

English 720.001 (22522) Special Topics: Films of Martin Scorsese
Gerald Duchovnay Spring 2019 R 5:30-8:10, Talbot Hall of Languages 203
Office: Talbot Hall of Languages 326
Office Hours: TH, 10:30--11, 12:15—1:45, Thurs, 4:30-5:15. Other times by appointment.
Telephone: (903) 886-5265 Fax 903 886 5980
e-mail: Gerald.Duchovnay@tamuc.edu

Course Description: English720 is an examination of the films of Martin Scorsese. We will look at several important aspects of his filmmaking, including other films and filmmakers who influenced him, as well as thematic and aesthetic assessments of some of his many films. As we proceed, we will consider Scorsese's comments on film restoration, the connections between technology, business, culture, and motion picture history, and genre influences on the filmmaker..

You are welcome and encouraged to see as many films by Scorsese and others as you can on your own. In addition to our discussions, you will have an opportunity to explore aspects of film history in one or more short papers and responses to the films we view. Your findings for the papers (not the responses) will be shared with the class through either abstracts or summaries or brief oral presentations. The oral presentations are an excellent way to develop presentation skills; they also introduce us to films that we might not otherwise discuss or see. The exact nature of the film paper(s) will be discussed in class, but the first one may be focused on films from an early decade in Scorsese's filmmaking.

Student learning outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the history of motion pictures related to the films of Martin Scorsese;
2. Students will demonstrate skills in visual literacy—being able to read films—in more significant ways than before this class as related to Scorsese films.
3. Students will demonstrate a familiarity with ways of discussing and evaluating films as reflections of cultures and periods of history;
4. Students will participate in a “community” interested in discussing/analyzing films beyond the surface level of narrative or character.

Textbooks: The two primary textbooks for this course are conversations and commentary on the filmmaker and many of his films.

Schickel, Richard. *Conversations with Scorsese*, updated. 2013. ISBN: 9780307388797

Thompson, David and Ian Christie., eds. *Scorsese on Scorsese*. 2004. ISBN: 9780571220021

Recommended—*A-List* on reserve (for brief reviews of key films from first 100 years of film history). For quick overview of films and listings of directors and actors and other information-- *imdb.com*

Technology Requirements: This course is face-to-face. You will, however, need access to a computer with access to broadband internet connection to view some items on youtube, or elsewhere.

Movies: In addition to the books for the course, you will probably need to buy one or two movies for your work. Media Services in the Gee Library has some movies on DVD and can be searched via the library catalog. I recommend, that you purchase a copy of the movie(s) you are working on. Some are special editions with useful “extras.” The film(s) is/are considered your “primary text(s),” and as such you will want to own a copy of it/them. It will also make it easier should you wish to show clips during your presentation.

Library Reserve: There are numerous key books on film and film theory and some on Martin Scorsese on reserve under my name and English 720 (and also English 432). The books are there for you to use; I hope you do. Also, please obtain the log-in information (passwords, whatever) that will allow you access to the data bases and other materials if you are off campus. For articles

not available on our campus, work IN ADVANCE of your deadlines with Interlibrary Loan to get the material (books or articles) that you need.

Evaluations: Assessment--Examinations and Papers: There will be one or two papers (as discussed in class), a mid-term response/examination based on the readings and viewings to that point in the course. In addition, you may have a few brief written assignments based on our films and discussions. They will include: responses/commentaries on our readings, an annotated bibliography linked to either your final paper or earlier film presentation, and abstracts to accompany any formal or semi-formal paper.

Responses—You are being asked to do two things with regard to some of the selected readings: 1) write two page responses to some of the ideas or questions in selected readings; 2) prepare three talking points--ideas that the author raises that are worth discussing in class--for the reading that you are assigned. On occasion you may lead a discussion of the essay you were assigned for that day. NOTE: It is important that you read all the material and be ready to discuss the ideas presented, even if it is not a reading that was assigned to you for presentation.

