



*Taxi Driver* (1976) Martin Scorsese

### **Introduction to Film**

English 282: Spring 2008

10:15-12:05 Monday/Wednesday

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Dr. Devin Orgeron

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**FILM STUDIES AT NCSU:** Yes, there is a film major at NCSU...even a minor. Plus, we offer a vast array of exciting courses on individual filmmakers, popular genres, major international cinematic movements, film history, screenwriting and production. If you are interested in pursuing the major or minor, contact Dr. Marsha Orgeron, our Film Studies chair at: marsha\_orgeron@ncsu.edu, or go to [www.ncsu.edu/chass/film](http://www.ncsu.edu/chass/film) for more information.

**Required Text:** *Film, Form and Culture* (3rd Edition). Robert Kolker. McGraw Hill, 2005. (must be packaged with DVD-ROM)

**Course Description:** This course was designed with two very simple goals in mind: 1) To give students a forum to think actively and seriously about film 2) To give students the tools necessary to intelligently articulate (verbally and in written form) their ideas about film and its place within culture.

The course is divided into seven basic units. The first six will introduce students to important “ways into” film and to the major areas of film studies. In the final unit, students will synthesize what they’ve learned and apply a variety of critical tools to one recent and popular cinematic text.

### **Course Requirements:**

**Screenings:** You are required to be present for **all** screenings. If you have a **documented emergency** and must skip a screening, you are responsible for viewing the film(s) screened on your own time prior to class discussion.

**Reading:** You are required to complete all reading for each class session. Read carefully and closely, making comments in the margins of the text and taking notes in order to help your oral responses in class and prepare you for the papers and final examination. You must also **ACTIVELY** work through the assigned DVD-ROM units so ***give yourself enough time***.

**Class Discussion/Oral Participation:** Discussions will revolve around the materials we’ve seen and read so always bring the text to class along with the notes that you have taken during or after the screenings. I frequently call on students to respond to questions or to provide topics for discussion, so be ready to participate on a daily basis.

While I do not officially quantify oral participation in determining your grade, participation *influences* borderline grades. An avid participator with a high “B” (mathematically) will often receive an “A” in the course, while someone who does not participate regularly with a borderline “B”/“C” will receive a “C” in the course.

**Administrative:** If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations **please contact me as soon as possible.** In order to take advantage of these accommodations, students must register with Disability Services at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. If you will be participating in a sport or other University sponsored event this semester you should provide me with documentation so that we can make arrangements for you to make up for any missed class sessions.

**Written Work:** There are two formal papers in this course, both *about* 5 pages. The due dates for both papers are noted on your syllabus. You are encouraged to discuss paper topics or any other assignment with us in advance via email or during our office hours. **Proofreading and revision** are essential to good writing and getting another person to read your work often reveals problems that you might miss. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day that they are due. **Late papers drop a grade per class day that they are late.**

Please consider about using NCSU's *free* Writing Tutorial Services. Call 515-3162 or visit [http://www.ncsu.edu/tutorial\\_center/writespeak/index.htm](http://www.ncsu.edu/tutorial_center/writespeak/index.htm) for more information.

**Final Examination:** This class also includes a final exam that will be cumulative. *There are no make-up exams.* You are responsible for all material covered in the readings, screenings, lectures, and discussions.

**Quizzes/In-Class Writing/Homework:** Quizzes will be given regularly and almost always at the beginning of class. Be prepared and be on time (quizzes cannot be made up). In-class writing assignments function in much the same way (some will be on major course topics, others will be screening-based). You will also occasionally be assigned short homework assignments. **THESE ARE NOT NOTED ON YOUR SYLLABUS!**

**Academic Integrity:** Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes plagiarism, cheating on assignments or exams, turning in work that has been written (partially or entirely) by someone else, fabricating information or citations, submitting work previously submitted in other courses, or helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. In addition to failing the assignment and the course, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct should you commit any form of academic dishonesty.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. If you miss a class, please ask another student for class notes and find out if you missed any assignments. More than four absences will result in the lowering of your grade by 1/3<sup>rd</sup> for every additional day (an "A" student with six absences will receive a "B+" for the course).

<b><u>Grades:</u></b> 20% Quizzes/In-Class Writing/Homework	20% Paper #1
30% Final	30% Paper #2

**Extra Credit:** The Witherspoon Campus Cinema will be screening 4 European movies (March 12, 19, 26 and April 2). All screenings begin at 7:00 and are free and open to the public (titles TBA). In addition, The North Carolina Museum of Art's Winter Film Series is packed with important and hard to see films. The museum screenings are \$3.50 for students and begin at 8:00. Visit the website at <http://ncartmuseum.org/events/films.shtml> or call (919) 715-5923 for full schedule and ticket information. For 5 pts. e.c. towards your quiz/short writing grade (you may do 2), submit a 2 pg. TYPED response to any of these films. Do not summarize the film and be certain to discuss major course concepts. You must include ticket stub and discuss the introduction given to the film.

