

CTVA 309. FILM AS LITERATURE—Fall 2009. **John Schultheiss, Department of Cinema and Television Arts**
An analysis of the idioms of literature and motion pictures—their reciprocity, their distinctness: perceived through the focuses of aesthetics, literary criticism, narratology; the screening of selected motion pictures. **Office Hours:** Armer Theater (MZ100)—Tuesday @6:30PM; Wednesday @3:00PM and 6:30PM; Thursday @3:00PM. Please e-mail in advance for appointments. E-mail j.schultheiss@csun.edu — Department of Cinema and Television Arts. For a schedule of all Cinematheque screenings: www.cinematheque.csun.edu => “Monthly Screening Schedules.”

REQUIRED READING:

For copy of this syllabus: <http://www.ctva.csun.edu/Academics/Syllabi.html>

1. Albert Camus. *Exile and the Kingdom*.
2. Ernest Hemingway. *The Short Stories*.
3. Nathanael West. *Miss Lonelyhearts & The Day of the Locust*
4. Dashiell Hammett. *The Maltese Falcon*
5. Frederick Knott. *Dial “M” for Murder*
6. Ronald Harwood. *Taking Sides*
7. David Mamet. *Oleanna*
8. CTVA 309. *Film as Literature: Readings*

*These Readings are available for downloading @: <http://www.ctva.csun.edu/OverviewBios/Schultheiss.html>
(listed on left side of page under Office Hours).

CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE:

Students will be held accountable for the content and the context of all film works—features and film extracts—shown in class, as well as the lecture material.

ASSIGNMENT VALUES: 7 Weekly Examinations & Final Examination

NOTE: Attendance at *five* Cinematheque events will permit the dropping of the lowest score of the weekly examinations. (See criteria below.) Simply sign attendance sheets. For a schedule of all Cinematheque screenings, go to: www.cinematheque.csun.edu => “Monthly Screening Schedules.”

GUIDELINES FOR THE ARMER THEATER

- There is ABSOLUTELY NO EATING OR DRINKING in the Armer Theater.
- DO NOT bring ANY food or drink (including water) in the theater—especially GUM!
- DO NOT put your feet on the backs or armrests of the seats.
- Please refrain from any talking or conversations during the screenings.
- Turn off ALL cell phones and electronic devices—NO text messaging during class.
- Violators of any of the above guidelines will be asked to leave the theater.
- Please be considerate of all who occupy this holy space.
- => *No form of wheeled personal transportation (skateboard, skates, scooter, etc.) is allowed in the Armer Theater. As a courtesy, we will make a holding area available for the storage of these items should a student insist on bringing them. However, items are left in this holding area at the student’s risk. The Armer Theater, CTVA, and the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication assume no responsibility for their security.*

*“The undisclosed title of every great narrative is
LOST ILLUSION.”
—André Maurois*

26 Aug 09. **Introduction — Teleological and Existential Texts — Figurative (Symbolic) Concepts (Tropes)**
[“Limping Hero,” “Destiny” vs. “Erosion,” etc.] *[Film Extracts]*

READING: *Film as Literature Readings*—#1 (“NIHILISM”), #2 (“NATURALISM”), #3 (“EXISTENTIALISM”), #4 (“DESTINY” vs “EROSION”), #5 (“THE LIMPING HERO”). NOTE: “Existentialism” Handout [**Completed worksheet will be handed in as part of the final examination, attached to a listing of extra-credit Cinematheque screenings attended.**]

*These Readings and the “Existentialism Worksheet” are available for downloading @:
<http://www.ctva.csun.edu/OverviewBios/Schultheiss.html> (listed on left side of page under Office Hours).

2 Sep 09. **The Hemingway Existential Universe** *[Film Extracts]*

READING: *Film as Literature Readings*—#1 (“NIHILISM”), #2 (“NATURALISM”), #3 (“EXISTENTIALISM”), #4 (“DESTINY” vs “EROSION”), #5 (“THE LIMPING HERO”). NOTE: “Existentialism” Handout [**Completed worksheet will be handed in as part of the final examination, attached to a listing of extra-credit Cinematheque screenings attended.**]

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Ernest Hemingway, *The Short Stories*: “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place,” “Today is Friday”

9 Sep 09. **EXILE AND THE KINGDOM** *[Film Extracts Illustrating All of the Above]*

READING: Albert Camus, *Exile and the Kingdom*:

=> **Post-Lecture EXAMINATION on *Exile and the Kingdom* by Albert Camus**— Reading knowledge of “The Adulterous Woman,” “The Renegade,” “The Silent Men,” “The Guest,” “The Artist at Work,” “The Growing Stone.”

