

ENG 510 – Introduction to Film Studies, 3 sh, 3cr.

Fall 2012, T 4:30-7:10 pm., Hall of Languages 203

Gerald Duchovnay

Office Hours: TH 10-11; 12:15-1:45, Thursday, 4:30-5:15. Other times by appointment. Or via email. Telephone: (903) 886-5265 FAX 903 886 5980

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Course Description:

English 510, Introduction to Film Studies, is designed for graduate students who have had no formal training in film study, but the course, part of the Film Certificate, does not exclude anyone who has studied film before. The course will introduce basic skills and approaches to understanding and interpreting film through its "rhetoric" and its links and connections to cultural criticism, genre, history, ideology, and the work of one or more directors. To have a better understanding of these concepts and approaches, this semester we will focus on the films of Alfred Hitchcock.

Alfred Hitchcock's career in film spans five decades (1926-1976), several film genres, countless adaptations of literary works., and the use of key aspects of filmmaking. Terms such as *mise en scène*, establishing shot, storyboarding, and montage are all a part of Hitchcock's grammar and will serve well as the basis for anyone wanting to understand the basic approaches to and ways of understanding film. This course will examine a few of the key early British films that incorporate themes and cinematic techniques used by Hitchcock, and then follow his transition into the films made for studios and producers in Hollywood. We may also consider his relationship with at least one of the screenwriters and how Hitchcock approached adaptation.

Throughout the seminar we will discuss basic approaches to film studies--how film relates to literature and critical theory – and use Hitchcock as our touchstone. Seminar participants will be asked to apply some of this knowledge to what we will be doing during the course via a presentation of a particular film, responses to the readings and films, participation in class discussion, presenting an annotated bibliography on one film by Hitchcock, and an analysis of a particular film in a final paper.

A typical class may include introductory remarks, viewing a film or film clips, plus discussion. Plus short breaks. We will see the films you have chosen. If there is limited time to see films in their entirety, I may ask you to see certain films before a particular presentation. As we move through the course, we will examine how Hitchcock's films help codify or reflect key aspects of film studies.

Textbooks: *Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Ed. Jonathan Hill and Pamela Church. Oxford UP, 1998. ISBN: 13: 978-0198711247

McMilligan, Patrick. *Alfred Hitchcock*. New York: Harper Collins, 2003.
ISBN: 9780060988272

Handouts, either in class or on reserve in the Gee Library

Books at Reserve Desk--on Hitchcock, on film studies, movie summaries, etc.

A DVD of the movie you are presenting. (*some are available in our media center*)

Highly Recommended:

Truffaut, Francois. *Hitchcock*. Rev. Ed. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983.

Giannetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*. 12th Ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2011
(or an earlier edition will be fine)

Monaco, James. *How to Read a Film*. 4th Edition. New York: Oxford UP, 2009.

Movies: In addition to the books for the course, Media Services (ext. 5502) has some of the movies on DVD or VHS. Let me know if you need to check out materials so that I can send along your names to the coordinator. I do recommend, though, that you purchase a copy of the movie you are working on. Some are special editions with useful “extras.” The film is considered your “primary text,” and as such you will want to own a copy of it. It will also make it easier should you wish to show clips during your presentation. **Note:** As of last report, we **do not** have Blu-Ray players available to us, so make sure your film is a “traditional” DVD.

Course Objectives:

- To become familiar with ways of "reading" films;
- To become more skilled in understanding Hitchcock's texts and Hitchcock as auteur;
- To become familiar with key aspects of film history as reflected in individual films;
- To develop greater skills in visual literacy-- film as a reflection of aesthetics (design, music, acting, source material) to increase your knowledge of film techniques and the grammar of film
- To exam key themes and motifs in Hitchcock's films.
- To prepare a thoughtful conference- or journal-ready study of some aspect of Hitchcock's films.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will develop an awareness of a key selection of Hitchcock’s films;
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of film concepts (i.e., the “grammar of film”) related to films viewed, readings, and discussions;
3. Students will produce texts that demonstrate visual literacy (essays, responses, oral presentations);
4. Students will participate in a community interested in discussing/analyzing films beyond the surface level of narrative and character.