<p><b>Please Note:</b> Some of the films screened in this class (and/or offered for extra credit) contain profanity, nudity and/or sexual situations, drug use, violence, etc. If this poses a problem, you should meet with me as soon as possible so that we might make alternate arrangements.</p>
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**Note: This syllabus is subject to change.** You are responsible for all changes announced in class. Always read the assigned text for the class session on which the assignment appears and don't forget the **DVD-ROM**...

### **PART I: Image and Reality: Representation and The Cinematic Impulse**

- W 1/9**            **INTRODUCTION** + A short exercise using clips from Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963) and Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation* (1974).
- M 1/14**            **Screening:** *Natural Born Killers* (1994) Oliver Stone (121 min.)
- W 1/16**            **Reading:** Introduction + Ch. 1 (1-27)  
**DVD-ROM:** Introduction
- M 1/21**            **NO CLASS – MLK Day**

### **PART II: Formal Structures**

- W 1/23**            **Screening:** *Sherlock Jr.* (1924) Buster Keaton (44 min.) + Selections from Eadweard Muybridge, Thomas Edison, The Lumière Brothers + Georges Méliès
- Reading:** Ch. 2 (30-50)  
                      **DVD-ROM:** Continuity Editing
- M 1/28**            **Screening:** *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) Nicholas Ray (111 min.)
- W 1/30**            **Reading:** Ch. 3 (51-80)  
**DVD-ROM:** The Long Take, Mise-en-scène
- M 2/4**             **Screening:** *Psycho* (1960) Alfred Hitchcock (109 min.)
- W 2/6**             **Reading:** Ch. 4 (81-106)  
**DVD-ROM:** Montage, Point of View, Camera

### **PART III: The Storytellers of Film: Collaboration and Authorship**

- M 2/11**            **Screening:** *Bottle Rocket* (1996) Wes Anderson (91 min.)
- W 2/13**            **Reading:** Ch. 5 (108-130)  
**DVD-ROM:** Sound and Music
- M 2/18**            **Screening:** *The Life Aquatic* (2004) Wes Anderson (119 min.)
- W 2/20**            **Reading:** Chapter 6 (133-153)
- M 2/25**            **Screening:** *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) Maya Deren (18 min)  
**Reading:** Chapter 6 (153-169)

### **PART IV: Film as Cultural Practice**

- W 2/27**            **Screening:** Selected educational films from the A/V Geeks Archive  
**Reading:** Chapter 7 (171-188)
- M 3/3**             **NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**

- W 3/5**            **NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**
- M 3/10**          **Screening:** *The Graduate* (1967) Mike Nichols (105 min.)
- W 3/12**          **Reading:** Chapter 7 (188-196)  
**Paper #1 Due**
- M 3/17**          **Screening:** *Taxi Driver* (1976) Martin Scorsese (115 min.)
- W 3/19**          **Reading:** Chapter 7 (196-206)

**PART V: The Stories Told by Film**

- M 3/24**          **Screening:** *The Parrot* (2000) Errol Morris (30 min.) From Bravo's *Errol Morris's First Person* series  
**Reading:** Chapter 8 (211-231)
- W 3/26**          **Screening:** *Double Indemnity* (1944) Billy Wilder (107 min.)
- M 3/31**          **Reading:** Chapter 8 (232-252)  
**DVD-ROM:** Genre
- W 4/2**            **Screening:** *Detour* (1945) Edgar Ulmer (68 min.)  
**DVD-ROM:** Lighting
- M 4/7**            **Screening:** *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence* (1962) John Ford (123 min.)
- W 4/9**            **Reading:** Chapter 9 (255-271)
- M 4/14**          **Screening:** *The 400 Blows* (1959) François Truffaut (99 min.) France
- W 4/17**          **Reading:** Chapter 9 (271-278)

**PART VI: SYNTHESIS**

- M 4/21**          **Screening:** *Superbad* (2007) Greg Mottola (114 min.)  
**PAPER #2 DUE**
- W 4/23**          **REVIEW**



Antoine is distracted during his exams in François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959)

**Final Examination: Monday, April 30: 8:00-11:00 / Bring examination booklet & pen**