Syllabus

**Course Goals:** This is a 300-level course with a substantial number of film screenings and readings that is an intensive study of the history and styles of the film noir genre focusing upon films with female protagonists. Students not able to undertake the serious demands required by the pace of the film screenings, the reading list as well as the upper division level expectations for the writing assignments should re-consider enrollment in this class. This course would be difficult for a student who has not had a previous film studies course. The critical methodologies of the course include genre and gender studies, historical examination, cultural studies analyses, psychoanalytic emphases, and analyses of directors’ filmmaking techniques and styles. This course fulfills a course for the Film Studies Minor (for information, about the Minor, please see Dr. McCormack), a literature elective for English majors and minors, a literature elective for English writing majors and minors, and a general elective for students with all other majors and minors.

**Books for the course (**NOTE: Use the editions of these texts in the University Bookstore**)**

3. E-reserve: theoretical, critical and historical essays on women in film noir
4. *Film Buffs Spring 09 Film Schedule*: see screening dates and times as well as summaries of assigned films
5. Videotapes of all films in the course are on reserve in the library for this course for your convenience. They cannot be taken out of the library.

**Screenings for the Course:**

Screenings are on Mondays and/or Wednesdays at 7:30 unless otherwise indicated. Screenings are in Bobet 332. Attendance at the screenings is not required; these screenings are provided to you so that you can see the films projected and in Surround Sound quality. You are required to have studied each film by the date on which it will be discussed.

**Readings for the Course:** Readings are chapters from Bordwell’s *Film Art* (These
are comprehensive, serious reading assignments); from Kaplan’s *Women in Film Noir*; and from the E-reserve essays. Students are required to have studied carefully every chapter and essay for the dates they are assigned. If a student is not prepared for class discussion, that student is marked absent. Beginning with the third absence from class for any reason, a student’s final grade is lowered per the Attendance Policy stated below.

Please note that students must bring texts to be discussed on each class day and take notes. No other work or use of electronic equipment of any kind is allowed during the class period.

**Schedule of Films, Readings, and Written Assignments:**

**NOTE:** Bordwell assignments are complete chapters, unless otherwise indicated.

1-13: Introduction to the course

1-14: Screening: *Double Indemnity*; BO 332; 7:30 (all screenings are in BO 332 at 7:30 unless otherwise indicated on syllabus)


1-19: Martin Luther King holiday: no screening or class

1-20: Discussion of Bordwell: 1) “The Significance of Film Form,” 2) “Film Genre,” 107-118, and 3) “Narrative as a Formal System”; 4) “The Shot: Mise en Scene”; **NOTE:** significant amount of reading: allow time to complete assignment.

1-21: Screening: *The Lady from Shangai*: BO 332; 7:30

1-18: Discussion of *The Lady from Shangai* and readings: 1) Kaplan: “The Dark Continent of Film Noir” (183-186 & 193-196) and 2) Bordwell, “The Shot: Cinematography”

1-26: Screening: *Gilda*: BO 332; 7:30


1-28: No screening
1-29: Readings: 1) **E-reserve:** Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,”
2) **E-reserve:** discussion of “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” and *Gilda* from America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies by Benshoff and Griffin; 3) Bordwell: “Editing”

**2-2:** Screening: *Mildred Pierce*: BO 332; 7:30

**2-3:** Discussion of *Mildred Pierce* and 1) Kaplan, “Duplicity in *Mildred Pierce*”

**2-4:** Screening: *Notorious*: BO 332; 7:30

**2-4:** Discussion of *Notorious*, Bordwell: “Sound”

**2-9:** Screening: *All About Eve*: BO 332; 7:30

**2-10:** Discussion of *All About Eve*; 1) **E-reserve:** “Women’s Place: the Absent Family of Film Noir”

**2-11:** Screening: *Sunset Boulevard*: BO 332; 7:30

**2-12:** Discussion of *Sunset Boulevard* and 1) Bordwell, “Style as Formal System”

**2-16:** Screening: *Vertigo*: BO 332; 7:30

**2-17:** Discussion of *Vertigo*, **E-reserve:** 1) Modeleski, “Femininity By Design” 2) Doane, “Film and Masquerade” (two chapters); and 3) examine stills only (no reading) from Doane’s chapter, “Veiling Over Desire: Close-ups of the Woman”

**2-18:** No screening

**2-19:** Group reports (counts as 2 quizzes) on choice of films from course thus far using Bordwell and theoretical essays. **NOTE:** at this point in the course, we have completed reading Bordwell chapters and most of the theoretical essays—Thus, this is now the time to begin work on major paper due April 28: thematic analysis of one or more course films with substantial use of Bordwell and film theory (8-12 pp. minimum)** See sample essay for thematic analyses, use of Bordwell, and use of critical theory.

**2-20 through 3-1:** Mardi Gras holiday for this class. Be safe!

**3-2:** Screening: *Bonnie and Clyde*: BO 332; 7:30

**3-3:** Discussion of *Bonnie and Clyde*

**3-4:** Screening: *Chinatown*: BO 332; 7:30
3-5: Discussion of Chinatown


3-10: Discussion of Postman and in class clips from ’46 Turner/Garfield version of Postman; 1) Kaplan: “The Postmodern Always Rings Twice”

3-11: Screening: Body Heat: BO 332; 7:30

3-12: Discussion of Body Heat: BO 332; 7:30

3-16: Screening: Fatal Attraction BO 332; 7:30

3-17: ** in class analytical writing on 80s film noirs: you choose a scene to examine from one film. Utilize a minimum of one theory essay and two references to Bordwell. You may bring notes but not a completely written essay. You write the essay in class and turn in your notes with the essay. Bring 2 exambooks and blue or black ink pens for this assignment.

