

CMST 3013: Topics in Film
Focus: The 70s Film
Department of Communication Studies
Fall 2015
T/TH (Lockett 134)
Lab Tuesday 6-8:50 pm (Lockett 225)

Dr. Tracy Stephenson Shaffer
E-mail: tsteph3@lsu.edu
Office: 128 Coates Hall Phone: 578-6685
Office Hours: T and Th 11-11:50 or by appointment

Course Description: This course explores “the 70s film.” More specifically, we examine the 1970s in Hollywood and how its climate of innovation and experimentation changed the film industry forever. Dubbed “Hollywood’s Last Golden Age,” the 1970s introduced a band of talented young filmmakers and actors who later became icons of the industry: Scorsese, Coppola, Spielberg, Lucas, DeNiro, Pacino, Nicholson. We will spend this semester studying their early years. This course is multimethodological. We will approach these films in a variety of ways: from contextualizing the films in history, to considering the films as works of art, to tracing the ways race and/or gender get imagined/represented in certain films, to highlighting the political themes that emerge in each film. Because this is a communication studies course, we will pay special attention to the way(s) that the 70s film, as an aesthetic act, communicates culture at a particular moment in time. The course is worth 4 credit hours; it includes a lab for film screenings every Tuesday night from 6-8:50 p.m.

Objectives: By the end of this course, you should:

1. Be able to read a film and what it is trying to communicate more closely.
2. Have specific knowledge of the history and impact of the 70s film.
3. Be familiar with several important and/or groundbreaking 70s films.
4. Be able to analyze/theorize film in a variety of ways.

Text: Biskind, Peter. *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-And-Rock ‘N’ Roll Generation Saved Hollywood*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.

In addition, the eleven films screened on Tuesday evenings serve as texts.

Assignments

Discussion Points (30% of class/12 pts. A class)	300 points
Reading Quizzes (12 – 30 pts. each – drop lowest 2)	300 points
Group Presentation	200 points
Paper	100 points
<u>Film Screenings (10 pts. each – drop 1)</u>	<u>100 points</u>
Total	1,000 points

Grading:

980-1,000	A+
921-979	A
900-920	A-
880-899	B+
821-879	B
800-820	B-
780-799	C+
721-779	C
700-720	C-
680-699	D+
621-679	D
600-620	D-
0-599	F

Description of Assignments:

Discussion Points: We will be in class 25 days. For each day, I will assign a numerical grade that marks your attendance and participation. Each class is worth 12 pts. During class we will discuss the assigned readings and the films (depending on the day). You will receive 8 points JUST for being present. But those who contribute to the discussion in meaningful ways will receive 12 points. Of course, those absent will receive zero points. These discussions are fairly straightforward. Just do the reading and pay attention to the films shown and relate them to the topics in the course!

Reading Quizzes: For each day that reading is assigned (12 of the classes), we will have a reading quiz. This quiz will take the first 20 minutes of class and be worth 30 points. I will drop the lowest 2 at the end of the semester.

Presentations: During the last three days of class, we will have group presentations. Small groups of 4-5 will work on these presentations all semester. They will focus on an aspect of the 70s film we have not covered to satisfaction in class. For example, "Women Directors of the 1970s" or "1970s Documentary Film." We will go over the requirements for this presentation more fully as the semester progresses, but it should be a researched 15-20 minute group oral presentation that includes short film clips and adds to our knowledge of the decade in meaningful ways. Because this class is allowed as an elective in the FMA major and many of you may be FMA students, you may produce a video for this presentation. Speak with me.

Paper: Anytime this semester (but before the Thanksgiving Break), you should turn in a paper that analyzes a film not screened in this class. This five-page paper should have a title, be typed and double-spaced in a reasonable and professional font, stapled, have an introduction, body, and conclusion. The paper should analyze the film in ways we talk about film in class. That is, you may address the film in history, the film as art, the politics or theme of the film, the genre of the film, the film in the context of other films being produced at the time. Feel free to talk to me as you work on this. This paper is worth 100 points.

Film Screening Points: This course includes a screening lab on Tuesday evenings. While you may be able to find many of these films online, you should attend the screenings with your classmates. One of the joys of watching film is experiencing it with others who may or may not share your opinions/responses/reactions. In addition, the screenings force you to watch the films from beginning to end without hitting the pause button to text, prepare food, or go to the restroom. The screenings encourage careful attention; they are more akin to seeing the films in a theater. Screening attendance is worth 10 points per screening. You will not receive full credit if you arrive late or leave early. (I will drop one.) But honestly, what an easy way to earn a grade! You may bring a friend from outside the class. You may bring a comfortable chair. You may bring snacks. Just don't be disruptive, and take all trash out with you when the screening is over. And just like in the theater, turn cell phones OFF!

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1	Aug. 25 LAB Aug. 27	Introduction to course Bonnie and Clyde Reading 13-51 and Film Discussion
Week 2	Sept. 1 LAB Sept. 3	Reading 52-80 Easy Rider Film Discussion
Week 3	Sept. 8 LAB Sept. 10	Reading 81-109 MASH Film Discussion
Week 4	Sept. 15 LAB Sept. 17	Reading 110-140 The Last Picture Show Film Discussion
Week 5	Sept. 22 LAB Sept. 24	Reading 141-196 The Godfather Film Discussion
Week 6	Sept. 29 LAB Oct. 1	Reading 197-224 The Exorcist Film Discussion
Week 7	Oct. 6 LAB Oct. 8	Reading 225-254 American Grafitti Film Discussion
Week 8	Oct. 13 LAB Oct. 15	Reading 255-285 Jaws NO CLASS – Petit Jean Performance Festival
Week 9	Oct. 20 LAB Oct. 22	Film Discussion Taxi Driver Reading 286-315 and Film Discussion

Week 10	Oct. 27 LAB Oct. 29	Reading 316-345 LAB NIGHT OFF – Enjoy Fall Holiday! NO CLASS – Fall Holiday
Week 11	Nov. 3 LAB Nov. 5	Reading 346-389 Star Wars Film Discussion
Week 12	Nov. 10 LAB Nov. 12	Reading 389-439 Raging Bull Film Discussion
Week 13	Nov. 17 Nov. 19	Early Presentations NO CLASS – National Communication Association Conference (work on presentations)
Week 14	Nov. 24 Nov. 26	(work on presentations) Thanksgiving Holiday
Week 15	Dec. 1 Dec. 3	Presentations Presentations

*****Course Policies:**

1) Upon arrival to class, please turn off all electronic devices (other than laptops to take notes) before entering. If a cell phone or other device interrupts the class, I will ask you to leave the class for that day. Please do the same during labs; 2) You may bring snacks to the labs, but I ask that you bring trash out after the films are over; 3) You may invite friends to attend the labs with you unless they are disruptive. At that point, they will be asked to leave; 4) Please be respectful of the other students during class and the labs; 5) Please see me before or after class or during my office hours if you have any issues you would like to discuss; 6) I reserve the right to add to the course policies over the course of the semester if the need arises.

I look forward to a great semester and to sharing my love of film with you.

The Americans With Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office for Disability Services (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please meet with me to discuss the provisions as soon as possible.