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## **FS101: Film and Narrative (Winter 2024)** **Department of English and Film Studies**



**Course Instructor: Dr. Katherine Spring** (she/they)

**Office:** 3-156 Woods Bldg.

**Office Hours:** Wed. 12:00-1:00 (Zoom; email for appt.) & Thurs. 12:00-1:00 (in-person)

**E-mail:** [kspring@wlu.ca](mailto:kspring@wlu.ca)

**Phone (Teams):** 1-548-889-4881

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Author Robert Coover writes, “The narrative impulse is always with us; we couldn’t imagine ourselves through a day without it.” Narrative, or the organization of story events into a logical sequence, is an essential quality of human life, one that traverses geographical, cultural, and historical boundaries. This course studies how the narrative impulse has been made manifest by cinema since the medium’s emergence in the late 1890s. Put simply, our guiding question is: **How do films tell stories?**

We will answer this question by considering how the four basic elements of film style—mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound—provide information about various aspects of narrative, including plot structure, characterization, and narration. After examining the principles of conventional or “classical” narrative form, we’ll explore alternative modes of storytelling, including those of the art cinema, documentary filmmaking, and contemporary digital cinema. In each case, we’ll question how filmmakers from various countries and historical periods have modified, subverted, and rejected the norms of classical narrative and narration.

### **COURSE TIMES AND FORMATS**

**Lecture:** Mon. 4:00-5:50 p.m., LH1001 (Laziridis Hall)

**Screening:** Tues. 7:00 p.m. or Wed. 7:00 p.m., BA101 (Bricker Academic)

**Tutorial (Required Discussion Sessions):** Attend the tutorial in which you have enrolled.

Direct all course-related questions to your tutorial instructor before contacting Dr. Spring.

T1 Thurs. 5:00-5:50	BA308	Jared Wallis	<a href="mailto:wall4470@mylaurier.ca">wall4470@mylaurier.ca</a>
T2 Thurs. 5:00-5:50	BA305/6	Tiffani Crant	<a href="mailto:cran9170@mylaurier.ca">cran9170@mylaurier.ca</a>
T3 Thurs. 6:00-6:50	BA305/6	Allison Koopman	<a href="mailto:koop4460@mylaurier.ca">koop4460@mylaurier.ca</a>
T4 Thurs. 6:00-6:50	BA308	Adrian Virgilio	<a href="mailto:virg9480@mylaurier.ca">virg9480@mylaurier.ca</a>
T5 Thurs. 7:00-7:50	BA308	Adam Tavares	<a href="mailto:tava5030@mylaurier.ca">tava5030@mylaurier.ca</a>

T6 Thurs. 7:00-7:50	BA305/6	Alek Szaranski	<a href="mailto:szar3220@mylaurier.ca">szar3220@mylaurier.ca</a>
T7 Thurs. 8:00-8:50	BA308	Jacob Bonus	<a href="mailto:bonu0110@mylaurier.ca">bonu0110@mylaurier.ca</a>
T8 Thurs. 8:00-8:50	BA305/6	John Wrublewskyj	<a href="mailto:wrub8170@mylaurier.ca">wrub8170@mylaurier.ca</a>

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify, define, and use the vocabulary of film studies for the insightful analysis of film narrative and narration;
- Explain the key formal and stylistic principles of classical Hollywood cinema and its alternatives, including early cinema, art cinema, documentary cinema; and
- Demonstrate skills of film analysis, including critical viewing and writing about film form and style by linking formal properties (e.g., shot scale, lighting, editing) to narrative function (e.g., characterization, structure, narration).

## COURSE EVALUATION (SUMMARY)

- Tutorial Participation (weekly) 10%
- Midterm Test (Feb. 26, in class) 25%
- Scene Analysis (Mar. 18, in class) 30%
- Final Exam, date TBA 35%

## REQUIRED TEXTS

### Readings

- Textbook: Maria T. Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis, *Film: A Critical Introduction*, 4th ed. Available from [Laurier Library](#) (e-book) and for purchase at [Laurier Bookstore](#) / Hawk Shop (hard copy). Listed below as *FCI*. You are welcome to use an older edition provided that you compensate for revised or missing pages.
- ARES articles posted to [ares.wlu.ca](http://ares.wlu.ca). Students are **required** to complete these readings in time for their tutorial sessions. Most of these are not assigned until after Reading Week. Use the Print-on-Demand feature at ARES to create a custom course packet.

