

Lloyd Michaels
Odd Fellows 225
E-mail: Lloyd.Michaels@allegheny.edu

Office Hours: M,W 10:00-11:30;
T, TH 3:00-4:30
Phone: x 4333

English 485
Topics in Narrative Film: International Art Cinema
(Five 21st Century Auteurs)
Spring 2012

Course Description:

This seminar involves intensive study of five directors who have contributed to the development of global art cinema as an alternative to the Hollywood entertainment industry. Since the 1950s directors like Akira Kurosawa, Ingmar Bergman, and François Truffaut have been deemed worthy of the same serious study as novelists, dramatists, painters, and composers; indeed, their works seem to have synthesized all of these traditional arts. This course focuses on 2-3 films by each of five 21st century filmmakers who, following these and other giants of the postwar era, have become internationally celebrated artists: Pedro Almodòvar (Spain), Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne (Belgium), Fatih Akin (Germany), Nuri Bilge Ceylan (Turkey), and Lee Chang-dong (Korea).

Because enrollment is limited and the topic of international film is so expansive, and because the last three filmmakers, in particular, are just emerging, students should approach this course as if it were *independent study*. Certainly, your instructor can make no claims to expertise on the subject of global cinema or these particular directors. I can only offer their films as examples of the ongoing philosophical richness and visual complexity that has marked art cinema since the 1950s. It is assumed that students enrolled in this advanced course already have taken English 304 and have general knowledge of both basic film terms and the history of the cinema; students who have not taken the prerequisite course will be provided with an introductory film textbook and asked to read it within the first two weeks. Unfortunately, there is no standard textbook on international film—and only a very few monographs and scholarly articles on the directors after Almodòvar. In addition to the course pack, which provides study guides to some of the films and supplemental short readings, I have provided an extensive selection of reserve reading, which includes the major film histories, studies of individual directors and national cinemas, and several important books about film theory and criticism. The main work of the course, however, will involve close study of the dozen films that comprise the syllabus plus a term paper on an auteur of your own choosing.

Course Design:

Students are expected to be full participants in all class discussions and to prepare some of the research materials used in the course. We begin with the difficult task of defining “art cinema” both by reading a few scholarly articles and sharing our experience of watching one black-and-white example from the first great era of the international art film, roughly the decade following World War Two (see list at end). We will then study the contemporary auteurs, one film per week. Certainly, we will try to have at least one “field trip” to see a significant new international release at a real movie theatre! Experience watching “movies with subtitles” and practice writing serious essays about complex films surely will help, but *curiosity* seems the most important quality for a successful experience in a course such as this.

Requirements:

For more than a century, film has been a communal experience involving the uninterrupted projection of oversized images in a darkened theatre. (Of course, that historical situation has changed dramatically in the past two decades with the development of new delivery systems.) The impact of movies is decidedly enhanced under these conditions, which is why *students are required to attend the weekly evening screenings—Monday, 7:30—in the Vukovich Center*. In such a small class that meets but twice a week, regular attendance and steady participation are obviously vital: *more than two unexcused absences during the semester may result in grade penalty*

At present, I anticipate the following graded assignments:

- Response papers (2-3 pages) on any two films in the course, to be submitted on the morning before class discussion
- An extended essay (5-7 pages) involving research and close analysis of a film shown in the first half of the semester
- A term paper (minimum 12 pages) on one of the directors studied in class or listed at the end of the syllabus

Grading:

I do not anticipate giving quizzes or a final exam. Because the written assignments at this point remain flexible and participation in such a small class is so crucial, it is impossible to assign precise percentages for each assignment. I am a holistic grader; that is, the final grade is based on a comprehensive assessment of your performance throughout the semester. Among the subjective factors I consider are *curiosity, commitment, and consistency*. These elements aside, I anticipate weighting your final grade as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • class performance, which includes regular attendance, informed participation, general interest and responsiveness | 20% |
| • response papers | 10% |
| • first essay | 20% |
| • term paper | 50% |

Students are invited to visit during office hours at any time during the semester to discuss their current standing in the course.

Plagiarism:

I assume that students taking an advanced English course are fully informed about issues relating to using secondary sources and have mastered the skill of citing others' ideas without plagiarism. Be particularly careful about using internet resources, which are often inaccurate and unauthorized. Please review the College's honor code and address any concerns regarding source materials to me. See the Learning Commons link <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/> for more about acknowledging sources and avoiding plagiarism.) Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels the need for an accommodation based on a documented disability should contact me as well as John Mangine in the Learning Commons (john.mangine@allegheny.edu, 332-2898). The Learning Commons arranges reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

Weekly Schedule + Screenings

<u>Th</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Films</u>
1/26	Galt and Schoonover, "The Impurity of Art Cinema" Bordwell, "The Art Cinema as a Mode Of Film Practice" Neale, "Art Cinema as Institution"	1/30 Schnabel, <i>The Diving Bell and the Butterfly</i> , 2007
2/2	Smith, "Introduction: <i>El Deseo, S.A.</i> (Desire Ltd)" Smith, "Silicone and Sentiment" Altares, "An Act of Love Toward Oneself"	2/6 Almodovar, <i>All About My Mother</i> , 1999
2/9	Arroyo, "Talk to Her" Scott, "The Track of a Teardrop, A Filmmaker's Path"	2/13 Almodovar, <i>Talk to Her</i> , 2002
2/16	Mai, " <i>The Son</i> "	2/20 Dardenne brothers, <i>The Son</i> , 2002 [<i>The Child</i> , 2008]
2/23	Scott, rev. of <i>Lorna's Silence</i> Mail, "Postscript: <i>Le Silence de Lorna</i> "	2/27 Dardenne brothers, <i>Lorna's Silence</i> , 2008
3/1	Suner, "The Cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan" White, "Nuri Bilge Ceylan: An Introduction And Interview"	3/5 Ceylan, <i>Distant</i> , 2002 [<i>Climates</i> , 2006]
3/8	Nuri Bilge Ceylan Photography Website Suner, "A Lonely and Beautiful Country"	3/12 Ceylan, <i>Three Monkeys</i> , 2008

SPRING BREAK

3/29	Isenberg, "Fatih Akin's Cinema of Intersections"	3/26 Akin, <i>Head-On</i> , 2004
4/5	Mennel, "Criss-Crossing in Global Space"	4/2 Akin, <i>The Edge of Heaven</i> , 2007
4/12	Raymond, "It's better not to lie..."	4/9 Chang-dong, <i>Secret Sunshine</i>
4/19	White, "Into the Past" Chung, rev. of <i>Poetry</i>	4/16 Chang-dong, <i>Poetry</i> , 2010

The First Wave: Postwar International Art Films

De Sica, *The Bicycle Thief/Bicycle Thieves*, 1948

Kurosawa, *Ikiru/To Live*, 1952

Ozu, *Tokyo Story*, 1953

Bergman, *The Seventh Seal*, 1957

Bergman, *Wild Strawberries*, 1957

Godard, *Breathless*, 1959

Resnais, *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, 1959

Truffaut, *Jules and Jim*, 1962

21st Century Auteurs: A Selective List

Claire Denis (France)

Michael Haneke (Austria)

Kore-eda Hirokazu (Japan)

Jia Zhang-ke (China)

Wong Kar-Wai (Hong Kong)

Abbas Kiarostami (Iran)

Cristian Mungiu (Romania)

Catherine Breillat (France)