16 Sep 09. Hemingway Short Stories

Hemingway's Adventures of A Young Man (1962. stories Ernest Hemingway w A.E. Hotchner d Martin Ritt)

READING: Ernest Hemingway, *The Short Stories* (1)—in the order of their appearance in the film—"The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," "The End of Something," "Indian Camp," "The Three-Day Blow," "The Battler," "A Pursuit Race," "Now I Lay Me," "In Another Country;" (2)—"The Snows of Kilimanjaro," "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," "Soldier's Home," "Big Two-Hearted River: Parts I & II"

Film as Literature Readings—#7 ("THEMES AND PATTERNS IN THE SHORT STORIES OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY")

23 Sep 09. The Hemingway Universe—Short Stories

FILM EXTRACTS: *The Killers* (2 film versions); *Body and Soul*; *Under My Skin*

READING: Ernest Hemingway, *The Short Stories*: "The Killers," "Fifty Grand," "The Undefeated," "My Old Man."

Film as Literature Readings—#7 ("THEMES AND PATTERNS IN THE SHORT STORIES OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY")

=> Post-Lecture EXAMINATION on all of the above assigned short stories by Ernest Hemingway

30 Sep 09. The Maltese Falcon

The Maltese Falcon (1941. novel Dashiell Hammett w d John Huston)

READING: Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*; Film as Literature Readings—#8 ("ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND THE TOUGH-GUY WRITERS"), #9 ("EXISTENTIAL MOTIFS IN THE FILM NOIR")

=> Post-Screening EXAMINATION on *The Maltese Falcon* (novel)

7 Oct 09. Literature of the Apocalypse: Media Grotesques

The Day of the Locust (1975. novel Nathanael West w Waldo Salt d John Schlesinger)

READING: Nathanael West. *Miss Lonelyhearts & The Day of the Locust*; Film as Literature Readings—#6 ("GROTESQUE")

=> Post-Screening EXAMINATION on *Miss Lonelyhearts & The Day of the Locust*

14 Oct 09. Adaptation of Joseph Conrad

Gabrielle (2005. novel Joseph Conrad w Patrice Chéreau, Anne-Louise Trimoc d Patrice Chereau)

21 Oct 09. Mumblecore

Ma nuit chez Maud [*My Night at Maud's*] (1969. w d Eric Rohmer)

[Q.v. *Mutual Appreciation* (2005. w d Andrew Bujalski)]

READING: Eric Rohmer, "My Night at Maud's" Handout

28 Oct 09. Alfred Hitchcock's Dial "M" for Murder

READING: Frederick Knott, *Dial "M" for Murder*

=> Post-Screening EXAMINATION on *Dial "M" for Murder*

4 Nov 09. Art and Morality

Taking Sides (2001. play w Ronald Harwood d István Szabó)

READING: Ronald Harwood, *Taking Sides*

=> Post-Screening EXAMINATION on *Taking Sides*

18 Nov 09. "MANY VIEWS OF FRANCE" SERIES

Jean de Florette (1986. novel Marcel Pagnol w Claude Berri, Gérard Brach d Claude Berri)

25 Nov 09. "MANY VIEWS OF FRANCE" SERIES

Manon des sources [*Manon of the Spring*] (1986. novel Marcel Pagnol w Claude Berri, Gérard Brach d Claude Berri)

2 Dec 09. Literature and Film of David Mamet

Oleanna (1994. w d David Mamet)

READING: David Mamet, *Oleanna*

=> Post-Screening EXAMINATION on *Oleanna*

9 Dec 09. Literature and Film of David Mamet

Redbelt (2008. w d David Mamet)

READING: Film as Literature Readings—#10 ("Woody Allen's Commencement Address to Graduates")

16 Dec 09.

FINAL EXAMINATION [composed of the following elements:]

- (1) **ESSAY EXAMINATION** on the themes of the course, as expressed in the literature and films;
- (2) **COMPLETED (TAKE-HOME) EXISTENTIALISM WORKSHEET** [handed out and discussed during the beginning lectures of the course], **along with an attached listing of the extra-credit Cinematheque screenings attended.**

GRADING POLICY

The final course grade will be determined by selecting the best scores achieved from the following assignments:

1. **Seven Weekly Examinations, plus Final ESSAY Examination.** Weekly objective examinations will be graded with the following scale: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, 59-below = F.
2. **Attendance at the Cinematheque Events.** Attendance at **five additional** events or screenings at the Cinematheque (at the Alan and Elaine Armer Theater, Manzanita Hall 100) during the current season has an extra-credit or make-up examination benefit. For a schedule of all Cinematheque screenings: www.cinematheque.csun.edu => "Monthly Screening Schedules"

***EXTRA-CREDIT POLICY:** *attending these events will result in the dropping of the lowest score of the seven weekly examinations. There are NO make-up examinations.* Therefore, if an examination is missed, the additional five Cinematheque screenings *necessarily* become the essential mechanism to compensate for that missed examination; otherwise, a "zero" for the missed examination will be calculated into the final course grade. (Attendance will be scrupulously taken on these occasions. Be sure to sign the attendance sheet.) ***IN ADDITION:** all students availing themselves of the extra-credit option must submit—on the date of the final examination, attached to the EXISTENTIALISM WORKSHEET—a listing of the five screenings attended; so carefully keep a log of these screenings throughout the semester.

A SIDEBAR ON GRADING. The final course grade (plus/minus evaluation) is based on the quantity of grade-appropriate work successfully completed. The instructor is intensely aware of the minimum "C" requirement for one's continuation in the CTVA major. Much contentious discussion usually ensues when one is awarded a "C—" in the course—including a supplication to roll the grade over into the "C" category, since surely this has been a close call and why not give the benefit of the doubt in the spirit of humanistic charity anyway? In actual fact, the granting of the "C—" has already been the result of scrupulous deliberation and humanistic charity, and has already received the benefit of the doubt in order to protect the student from an even lower grade. Please do not petition to have a "C—" grade raised to a "C".

OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT CRITICAL ESSAYS

The following are OPTIONAL extra credit assignments. If undertaken, the resulting critical essays must conform to the following guidelines:

Critical essay topics or theses must be selected from the list below. The analytical emphasis of the critical papers—*five to seven double-spaced pages in length*—must focus on the syllabus films screened in class. The *rigid* deadline for the submission of the essays is **16 December 2009**, but early submissions will be able to take advantage of a revision policy that allows for re-writing.

GENERAL GUIDELINES.

—The paper must be executed with careful attention to literary and research principles. It will be evaluated on the basis of the clarity, logic, and organization of the discussion of the films and any secondary sources utilized.

—Great emphasis must be given to writing fundamentals: spelling accuracy, grammatical exactitude, and stylistic felicity. Research material may be employed—and is encouraged! (The papers earning the highest grades probably will have combined independent analysis with outside research.) But these external sources must be acknowledged in notes. Verbatim wording from such material must be enclosed in quotation marks.

Note on Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is more than simply taking the *words* of others and presenting them as your own; it is also taking the *ideas* of others and presenting them as your own. If you use another author's words or ideas, you must cite them in proper MLA format. Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated—review the appropriate admonition in the University *Catalog*. All suspected cases are automatically turned over to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

THE FOLLOWING TOPICS OR CONTEXTS MUST BE EMPLOYED

AS THE BASIS FOR THE CRITICAL PAPERS:

Directions. All of the following critical essay topics *require* the quotation from and the integration of relevant concepts from the specified literary reference and film stated in the question as the context for the discussion of each topic. A knowledge and implementation of the *assigned reading* must be demonstrated in your essays. The syllabus *film* being discussed must be analyzed in specific, concrete detail. Avoid generalities.

1. **Define** the concept and thematic implications of the so-called "Limping Hero," and use it as a context by which to make comprehensible the narratives of Hemingway's "A Pursuit Race;" Nathanael West's *Miss Lonelyhearts* and *The Day of the Locust*; and *Jean de Florette* and *Manon of the Springs*.

2. **It has been written** that Hemingway's "The Killers" could be perceived as a narrative continuation of his "Fifty Grand." Make this case with very specific supporting detail from the stories themselves.
3. **Writer-director Eric Rohmer** has labeled his *My Night at Maud's* a "moral" tale. Justify the use of the concept of "moral" in this context with a very specific definition of the term—and by ample supporting details from the literary source and the film.
4. **Taking Sides.** Both *Taking Sides* by Ronald Harwood and *Oleanna* by David Mamet have been written with such intentional *ambiguity* that taking the ethical, political, or cultural "side" of an individual protagonist in each work is essential to the process of making the texts comprehensible. Using evidence from the selected text, support the ethical, political, or cultural superiority or acceptance of the protagonist of your choice in **either** (A) *Taking Sides* **or** (B) *Oleanna*.
5. **André Maurois** has written that "almost all the great writers have as their *motif*, more or less disguised, the 'passage from childhood to maturity,' the clash between the thrill of expectation, and the disillusioning knowledge of the truth. *Lost Illusion* is the undisclosed title of every [great narrative]." Affirm or deny this contention, employing a text of your choice.
6. **For the purposes of this question**, consider David Mamet's *Redbelt* as the consolidation and culmination of the central themes of the course. Define and discuss a selection of relevant themes and figurative devices from the work, in order to provide as comprehensive a summary of the course's conceptual focuses as possible.

