

Eng 492E 001 / IDS 496C 002



Road Movies

Spring 2008

M/W: 2:35-4:25 – Caldwell G 107

Dr. Devin Orgeron

Office Hours: 1:15-2:15 M/W (or by appt.)

Office: Tompkins 280

e-mail: devin_orgeron@ncsu.edu

Phone: 515.4138

Film Studies at NCSU: NCSU offers a Film Studies Minor (15 credit hours) and a Film Major (30 credit hours). For more information, contact Dr. Marsha Orgeron or visit our website at:

www.ncsu.edu/chass/film.

Required Texts:

- 1) Devin Orgeron, *Road Movies: From Muybridge and Méliès to Lynch and Kiarostami* (Hardcover): Palgrave Macmillan. Dec. 2007. (ISBN: 978-0230601277)
- 2) Electronic Reserve Materials (ER on syllabus) – <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/reserves/> (Orgeron, Devin – Eng492E)

Course Objectives and Outcomes: The cinema and the automobile were born at roughly the same historical moment; perhaps this accounts for the cinema's sustained interest in the subject of automotive (or at least *automated*) travel. In this course we will explore the road movie genre, tracing its historical roots (from turn-of-the-century motion studies, to early locomotive and/or fantasy travel films), its generic mutations (Westerns and Films Noir frequently find themselves *on the road*), and the genre's current, postmodern forms. We will consider films made in the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Iran. As our knowledge of the genre's international history develops, a variety of consistent thematic and formal ideas will emerge, pointing to the genre's similarly consistent (though perhaps surprising) critical stance. Coursework includes two formal papers and a cumulative final examination. No prior film studies experience is required.

Screenings: You are required to be present for **all** screenings. If you have a **documented emergency** and miss a screening, you are responsible for viewing the film(s) on your own time prior to class discussion. The Library's media center (2nd floor of D.H. Hill, 515-2977) has most of the films we'll be viewing. You may also make up screenings in the film lab: Tompkins G116, Tuesdays 11:00 am-3:00 pm and Wednesdays 3:00-7:00 pm. Please contact our assistant, Sowmya Bharadwaj, to make arrangements (sbharad@ncsu.edu).

Some of the films in this course and some of the films offered as extra credit involve drug-use, nudity, sexuality, violence, extreme language, etc. If you fear that you might be offended by such material, you should meet with me immediately and may want to seek another course.

Class Discussion/Oral Participation: Discussions will revolve around the materials we've seen and read so always bring the text being covered 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. You should feel free to express your opinions and ideas, but also be prepared to draw upon supporting evidence from the films and essays. 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. Students who participate usually receive the highest grades in the course, largely because they use each class session to test their own ideas.

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 to prepare you for the papers and final examination. You should print out and bring to class all assigned e-reserve materials.

Written Work: There are two formal papers in this course, both *about* 8 pages. The due dates for both papers are noted on your syllabus. You are encouraged to discuss paper topics or any other assignment with me in advance via email or during my office hours to avoid writing an inappropriate paper. **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 using NCSU’s *free* Writing Tutorial Services. Call 515-3162 or visit http://www.ncsu.edu/tutorial_center/writespeak/index.htm .

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.

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, or helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. I reserve the right to give students a failing grade in the course for any violation of academic integrity.

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 for every additional day (an “A” student with six absences will receive a “B+” for the course).

Grades:

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

20% Quizzes/In-Class Writing/Homework

20% Paper #1

30% Paper #2

30% Final

****extra credit****

The Witherspoon Campus Cinema will be screening 4 European road movies (March 12, 19, 26 and April 2). All screenings begin at 7:00 and are free and open to the public (titles TBA). The North Carolina Museum of Art will screen Jean-Luc Godard’s *Pierrot le fou* on Feb. 15, and Ida Lupino’s *The Hitch-Hiker* on April 25. 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 ticket information. You can get 5 pts. e.c. towards your quiz/short writing grade (you may do 2). Submit a 2 pg. typed response paper (not summary!) that discusses major course concepts and your ideas about the film. Must include ticket stub and discuss the film introductions.

In Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* (1994), Mickey and Mallory's road-side wedding ceremony reminds us of the road movie's domestic concerns.