### Films

Apart from *Sherlock Jr.* and the Week 7 short films, all of the required course films screen twice each week (Tues. and Wed. at 7pm) in BA101. You are welcome to attend either screening regardless of your registered section in LORIS. To view films outside of our classroom screening, you may borrow DVDs from the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Music Ensemble Room at Laurier Library or stream most of the titles by clicking on the links below. Legal streams for films without a link below will need to be rented or purchased independently. Consult [Just Watch](#) for sources and prepare to spend \$5-15 for each title. Be sure to view each assigned film in time for each tutorial session.

- [Singin' in the Rain](#) (Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, 1952, USA, 103 min.)
- [Casablanca](#) (Michael Curtiz, 1942, USA, 102 min.)
- [Do the Right Thing](#) (Spike Lee, USA, 1989, 120 min.)
- [Sherlock Jr.](#) (Buster Keaton, USA, 1924, 44 min.)
- [Rear Window](#) (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1954, 112 min.)
- [Buster Keaton: The Art of the Gag](#) (Tony Zhou, USA, 2015, 9 min.)
- [M](#) (Fritz Lang, Germany, 1931, 110 min.)
- *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, USA, 1941, 119 min.)
- Selection of short films, links posted to MyLS.
- *Senna* (Asif Kapadia, UK/France, 2010, 106 min.)

- *Cléo de 5 à 7* (Agnès Varda, France, 1962, 90 min.)
- [Nanook of the North](#) excerpts (Robert J. Flaherty, USA, 1922, 79 mins.)
- [Before Tomorrow](#) (Marie-Hélène Cousineau and Madeline Ivalu, Canada, 2008, 93 mins.)
- *Chungking Express* (Wong Kar-wai, Hong Kong, 1994, 102 min.)
- [Knives Out](#) (Rian Johnson, USA, 2019, 130 mins.)

## WEEKLY READING AND VIEWING SCHEDULE

### UNIT ONE: NARRATIVE, STYLE, AND CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

#### Jan. 8      **Lecture 1: Introduction: What is (Film) Narrative?**

Reading: Course syllabus; *FCI*, Ch. 1; *FCI*, Ch. 2, pp. 20-45.

Jan. 9, 10      Film: *Singin' in the Rain* (Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, 1952, USA, 103 min.)

Jan. 11      Tutorial 1: TA and Student Introductions.

#### Jan. 15      **Lecture 2: Narrative Form and the Classical Hollywood Cinema**

Reading: *FCI*, Ch. 4, pp. 76-86; *FCI*, Ch. 11, pp. 350-55; Douglas Gomery and Clara Pafort-Overduin, excerpt, *Movie History: A Survey* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 62-69.

Jan. 16, 17      Film: [Casablanca](#) (Michael Curtiz, 1942, USA, 102 min.)

Jan. 18      Tutorial 2

#### Jan. 22      **Lecture 3: Mise-en-scène and Cinematography**

Reading: *FCI*, Ch. 5, pp. 102-34, 139; *FCI*, Ch. 6, 144-69, 174-77.

Jan. 23, 24      Film: [Do the Right Thing](#) (Spike Lee, USA, 1989, 120 min.)

Jan. 25      Tutorial 3

#### Jan. 29      **Lecture 4: Editing**

Readings: *FCI*, pp. 204-211, 214-28, 236-39.

Jan. 30, 31      Films: [Sherlock Jr.](#) (Buster Keaton, USA, 1924, 44 min.); [Rear Window](#) (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1954, 112 min.); [Buster Keaton: The Art of the Gag](#) (Tony Zhou, USA, 2015, 9 min; online).

Feb. 1      Tutorial 4

#### Feb. 5      **Lecture 5: Sound**

Reading: *FCI*, pp. 240-56, 259-72, 275-76.

Feb. 6, 7      Film: [M](#) (Fritz Lang, Germany, 1931, 110 min.)

Feb. 8      Tutorial 5

#### Feb. 12      **Lecture 6: Narration in the Classical Hollywood Cinema**

Reading: *FCI*, pp. 86, 89-95.

Feb. 13, 14      Film: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, USA, 1941, 119 min.)

