SOUND IN Assigned Film: *The Piano* (Jane Campion, 1993, 121 min.) (Streaming, COD)

Assigned Readings: *Looking at Movies*; Chapter 9: “Sound.”
Writing About Movies: Chapters 5 and 6: “Generating Ideas” and “Researching Movies.”

InQuizitive Test (Ch. 9) due TBD

WEEK EIGHT: TYPES OF MOVIES:

Assigned Films: *Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2017, 104 min.) (Currently available through trial access to Audio-Cine; if trial is no longer active, film we need to be purchased or rented from YouTube or an alternative online platform)

Assigned Reading: *Looking at Movies*: Chapter 3: “Types of Movies.”

InQuizitive Test (Ch. 3) due TBD

WEEK NINE: TYPES OF MOVIES:

Assigned Film: *Stories We Tell* (Sarah Polley, 2012, 90 min.) (Streaming, COD)

Assigned Reading: *Writing About Movies*: Chapter 7: “Developing Your Thesis”

WEEK TEN: FILM ANALYSIS: CASE STUDIES 1

Assigned Film: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941, 120 min.) (Can either be purchased or rented from YouTube, or is currently available through Netflix)

Assigned Reading: *Looking at Movies*: Chapter 10 (just the section entitled “Looking at *Citizen Kane* and its Place in Film History,” 404–6). *Writing About Movies*: Chapter 8:

“Considering Structure and Organization”

WEEK ELEVEN: FILM ANALYSIS: CASE STUDIES 2

Assigned Film: *Wadjda* (Haifaa Al-Mansour, 2012, 98 min.) (Streaming, COD)

Research Essay (due TBD)

WEEK TWELVE : FILM ANALYSIS: CASE STUDIES 3 AND EXAM PREPARATION

Assigned Film: *Lady Bird* (Greta Gerwig, 2017, 93 min.) (Streaming, COD)

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment	Due date	Value	Length
Online Quizzes: InQuizitive	TBD (every week for the first 8 weeks)	10%	n/a
2 Short Assignments (Mise-en-scène and Shot Analysis)	TBD	25%	1–2 pages each
Research Essay	TBD	30%	4–7 pages
Final Exam	TBA	35%	3 hours

Assignment Policies

All assignments are individual assignments and cannot be completed collaboratively.

- ✧ Written assignments must be submitted to the appropriate folder under Assignments in D2L on the dates indicated. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED except in extenuating circumstances.
- ✧ If you require an extension, for medical or other reasons, you must ask for one BEFORE the due date.
- ✧ The final exam must be written on the date scheduled, so do not make alternative plans for the exam period until the exam schedule is posted.

Guidelines for Written Work

- ✧ Paper: Use 8.5 by 11 inch paper setting
- ✧ Margins: Use 1 inch margins all around.



- ✧ Spacing: Your essay should be double-spaced throughout, including blocked quotations, notes, and the works cited page.
- ✧ Title Page: As per MLA guidelines, your paper does not need a title page. At the top of the first page at the left-hand margin, type your
- ✧ name, your instructor's name, the course name and number, and the date – all on separate, double-spaced lines. Then double-space again and center the title above your text. Double-space again before
- ✧ beginning your text. The title of your paper should be neither
- ✧ underlined nor written in caps. Capitalize only the first, last, and principal words of your title.
- ✧ Page numbers: insert page numbers throughout the document.
- ✧ All requirements for MLA (8th edition) formatting of quotations and references can be found at the following online source:
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
- ✧ Works Cited: every essay must include a Works Cited page, which will include all texts cited in the essay (including primary texts). Refer to the OWL Purdue (see above) for proper works cited format.

Details of Assignments

Online Quizzes/InQuizitive

The links for InQuizitive Tests are provided near the top of each week's material. You will need to register before completing the first test. Links for registering and technological support have been provided. Access to InQuizitive comes with purchase a new textbook; if you buy a secondhand or older version of the textbook, it is possible to purchase access to InQuizitive separately through the campus bookstore.

Short Assignments

The details of these two short assignments on mise-en-scène and shot-to-shot analysis can be found on D2L under Assessments.

Research Essay

Questions for this assignment can be found on D2L under assessments.

Final Exam

This three-hour exam will be made up of multiple-choice questions on key terms, short answer questions, and essay questions. The date for the exam will be assigned by the university later in the term. The exam will be administered through the Quizzes function on D2L.

Marking Standards

All assignments will be marked in accordance with the [English Department Marking Standards](#) and/or assigned rubrics.

Collaboration/Plagiarism Rules



Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student's work, or working together on an individual assignment, all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you've submitted to another course is also academic dishonesty. All plagiarized work (in whole or in part) and other forms of academic dishonesty, including collaborating on individual assignments, will be reported and infractions penalized as required by the [Student Code of Conduct - Academic Integrity](#)^{iv}

Course Policies

1. Please keep in mind that proper class participation includes appropriate interactions between students and appropriate behavior on discussion boards. Sexist, homophobic, and/or racist comments on discussion boards will not be tolerated.
2. Students are expected to complete ALL assigned readings and viewings prior to working through the class material for each week.
3. Keep a copy of all written work – technological failures are possible. It is the student's responsibility to have a backup ready should this occur.

University Policies

Students in this course are expected to conform to the [Student Code of Conduct - Academic Integrity](#)ⁱⁱ.

Accommodations: Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)ⁱⁱⁱ. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#)^{iv} and register as early as possible.

This course outline is available online through the [English Department homepage](#)^v and/or the [Desire2Learn or My Courselink](#)ⁱ site for the course.

ⁱ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/english/marking-standards>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct/academic-integrity/node/51239>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>

^{iv} <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-services/accessibility>



∇ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/english>