**GRADING CRITERIA FOR THE TAKE-HOME ESSAY QUESTIONS
AND CRITICAL PAPERS**

The felicities of individual writing style will always influence the final, subjective judgment, but the following are general CRITERIA relevant to an evaluation of the essays:

"A" & "B" PAPERS

Substantially exceeds minimum standards: it is clear from the structure and development of the essay that the ultimate number of pages produced is the result of a logical pursuit of an explicit thesis that has been defended and supported by documented evidence, and not the result of a literal observance of the barest specified requirements.

Characteristics: copious quotations from the reading, complete and lucid definition of terms, extended and logical development of themes and ideas under scrutiny, consistent use of detailed examples from the films or works under discussion, abundant evidence that the reading is being integrated and supplementary research sources are being employed—a rich, extended, textured, and nuanced presentation.

"C" PAPER

Meets minimum standards: a passing, acceptably competent fulfillment of the assignment.

Characteristics: exiguous quotations, limited employment of the reading assignment, abbreviated definition of terms, superficial development of themes or concepts, skeletal discussion of allied topics or implications, little documentation or support of generalities or assertions through the use of examples from the films or works under discussion, no indication that additional reading was accomplished or research sources were consulted, a generally thin and barren presentation.

"N/A" [not acceptable]

Does not satisfy minimum class standards: a paper clearly incompatible with literate communication.

Characteristics: extensive and pervasive mechanical, grammatical, spelling, syntactical, structural errors; sloppiness, clearly no attempt at proofreading or revision; non-responsiveness to the content, directions, or guideline requirements of the assignment.

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LOST ILLUSION."
—André Maurois*

NOTES: Students with disabilities must register with the Center on Disabilities and complete a services agreement each semester. Staff within the Center will verify the existence of a disability based on the documentation provided and approve accommodations. Students who are approved for test taking accommodations must provide a proctor form to their faculty member signed by a counselor in the Center on Disabilities prior to making testing arrangements. The Center on Disabilities is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110. Staff can be reached at (818) 677-2684.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a familiarity with the nature of film and television as a technology, business, cultural product, entertainment medium, and art form.

- demonstrate a knowledge of the formal aesthetic elements of motion pictures and how they are used to create cinematic art.
- demonstrate a knowledge of the various categories, models, theories and ideologies used as analytical tools in understanding works of cinema.
- demonstrate an enhanced visual literacy through an increased awareness of film's complex role and function in society.
- demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, interpret, and write about films and electronic media using film-specific language.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Explain and reflect critically upon the human search for meaning, values, discourse and expression in one or more eras/stylistic periods or cultures.
- Analyze, interpret, and reflect critically upon ideas of value, meaning, discourse and expression from a variety of perspectives from the arts and/or humanities.
- Demonstrate ability to engage and reflect upon their intellectual and creative development within the arts and humanities.
- Use appropriate critical vocabulary to describe and analyze works of artistic expression, literature, philosophy, or religion and a comprehension of the historical context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged.
- Describe and explain the historical and/or cultural context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged.

Department of Cinema and Television Arts Student Learning Outcome:

At the end of the program of study, students should be able understand and articulate the history, theories and critical models of cinema and electronic media.

Arts and Humanities GE Subject Course Goal and Student Learning Outcomes:

Goal: Students will understand the rich history and diversity of human knowledge, discourse and achievements of their own and other cultures as they are expressed in the arts, literatures, religions, and philosophy.

Information Competence Course Goal and Student Learning Outcomes:

Goal: Students will progressively develop information competence skills throughout their undergraduate careers by developing a basic understanding of information retrieval tools and practices as well as improving their ability to evaluate and synthesize information ethically.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Determine the nature and extent of information needed.
- Demonstrate effective search strategies for finding information using a variety of sources and methods.
- Locate, retrieve and evaluate a variety of relevant information including print and electronic formats.
- Organize and synthesize information in order to communicate effectively.
- Explain the legal and ethical dimensions of the use of information.