Feb. 15      Tutorial 6 reading: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, "Narrative Form in *Citizen Kane*" (excerpt), in *Film Art: An Introduction*, 8th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008): 96-108.

### UNIT TWO: ALTERNATIVES TO CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

- Feb. 26**      **\*\*\* Midterm Test \*\*\* (50 mins.)**  
**Lecture 7: Early Cinema: A Cinema of Attractions**
- Feb. 27, 28      **NO CLASSROOM SCREENING THIS WEEK.** Films: Selection of short films posted to MyLS. Total running time: approx. 70 min.
- Feb. 29      Tutorial 7 reading: Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," in *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (London: BFI, 1990), 56-62.
- Mar. 4**      **Lecture 8: Documentary Film: Non-Fiction Narrative**  
Reading: *FCI*, 283-291.
- Mar. 5, 6      Film: *Senna* (Asif Kapadia, UK/France, 2010, 106 min.)
- Mar. 7      Tutorial 8 reading: Patrick Terry, "Senna: Stylistic and Technological Developments in Documentary Filmmaking," in *Gender and Genre in Sports Documentaries: Critical Essays*, eds. Zachary Ingle and David M. Sutura (Lanham; Toronto: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 65-76.
- Mar. 11**      **Lecture 9: Art Cinema I: The French *Nouvelle Vague***  
Reading: *FCI*, 228-29, 355-59, 367.
- Mar. 12, 13      Film: *Cléo de 5 à 7* (Agnès Varda, France, 1962, 90 min.)
- Mar. 14      Tutorial 9 reading: David Bordwell, "Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 5th ed., eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 717-24.
- Mar. 18**      **\*\*\* Scene Analysis (60 mins.) \*\*\***  
**Lecture 10: Art Cinema II: Global Narratives**
- Mar. 19, 20      Film: *Chungking Express* (Wong Kar-wai, Hong Kong, 1994, 102 min.)
- Mar. 21      Tutorial 10 reading: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, "Chungking Express (*Chung Hing sam lam*)," in *Film Art: An Introduction*, 9th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 417-22.
- Mar. 25**      **Lecture 11: Indigenous Cinema in Canada**
- Mar. 26, 27      Films: [Before Tomorrow](#) (Marie-Hélène Cousineau and Madeline Ivalu, Canada, 2008, 93 mins.); [Nanook of the North](#) excerpts (Robert J. Flaherty, USA, 1922, 79 mins.)
- Mar. 28      Tutorial 11 reading: Excerpts, Faye Ginsburg, "Screen Memories and Entangled Technologies: Resignifying Indigenous Lives," in *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media*, eds. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (NJ: Rutgers UP, 2003), 77-86, 92-98.
- Apr. 1**      **Lecture 12: The End of Cinema? Film in the Age of Digital Media**
- Apr. 2, 3      Film: [Knives Out](#) (Rian Johnson, USA, 2019, 130 mins.)
- Apr. 4      Tutorial 12 reading: Kristin Thompson, ["The End of Cinema as We Know It - Yet Again"](#) (online); TBD.
- Date TBA**      **\*\*\* Final Exam \*\*\***  
Do not make travel commitments during the examination period. Travel is not a legitimate excuse for a deferred exam.

## COURSE EVALUATION

### **Tutorial Participation (10%, weekly)**

The weekly “tutorial” is a required seminar component of FS101 that gives you the opportunity to apply the concepts introduced in lecture to the week’s assigned films and readings, the latter of which students are **required** to bring to class. Each tutorial is facilitated by an instructor, also known as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), who assesses students for their consistent and substantive contributions to class discussion. Good tutorial participants are not necessarily chatty students who have personal opinions to offer but rather students who arrive to class on time and stay for its entirety, and who are prepared to discuss the relevant readings and films (even if they don’t understand all the material). They may also take an active role in asking questions and presenting ideas.

Perfect attendance, but without contributions, constitutes a score of 4/10. This score is adjusted upwards or downwards according to timely, regular, and respectful participation. **Tutorial absences cannot be made up under any circumstances**, and a GTA’s office hours are not intended for reiteration of a tutorial session. However, to account for unexpected absences, only your top 10 of 12 tutorial scores will count toward the Participation component of your final grade. Arriving late twice to tutorials counts as one absence.

TIP: Turn off your cell phone before entering the tutorial classroom.