This syllabus is subject to change. You are responsible for all changes announced in class. If you miss some or all of a class session, contact a classmate about changes to the syllabus. Always read the assigned text for the class session on which the assignment appears.

PART I. – The Seduction of the Century

W 1/9 **INTRODUCTION + Clips:** *How it Feels to be Run Over* and *Explosion of a Motor Car* (both 1900) Cecil Hepworth, *The (?) Motorist* (1906) Robert Paul, *Gun-Crazy* (1950) Joseph Lewis, *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) Arthur Penn, and *Badlands* (1973) Terrence Malick

M 1/14 **Screening:** *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) Victor Fleming (103 min.) USA

W 1/16 **Screening:** Early Film Selections: Eadweard Muybridge, The Lumière Brothers + *Voyage dans la lune* (1902) Georges Méliès (12 min.)
Reading: *Road Movies* (Introduction + Ch. 1: 1-46)

M 1/21 **NO CLASS – MLK Day**

PART II. – Highways and Trails: Generic Stirrings

W 1/23 **Screening:** *Detour* (1945) Edgar Ulmer (68 min.) USA
Reading: *Road Movies* (Ch. 2: 47-61)

M 1/28 **Screening:** *The Searchers* (1956) John Ford (119 min.) USA

W 1/30 **Reading:** *Road Movies* (Ch. 2: 62-73)

PART III. – International Exchange

M 2/4 **Screening:** *Breathless* (1960) Jean-Luc Godard (90 min.) France

W 2/6 **Reading:** *Road Movies* (Ch. 3: 75-100)

M 2/11 **Screening:** *Easy Rider* (1969) Dennis Hopper (95 min.) USA

W 2/13 **Reading:** *Road Movies* (Ch. 4: 101-127)
ER: Klinger, Barbara: “The Road to Dystopia” (179-203)

M 2/18 **Screening:** *Two Lane Blacktop* (1971) Monte Hellman

W 2/2 **Reading:** **ER:** Laderman, David: “Aimless Racing: *Two Lane Blacktop*” (93-106)
ER: Kilnger, Barbara: “‘Cinema/Ideology/Criticism’ Revisited: The Progressive Genre.” (75-91)

- M 2/25** **Screening:** *Kings of the Road* (1976) Wim Wenders (175 min.) Germany
- W 2/27** **Reading:** *Road Movies* (Ch. 5: 129-154)
***PAPER #1 Due**
- M 3/3** **NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**
- W 3/5** **NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**
- M 3/10** **Screening:** *Stroszek* (1977) Werner Herzog (115 min.) Germany/USA
- W 3/12** **Reading: ER:** Mouton, Jan: “Werner Herzog’s *Stroszek*: A Fairy Tale Film in an Age of Disenchantment” (96-106)
- M 3/17** **Screening:** *Vagabond* (1986) Agnes Varda (105 min.) France
- W 3/19** **Reading: ER:** Laderman, David: From “Traveling Other Highways: The European Road Movie” (265-270)
- M 3/24** **Screening:** *O Lucky Man* (1973) Lindsay Anderson (183 min.) UK
- W 3/26** (GUEST LECTURE)

PART IV. Road Movies as Another Century Turns

- M 3/31** **Screening:** *Natural Born Killers* (Oliver Stone) 1994 (118 min.) USA
- W 4/2** **Reading:** *Road Movies* (155-165)
ER: Baudrillard, Jean: “Vanishing Point” (1-13)
ER: Corrigan, Timothy: “Genre, Gender and Hysteria: The Road Movie in Outer Space.” (137-160)
- M 4/7** **Screening:** *The Straight Story* (1999) David Lynch (112 min.) USA
- W 4/9** **Reading:** *Road Movies* (Ch. 6: 165-181)
- M 4/14** **Screening:** *Ten* (2002) Abbas Kiarostami (94 min.) Iran
- W 4/17** **Reading:** *Road Movies* (Epilogue: 183-199)
PAPER #2 Due
- M 4/21** **Screening:** *Little Miss Sunshine* (2006) Jonathan Dayton (101 min.) USA
- W 4/23** **Reading: ER:** Cohan, Steven and Ina Rae Hark: “Introduction” to *The Road Movie Book* (3-14)
REVIEW

Final Exam: Friday, May 2: 1:00-4:00 p.m.
(please bring exam books)