Examination—The mid-term extended response will be a take-home. This will require a synthesizing/analysis of the readings and discussions, with application to filmed texts. While it may change, at present there is no plan for a final examination. Your paper (s) will serve as your final, demonstrating all that you have gained and applied from what we have done in the class.

Annotated Bibliography—You are being asked to find “readings” or cognate readings about the particular texts/ideas you are dealing with in your final project (or an earlier project is so required) and provide a useful, briefly annotated (2-3 sentences) bibliography of reviews, articles, and books related to your study. This will be distributed to everyone in the seminar so that we will all benefit from your explorations. Guidelines: A minimum of ten substantive scholarly sources (books or articles) and three or four substantive reviews (400 words or more) of the film or source material. If you are asked to do two papers, then the annotated bibliography need cover only one of the films.

Papers— Given the size of the class, it is likely that each will be asked to present two films. Specific films and the nature of the assignments will be worked during the first week of class. On course reserve is the book the *A-List*, which offers brief summaries and commentaries in about 100 films, many of which have influenced Martin Scorsese. There are also several books on Scorsese on reserve or available to you via ILL, as well as numerous articles. .

This assignment will vary, depending upon our discussions and whether you present one or two films. If you do one film, then you are being asked to submit a 10-12 page essay suitable for a conference presentation, or, if so inclined, an 18-24 page paper that, with some polishing, could be submitted to a scholarly journal. Our focus is something few scholars have addressed, so there is a good possibility that if you do substantive work, you will definitely have material for part of a panel or individual conference presentation. Your final paper might be: 1) a theoretical essay, with concrete examples from the filmed text, related to historical, cultural, or aesthetic aspects of the film under discussion; 2) an essay that analyzes a debate or conflict related to some aspect of your film; or 3) an essay developing a key idea related to the text(s) you are focusing on for your class presentation. The scope and direction of the project will depend upon your knowledge and experience with the film(s), your research, and your critical approach(es). If you are asked to do two papers, then each paper needs be eight or nine pages long, with appropriate documentation.

Examination Policy: Aside from the mid-semester extended response, there will be no formal examinations in the class.

Grievance Procedure:

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head, Dr. Hunter Hayes, by completing a student grievance form available in the office of the Department of Literature and Languages. Where applicable, students should also consult University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 (“Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation”).

Attendance: Please try to attend all classes. Without being in class you lose the benefit of participating or listening to responses to the films. *While class absences will have a negative effect on the evaluation of classroom participation, it is extremely important to you and your classmates and to me that if you are sick (or a carrying something like the flu), that you not attend class.* I will note your absences; except for certain circumstances (such as medical matters), absences in excess of three will contribute to the lowering of your grade. After six absences you will be dropped from the class. If there are truly extraordinary circumstances, it is incumbent upon you to notify me about your situation to see if you are able to remain in the class. *It is my understanding that those who are dropped from class without having attended regularly and who are on financial aid may be required to repay their financial aid.* In some quarters there is the notion that some absences are excused and others are not. I consider any absence an absence, whether it be sleeping late, car trouble, work, a doctor's appointment, a family emergency, or a university athletic event.

We meet only once a week, and it is unlikely that material shown in class will be re-shown at a future time. Some of the films we will be seeing are on Youtube, DVD, or accessible through streaming (Netflix, Amazon, Hulu) or may be available from outlets such as Hastings or Family Video. Some, by coincidence, may be shown on such stations as AMC, TBS, Showtime, Cinemax, The Movie Channel, Independent Film Channel, Starz, Encore, etc. Those presented with commercials may be edited for tv, and even, occasionally, stations without commercials may edit a film for content. Some of the films may be available at the Media Center on campus. (This is also a place, in the library, to study films for your papers if the films are on DVD or video and you don't have access to equipment.) I encourage you to view a film more than once. If you read film history, you will discover how filmmakers came to film by carefully watching films, some as many as twenty times or more. The more you look at films and think about them, the more you will see.