### **Midterm Test (25%, Feb. 26)**

This in-class test consists of multiple-choice questions and may include one or two short-answer questions. The test will be based on material presented in lectures, tutorials, assigned readings, and assigned films to date. Its primary purpose is to assess student knowledge as we progress through the term. Additional information will be discussed in class.

TIP: Keep up with the assigned readings, course screenings, and tutorial material so that you avoid having to cram for this assignment.

NOTE: If you are registered with Accessible Learning, make appropriate accommodations.

### **Scene Analysis (30%, Mar. 18)**

This in-class essay aims to assess your knowledge of the vocabulary and principles of film analysis that have been introduced in the course to date. At the start of the testing period, you will be shown two scenes, each drawn from an assigned film. You will select one of the scenes and, after identifying the film’s name, director, and year of release, answer the following question in the form of an essay: What is the narrative function of this scene in the context of the film, and how is this function conveyed or reinforced by three specific devices of film style? Additional information will be discussed in class.

TIP: Keep up with the assigned films so that you avoid having to cram for this assignment.

NOTE: Students who do not write the Scene Analysis will receive a failing grade in the course. If you are registered with Accessible Learning, make appropriate accommodations.

### **Final Exam (35%, date TBA)**

The exam will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions based on lectures, readings, screenings, and tutorial discussions. The exam date is set by the Registrar and will be announced later in the course.

NOTE: Do not make travel arrangements during exam period until you have confirmed your exam dates, as exams missed due to travel cannot be deferred. Students who do not write the



Final Exam will receive a failing grade in the course. If you are registered with Accessible Learning, make appropriate accommodations.

## COURSE POLICIES

### Workload

A general rule of thumb for FS101, as with most university classes, is that students are expected to study at least 2-3 hours for every hour spent in class, not counting film screenings. Rice University's [Course Workload Estimator](#) indicates that FS101 students should expect to allocate 6.5 hours/week *outside of class* for studying course material. Some weeks will require less time, while others will require more. If you are carrying a full course load this term, the expectation is similar to that of a demanding full-time job. You will have to budget your time carefully if you are also working or have taken on extracurricular activities.

### Grading Standards

Grades in FS101 are earned not by your effort per se but rather by your active demonstration of comprehension through assignments and other components. A (80-100) indicates truly excellent work that demonstrates command of material and significantly surpasses assignment expectations. B (70-79) indicates above-average work that demonstrates the achievement of assignment expectations and the completion of the assignment in a strong fashion. C (60-69) indicates work that satisfactorily meets the assignment expectations in an adequate fashion. D (50-59) indicates work that does not achieve significant assignment expectations. F (0-49) indicates work that fails to meet assignment expectations and goals. Your final score is your final score and will not be bumped. However, if you wish to have your work reassessed after it has been returned, email it to your GTA with a rationale for reassessment.

### Classroom Civility

Please put away your cell phones before lecture or tutorial begins. Also, while I truly enjoy chatting with students, please do not try to catch me right before or after my lecture unless I have invited students to do so. I have a limited amount of time to set up the computer and to clear the room for the next class. It's far better to visit me during office hours or to make an appointment. Lastly, please do not talk to each other during my lecture. I'm working up there!

### Readings

Students are **required** to bring the assigned ARES readings (i.e., not the textbook) to tutorial for the purpose of discussion, and they may be called upon to cite or read key passages.

TIP: Learn how to take notes on assigned readings. (You very likely need to know how to do this for other courses at Laurier.) Consult [this resource](#) and others posted to Laurier's [Study Skills and Course Support](#) website. Consider making an appointment and attending workshops to further hone your skills of critical reading.

### Film Screenings

Students are **required** to view each week's assigned film(s) in time for tutorial. The course films have been chosen to illustrate each week's lecture topic. While I hope that you find the films to be entertaining, remember that their primary purposes are to expand your breadth of knowledge of cinema's rich history and aesthetic traditions, and to build your skills of film analysis. Some films are very accessible; others are more challenging. Several films deal with mature themes, including sexuality, violence, and racial and ethnic tension. If you have read this far before the third week of

classes, email me a picture of an animal to earn a one-percent bonus on your final grade. If you have concerns about film content, including potentially triggering material, consider using a resource such as the website [Does the Dog Die](#) to check the content and prepare yourself to watch accordingly. If you approach the films with an open and attentive mind, you may find yourself thinking in new and exciting ways about the nature of art, entertainment, and culture.