Library Reserve and Interlibrary Loan: Many of the books that focus on Hitchcock and his career are, or will be, on Reserve in Gee Library so everyone can have access to the material (room use only). Please check to get the log-in information (passwords, whatever) that will allow you access to the data bases and other materials if you are off campus. You want to make sure you can access material from off campus. Please make use of ILL as soon as possible. There are literally hundreds of articles on Hitchcock’s career and films, but you need to find ones that work for you. Getting the articles you need can take anywhere from a few days to two weeks. As Nike says, “Just do it.” But do it NOW.

Evaluations: Grades will be determined by your oral presentation and supporting material (15%), your paper (40%), your annotated bibliography (15%), class participation (10%), Responses (20%).

Examination Policy: Unless there is an overwhelming demand by you, there will be no examinations for this course, but you may be asked for a mid-semester and/or final synthesizing response related to Hitchcock, his films, and your readings. That/those responses will weigh more heavily than the “weekly” responses.

Attendance: Class absences will have a negative effect on the evaluation of classroom participation, and thus your grade, and also the class dynamics. Excessive absences will impact your grade. Unless we have spoken about extraordinary circumstances, extreme excessive absences (4 or more) will result in either lowering your grade (for each absence beyond 3) or my dropping you from the class.

Projects:

Oral Presentation: Prior to our viewing or discussing a film, I am asking each seminar participant to make a 15 minute, substantive introduction, placing one film in Hitchcock's cannon, discussing key themes, motifs, or aesthetics to consider. (Powerpoints are fine, but don't just read from the powerpoints);

Let us know who some of the key critics on this film are and what they say about the film (as far as you have gone in your research);

Present a handout of 6-8 study questions that could serve as the basis of our discussion should we see your film or even if we don't.

Responses: You will be asked to write up short (1 ½-2 page) responses to aspects of the readings or films. Some may be assigned particular readings in *OGFS* to respond to. There may be a longer, synthesizing response around mid-term or near the end of the semester. If we do one or both of those, because of length and what will be asked of you, those responses will carry more weight than the "weekly" readings/film responses.

Annotated Bibliography: Should include at least fifteen **substantive** sources from books and articles and at least three substantive reviews of your film when it was released or when it was reviewed for a retrospective of Hitchcock's films. DUE: Nov. 6.

Final Paper: You are being asked to write either a conference length paper (9-12 pages, plus documentation) or a draft of a scholarly article (16-24 pages, plus documentation). This assignment is due in the last week of the semester before finals week (week of December 4) unless we agree otherwise. You have the freedom to work on any aspect of Hitchcock's films, but you will probably want to focus on the film you are presenting; you may, if you wish, trace an idea, concept, or theoretical approach through a few films. Not including the film, you are required to use eight sources in this essay.

Plagiarism/Academic Honesty: Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]).

Our word plagiarism is derived from a word that means "to kidnap." Plagiarism is a form of kidnapping someone else's ideas, opinions, arguments, or research, and presenting them (it) as your own. Plagiarism "includes (but is not limited to) failure to indicate the source with quotation marks or footnotes or internal documentation where appropriate if any of the following are reproduced in the work submitted: 1. a phrase, written or musical; 2. a graphic element; 3. a proof; 4. specific language; 5. an idea derived from the work, published or unpublished, of another person or group.

Much of the confusion and unintentional dishonesty in undergraduate papers results from ignorance or carelessness with regard to attribution of sources. When you borrow from what others have said, you are obligated to acknowledge your sources. We all solicit opinions about our writing from family, friends, or colleagues. Your indebtedness to others for sharing substantive ideas with you about your papers or for reading and commenting on them can be indicated in an acknowledgements page accompanying each formal assignment. If you go beyond conversations with friends or colleagues to other outside sources, you need to acknowledge these sources in your paper and in a Works Cited section. If you are uncertain about your documentation, please see me before you submit the paper. Intentional plagiarism will result in a zero for the work and other appropriate disciplinary action.