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 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 ideas with you about your paper or for reading and commenting on it 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 page. If you are uncertain about your documentation, please see your instructor before you submit your paper. Intentional plagiarism will result in a zero for the work and 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. In addition, you are requested to turn off your cell phones, ipads, and other forms of technology before entering the classroom. Common courtesy says you do not receive or answer calls during class. If you are expecting a call, put your phone on vibrate and sit in a seat where you can leave the classroom without disturbing others. Restrooms in the Hall of Languages are on the first and third floors.

Procedure 34.05.99.R1 now prohibits the use of vapor/electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff and chewing tobacco inside and adjacent to any building owned, leased, or operated by A&M - Commerce.

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

Grievance Procedure:

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head, Dr. Hunter Hayes, by completing a student grievance form available in the office of the Department of Literature and Languages. Where applicable, students should also consult University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 (“Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation”).

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 is on the ground floor of the Hall of Languages (room 103), and may be available on line or at the Gee Library. To schedule an appointment, come to HL 103 or call (903) 886-5280 to check out the hours or to see if there is on-line assistance available. DON'T, though, wait until the last minute to get assistance.

Teacher Certification: *If, as a graduate student, you plan to seek certification in English, Spanish, Bilingual, an endorsement in ESL, or in other areas at TAMU-C, you must pass the required tests.* You should contact the appropriate certification advisor in your discipline as soon as possible. If you plan to be certified or pursue Alternate Certification to teach in the public schools, you need to become familiar with all the details of the competencies and requirements as early as possible in your academic career.

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness: In order to measure the level of compliance with the university's Institutional Effectiveness guidelines, throughout the semester, I will ask you to send me an attachment of your final project. This text will be part of a portfolio created on your behalf and will be measured to ensure that our program “promotes practices that result in higher student academic achievement; an enhanced student experience; aligned and transparent decisions; and readily available information for improvement, accountability, and accreditation” (see “Department of Institutional Effectiveness, <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutus/institutionalEffectiveness/default.aspx>). This is solely an assessment of program effectiveness and in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs.

Campus Concealed Carry. Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/3>)

4SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Class Schedule: The key words here are tentative and flexibility. We meet only once a week and will need to make very good use of all available class time. My presentations will involve some lecturing, but primarily we will discuss what you are reading and seeing. In addition to the two books required, there will be other reading assignments based on the films we see and discuss.

Abbreviations: SoS=*Scorsese on Scorsese*, ed. Thompson and Christie
CwS=*Conversations with Scorsese* (Richard Schickel)

Week 1 1/17

Read for next time: SoS xvii-xvi, Chapter 1, 1-22, 196-197; CwS vii-xiv, 3-46

Week 2 1/24

Read for next time: SoS, Chapter 2, 23-37; CwS, 47-96, 293-303

Week 3 1/31

Read for Next Time: SoS, Chapter 3, 38-67; CwS, 97-121, 309-317

Week 4 2/7

Read for Next Time: SoS, Chapter 4, 68-93; CwS, 122-156

Week 5 2/14

Read for Next Time: SoS Chapter 5, 94-115; CwS, 157-166

Week 6 2/21

Read for Next Time: SoS Chapter 6, 116-145, 211-217; CwS, 167-178

Week 7 2/28

Read for Next Time: SoS Chapter 7, 146-175; CwS, 179-196

Week 8 3/7 **Mid-Semester Response Assigned**

Read for Next Class: SoS Chapter 8, 176-196

Week 9 Spring Break 3/12 & 3/14

Week 10 3/21

Read for Next Time: SoS Chapter 9, 198-210; CwS, 198-201

Week 11 3/28

Read for Next Time: CwS, 202-223

Week 12 4/4

Read for Next Time: CwS, 224-250

Week 13 4/11

Read for Next Time: CwS, 251-273, 318-328

Week 14 4/18

Read for Next Time: CwS, 274-292, 339-352

Week 15 4/25 Annotated Bibliography Due—2 copies

Read for Next Time: CwS, 353-384

Week 16 5/2/19 Closure: Where Have We Been—What is Next for M. S.?

PAPER DUE--2 Copies

Week 17 **Final Examination Week**