

ENG 697.004 (83404) – Sp. Topics: Introduction to Film Studies, 3 sh, 3cr.
Fall 2014, T 4:30-7:10 pm., Hall of Languages 203
Gerald Duchovnay
Office Hours: TH 10-11; 12:15-1:45. Other times by appointment. Or via email.
Telephone: (903) 886-5265 FAX 903 886 5980
e-mail: Gerald.Duchovnay@tamuc.edu

Course Description:

English 697, 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, who has often been described as the "Shakespeare of film." Hitchcock is much more than a maker of thrillers (*Psycho*) or mysteries (*The Lady Vanishes*). More has been written about Hitchcock, his films, and his impact on other filmmakers than any other director, which is in keeping with his being called the "Shakespeare of Film."

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 films that incorporate themes and cinematic techniques used by Hitchcock early in his career and then his transition into the films made for studios and producers in Hollywood. We may also consider his relationship with particular screenwriters and actors 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. 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:

Giannetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*. 13th Ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2014
(an earlier edition will work)
Monaco, James. *How to Read a Film*. 4th Edition. New York: Oxford UP, 2009.

Moral, Tony Lee. *Alfred Hitchcock's Moviemaking Master Class*. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 2013.

Osteen, Mark. *Hitchcock and Adaptation: On the Page and Screen*. Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield, 2014.

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

Movies: In addition to the books for the course, Media Services (ext. 5502) has some of the movies. 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" for your project 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 in HL 203, so make sure your film is a "traditional" DVD or is in dual format mode so that it works for us.

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 or are available as e-books, so everyone is able to 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. Please make use of ILL, and as soon as possible for your project. 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 as soon as you have a sense of the direction your project is going.

Evaluations: Grades will be determined by your oral presentation and supporting material (15%), your paper (40%), the completeness and accuracy of your annotated bibliography (15%), class participation (10%), Written Responses (20%). Minor adjustments (5%) to these percentages may be made to the responses/annotated bibliography depending upon the number of responses you write.

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 any “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* or *AH* to respond to. There may be a longer, synthesizing response around mid-term and/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. Your film and our books do not count as part of the fifteen. You may go beyond the fifteen. Annotations should be focused on key elements of the item being cited. One or two paragraphs at most. DUE: Nov. 4.

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 2) 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) in the Gee Library. To schedule an appointment, come to HL 103 or call (903) 886-5280, or check out the hours and location at the Gee Library.

Schedule: Two key words with classes that deal with media (and your instructor) are “flexibility” and “patience.” In order to see the films you may present 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, especially the films listed. The important thing is to make the class work for everyone. Please note that a schedule of presentations won’t be firmed up for a while and thus we will make adjustments as necessary. Also, I may ask you to view a few films in their entirety outside of class (the library owns most of them), 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 26 Course Introduction
Read for next time:
AH: 3-107; OGFS: 3-10, 11-30, 354-364

Documentary on Hitchcock

Wk 2, Sept. 2 Looking/Seeing Hitchcock Read for next time: AH: 111-153; OGFS: 176-189; 195-201,501-509	<i>Rear Window</i>
Wk 3, Sept. 9 Read for next time: AH: 154-230; OGFS: 272-288, 190-194	<i>39 Steps or The Lodger or Blackmail</i>
Wk 4, Sept. 16 Read for next time: AH: 234-290; OGFS: 227-237, 77-90	<i>The Lady Vanishes</i>
Wk 5, Sept. 23 Read for next time: AH: 291-396; OGFS: 342-353, 371-381	<i>Rebecca</i>
Wk 6, Sept. 30 Read for next time: AH: 399-472; OGFS: 310-326, 245-254	<i>Shadow of a Doubt</i>
Wk 7, Oct 7 Read for next time: AH: 475-564; OGFS: 327-341	<i>Notorious</i>
Wk 8, Oct. 14 Read for next time: AH: 565-601; OGFS: 36-42, 202-211	<i>Dial M for Murder or Spellbound</i>
Wk 9, Oct. 21 Read for next time: AH: 605-695; OGFS: 30-35, 51-57	<i>To Catch a Thief</i>
Wk 10, Oct. 28 Read for next time: AH: 696-745; OGFS: 310-326, 212-223	<i>Trouble with Harry</i>
Wk 11, Nov.4 Read for next time: AH: 746-750; OGFS: 289-309	<i>Vertigo</i>
Wk 12, Nov. 11 Read for next time: TBA	<i>North by Northwest</i>
Wk 13, Nov. 18 Read for next time: TBA	<i>Psycho</i>
Wk 14, Nov. 25 Read for next time: TBA	<i>The Birds</i>
Wk 15, Dec. 2	<i>Marnie</i>
Wk 16	Finals Week--TBA