3-18: Screening: The Grifters BO 332; 7:30

3-19: Discussion of The Grifters

3-23: Screening: The Last Seduction BO 332; 7:30

3-24: Discussion of The Last Seduction: Note: Group reports on The Grifters or Last Seduction, using Bordwell, and essays (counts for 2 quizzes)

3-25: Screening: To Die For BO 332; 7:30

3-26: Discussion of To Die For

3-30: Screening: Bound BO 332; 7:30

3-31: Discussion of Bound

4-1: Screening: Notes on a Scandal B0 332; 7:30

4-2: Discussion of Notes on a Scandal

4-3 through 4-13: Easter Holiday for this class. Work on your major paper. NOTE: Watch The Good German via streaming, DVDs from the library, or
your accessing of the film.

4-14: Discussion of *The Good German* and Neo-noir films

4-15: Screening: *Brick* BO 332; 7:30

4-16: Discussion of *Brick*

4-20: Screening: *Volver* BO 332; 7:30

4-21: Group reports on new millenial neo-noirs and films utilizing conventions of film noir. Groups may choose to report on of *The Good German, Brick,* or *Volver.* (counts as 2 quizzes)

4-22: Screening: *Audition* BO 332; 7:30. NOTE: Audition is a horror movie with film noir/femme fatale conventions. Students who prefer not to study *Audition* may watch the screening of *Rebecca* on 4-27 as an alternative.

4-23: Discussion of *Audition*

4-27: Screening: *Rebecca* BO 332; 7:30 (NOTE: students may watch both *Audition* and *Rebecca.* This additional film will count as 2 quizzes.)

4-28: Course wrap up. Discussion of *Rebecca* for students who watched that film. **Major paper due. No emails, please. **Distribution of take home essay final exam: Due in my English Department mailbox (Bobet 318) by Monday, May 1** No emails, please.

Components of the Course Grade:

1. Brief, objective quizzes on films, directors’ filmographies available on imdb.Com, readings in Kaplan and the E-reserve essays given at the beginning of class (NO MAKE-UPS): 15%

2. In class writing: scene analysis paper on March 17 using Bordwell and critical theory: 15% (See late paper penalties below).

3. Major paper (minimum length: (8-12 pp. minimum): DUE APR. 28 (See late paper penalties below): 55% You are encouraged to create an analytical paper topic examining one or several films in terms of genre, gender studies, stylistic, thematic, ideological, and/or any set of Bordwellian film elements that interest you and that you feel able to examine textually and with which you can intelligently employ noir film theory. These are to be primarily analytical papers; they are not research papers that repeat other critics’ work.
4. Comprehensive final essay exam: distributed in class on APR. 28 (DUE: MAY 1 in my English Department mailbox—Bobet 318); late paper penalties apply to final: 15%

5. Regular attendance and class participation increase final course grade by +4 points

6. **Grading Scale:** 8 point grading scale. e. g.: 93-100 = A

**Rewrite Policy:**

Your papers cannot be re-written since this practice encourages students to turn in poorly-written papers, take advantage of my editing skills, and re-write them to improve grade based on my editing. The WAC Lab tutors can help you learn to improve your own writing. I am glad to discuss your papers at any stage as well. **NOTE:** Going to the WAC Lab and/or seeing me about your paper will improve your paper, but these paper consultations do not guarantee any specific grade.

**Absence and Tardiness Policies:**

1. I take roll at the beginning of class; if a student misses more than 2 classes FOR ANY REASON (including lack of preparedness for daily film and reading assignments, each subsequent absence = 1 full letter grade deducted from final course grade.

2. Class starts at 2. If a student arrives after I have taken roll, that student is responsible after class to notify me to change your status from “absent” to “tardy.”

3. Tardiness = ½ absence.

4. A student who misses class is responsible to find out what the assignment was for that day and for the day that the student returns. Students who are absent should be prepared to be called upon on the day they return to class.

5. If a student is not prepared for class for any reason, that student receives ½ absence for lack of preparedness.

6. **NOTE:** Each student is responsible to get the full names and phone numbers of 2 students in the class as contacts with whom you can check assignments if you’re absent.
Policy Regarding Late Papers and Exams:

In order not to disadvantage students whose papers are on time, late work will be penalized 1 letter grade for each late day. If you experience difficulty completing a paper, DISCUSS THIS WITH ME BEFORE THE DUE DATE. If you have not talked with me before the paper is due (the day it is due = too late to talk to me), the late penalties, in fairness to students who turn in their work on time, will be enforced.

Policy Regarding Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is understood as a very serious error. A student who does not properly cite paraphrased or quoted sources, especially internet materials, will receive “F” on that paper, risk failing the course, having the plagiarism reported to the Associate Dean, and having the plagiarism placed on her/his permanent Loyola academic record.

Please Note: Students with disabilities who wish to receive accommodations in this class should contact Disability Services at 865-2990 as soon as possible so that warranted accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. Disability Services are located in the Academic Enrichment Center, Monroe Hall 405.

*** PLEASE NOTE: I am always available to discuss any aspect of your papers or the course with you. See me during my office hours or see me to schedule an appointment.