Common Decency: All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. You are requested to turn off your cell phones before entering the classroom. **Common courtesy says you do not receive or answer calls during class. And no text messaging, tweeting, or Facebook exchanges during class.** If you are expecting an emergency call, please let me know ahead of time, put your phone on vibrator mode, and sit close to the exit so you can leave discreetly to take the call. Ipads, laptops, and smartphones are okay, as long as they are being used for class activities.

Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services / Texas A&M University-
Commerce / Gee Library, Room 132 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-
8148

The Writing Center. The Writing Center is dedicated to helping writers take advantage of all opportunities for learning related to the writing process; to that end, the Center can assist writers at any stage of the writing process. In addition to your instructor, this is the place to go for additional assistance with your reading and writing projects at TAMU-Commerce. The Center can help you with your papers and digital texts for your classes. The Center has two locations: (1) on the ground floor of the Hall of Languages (room 103), and (2) by the circulation desk in Gee Library. To schedule an appointment, come to HL 103 or call (903) 886-5280, or check out the hours at the Gee Library.

Schedule: Two key words with classes that deal with media (and your instructor) are “flexibility” and “patience.” As I prepare this schedule, fifteen are enrolled, but that may change in the hours and days ahead. If we remain at that number, in order to see your films in their entirety, combined with the time it will take for us to rev up during the first week, we may need to make adjustments to our schedule.. The important thing is to make the class work for everyone. **Please note that as individuals add or drop in the first week the schedule of presentations won’t be firmed up for a while and thus we will make adjustments as necessary. Also, I will probably ask you to view a few films in their entirety outside of class, prior to presentations and our discussions.**

Abbreviations for readings: AH=*Alfred Hitchcock: A Life in Darkness and Light* (McGilligan);
OGFS=*Oxford Guide to Film Studies* (Hill and Gibson)

Wk 1, Aug 28 Course Introduction

Read for next time:

AH: 3-107; OGFS: 3-10, 11-30, 354-364

Inside Hitchcock

The Lodger or Blackmail

Wk 2, Sept. 4 Looking/Seeing Hitchcock

Read for next time: AH: 111-153; OGFS: 176-189; 195-201,501-509

Rear Window

Wk 3, Sept. 11

Read for next time: AH: 154-230; OGFS: 272-288, 190-194

39 Steps

Wk 4, Sept. 18

Read for next time: AH: 234-290; OGFS: 227-237, 77-90

The Lady Vanishes

Wk 5, Sept. 25 Read for next time: AH: 291-396; OGFS: 342-353, 371-381	<i>Rebecca</i>
Wk 6, Oct 2 Read for next time: AH: 399-472; OGFS: 310-326, 245-254	<i>Shadow of a Doubt</i>
Wk 7, Oct 9 Read for next time: AH: 475-564; OGFS: 327-341	<i>Spellbound/Notorious</i>
Wk 8, Oct. 16 Read for next time: AH: 565-601; OGFS: 36-42, 202-211	<i>Dial M for Murder</i>
Wk 9, Oct. 23 Read for next time: AH: 605-695; OGFS: 30-35, 51-57	<i>To Catch a Thief</i>
Wk 10, Oct. 30 Read for next time: AH: 696-745; OGFS: 310-326, 212-223	<i>Trouble with Harry</i>
Wk 11, Nov. 6 Read for next time: AH: 746-750; OGFS: 289-309	<i>Vertigo</i>
Wk 12, Nov. 13 Read for next time: TBA	<i>North by Northwest</i>
Wk 13, Nov. 20 Read for next time: TBA	<i>Psycho</i>
Wk 14, Nov. 27 Read for next time: TBA	<i>The Birds</i>
Wk 15, Dec. 4	<i>Marnie</i>
Wk 16	Finals Week