TIP: Take notes on each film's plot and style during or immediately after each screening so that you are prepared for tutorial discussion.

### Communication

Students are expected to check the MyLS course page and Laurier email at least once every 24 hours on weekdays for announcements and updates. I will do the same. Please contact your GTA (see email addresses above) before contacting Dr. Spring. Do not use MyLS email to communicate with Dr. Spring; instead, use the WLU email address, [kspring@wlu.ca](mailto:kspring@wlu.ca). To protect my time with my family and friends, I try not to check email in the evenings and on weekends.

### Copyright Statement

The educational materials developed for this course, including, but not limited to, lecture notes and videos, lecture and tutorial slides, examinations and assignments, tutorial sessions, and any materials posted to MyLearningSpace, are the intellectual property of the course instructor(s). These materials have been developed for student use only and they are not intended for wider dissemination and/or communication outside of a given course. **Posting or providing unauthorized audio, video, or textual material of lecture or tutorial content to third-party websites, including OneClass and CourseHero, violates an instructor's intellectual property rights and the Canadian Copyright Act.** Recording any component of this class, including tutorials, in any way is prohibited in this course unless specific permission has been granted by the instructor. Failure to follow these instructions may be in contravention of the university's Student Non-Academic Code of Conduct and/or Code of Academic Conduct, and will result in appropriate penalties. Participation in this course constitutes an agreement by all parties to abide by the relevant University Policies, and to respect the intellectual property of others during and after their association with Wilfrid Laurier University.

### Film Resources

I encourage you to watch as many films as possible and to review assigned films more than once. DVDs are available in the FS Collection at [Laurier Library](#) and in the library's main collection; find the call number in Primo and then head up to the 4th floor Music Room. The best campus resource for cinephiles is the [WLU Film Society](#), a vibrant WLUSU club open to all students. Filmmakers should check out the [Filmmakers of Laurier](#) club. Here are additional online resources to consider: [Film Studies E-Resources](#); [Film Studies Databases](#); [Film Studies for Free](#); [Glossary of Film Style](#); and [Film & TV Literature Index](#).

### Off-Campus Films

For art-house, foreign, and second-run fare, visit the [Princess Cinemas](#) in Waterloo and [Apollo Cinema](#) in Kitchener. I would be delighted to arrange class trips to these theaters upon request! For new releases, try the Galaxy Cinema multiplex at Conestoga Mall and Landmark Cinema at Boardwalk Mall. Aspiring filmmakers should check out the Working Centre's [Commons Studio](#).

### **Accessible Learning**

Students with disabilities or special needs are advised to contact Laurier's [Accessible Learning Centre](#) for information regarding its services and resources. Students are encouraged to review the Calendar for information regarding all services available on campus.

### **PEER CONNECT**

1.866.281.7337

Peer Connect is a committee that addresses mental health by promoting a balanced lifestyle for all students. We promote a confidential phone service run by students for students as a resource for any information and support. We run campaigns of mental health, stress relief and healthy body care. We provide programming such as access to athletic equipment, movies, board games and volunteers through booking to dons, icebreakers, campus clubs and campus committees.

### **EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM**

519.885.3333

The [Emergency Response Team](#) provides on-call medical assistance to students on campus. ERT operates Monday through Thursday, 3 p.m.-3 a.m. and Friday to Sunday 24 hours. ERT can also be booked for on-site event support by filling out the online booking request form on their website. Operating on the Waterloo campus only.

### **STUDENT RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The [Student Rights Advisory Committee](#) exists to provide you with information about your rights when it comes to landlord-tenant issues or academic appeals. While in no way legal representation, it can help to inform you about your options in order to make difficult situations easier to navigate.

### **FOOD BANK**

[Food Bank](#) provides food parcels in order to cater to the nutritional and dietary needs of students. All students are eligible to use this service, regardless of circumstance or financial situation. Request a package at [foodbank.yourstudentsunion.ca](http://foodbank.yourstudentsunion.ca). Food Bank also carries out various initiatives throughout and during the year such as the weekly on-campus Farmers' Market and monthly Pancake Tuesdays. For more information visit your [Student Union](#).