WESTERN UNIVERSITY | LONDON, CANADA | Film Studies | Winter 2025

Antirequisite: Film Studies 3360F/G, if taken in 2016-2017.
Prerequisite: At least 60% in Film Studies 1020E or Film Studies 1022E or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

I think of cinemas, panoramic sleights
With multitudes bent toward some flashing scene
Never disclosed, but hastened to again,
Foretold to other eyes on the same screen.

– Hart Crane, "To Brooklyn Bridge"

Musical films are one of the most enduring forms of cinema, in Hollywood and around the world. This course explores the range of musical films, from all-singing, all-dancing extravaganzas to the eruption of "musical moments" in popular films, art cinema, and the avant-garde. But what is is that makes the film musical, as a separate genre, so unique? In Hart Crane's terms, in film what is the scene "Never disclosed, but hastened to again"? And why does film hold such a potent promise repeatedly *to* disclose this scene? This course will read this promise in the genre of the American film musical. The course argues that the 'scene' of the musical is an often unspeakable or unrepresentable trauma in the absence of which film projects its audience's most sublime desires and abject fears. In the film musical the most potent vehicle of this projection is utopianism. Students will thus be asked to answer the above questions by examining the musical's various utopias of sex, gender, technology, nationhood, ethnicity, domesticity, politics, especially as these utopias are undercut by anti-utopian themes of sexism, AIDS, Nazism, racism, and the general threat of social breakdown. The course will also ask how film musical utopianism orchestrates a complex relationship between capitalism, technology, family values, and the American Dream.

See Learning Outcomes for 3000-level courses on the Department of English and Writing Studies website at:
https://www.uwo.ca/english/english_studies/courses/english_learning_outcomes.html#threethousand

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

FILMS to be STUDIED

Here are the links to all the films we'll study. You are expected to view the required film(s) for each week ahead of that week's class.

Hollywoodism, directed by Simcha Jacobovici, Séville, 1998. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXeHnvImcMk
OR: https://www.lib.uwo.ca/cgi-bin/ezpauthn.cgi?url=https://stream.mcintyre.ca/westernu2020/title/25688

Golddiggers of 1933, directed by Mervin Leroy, Warner Brothers, 1933.
https://www.lib.uwo.ca/cgi-bin/ezpauthn.cgi?url=https://media3.criterionpic.com/htbin/wwform/006?T=WR33175&ALIAS=WR33175_EN.KF&M=0_pmfg6bd5&DSTYLE=0#multimedia_resources_WR33175

Meet Me in St. Louis, directed by Vincent Minelli, MGM, 1944.
https://www.lib.uwo.ca/cgi-bin/ezpauthn.cgi?url=https://media3.criterionpic.com/htbin/wwform/006?T=M45120

Singin' in the Rain, directed by Stanley Donen and Gene Kelley, MGM, 1952.
https://www.lib.uwo.ca/cgi-bin/ezpauthn.cgi?url=https://media3.criterionpic.com/htbin/wwform/006?T=M52270

Oklahoma!, directed by Fred Zinnemann, RKO/20th Century Fox, 1955.
https://www.lib.uwo.ca/cgi-bin/ezpauthn.cgi?url=https://media3.criterionpic.com/htbin/wwform/006?T=F000108

West Side Story, directed by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, United Artists, 1961.
https://stream-mcintyre-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/westernu2020/title/25636

Cabaret, directed by Bob Fosse, ABC, Allied Pictures, 1972.
https://www.lib.uwo.ca/cgi-bin/ezpauthn.cgi?url=https://media3.criterionpic.com/htbin/wwform/006?T=644103

All That Jazz, directed by Bob Fosse, 20th Century Fox, Columbia, 1979.
https://www.lib.uwo.ca/cgi-bin/ezpauthn.cgi?url=https://media3.criterionpic.com/htbin/wwform/006?T=F05395

Zero Patience, directed by John Greyson, Strand Releasing, 1993.
https://stream-mcintyre-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/westernu2020/title/22001

Dreamgirls, directed by Bill Condon, Dreamworks, Paramount, 2006.
https://www.lib.uwo.ca/cgi-bin/ezpauthn.cgi?url=https://media3.criterionpic.com/htbin/wwform/006?T=P34782

LaLaLand, directed by Damien Chazelle, Lionsgate, 2016.
https://www.lib.uwo.ca/cgi-bin/ezpauthn.cgi?url=https://streaming.acf-film.com/audiocine/play/42c5353ab477179d

West Side Story, directed by Steven Spielberg, 20th Century Studios, 2021.
https://stream-mcintyre-ca.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/westernu2020/title/25637

COURSE READINGS (.pdfs posted to OWL course site)

Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, translated by Edmund Jephcott, Stanford University Press, 2002. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/lib/west/reader.action?docID=5406369&ppg=115

Altman, "The American Film Musical as Dual-Focus Narrative." *Hollywood Musicals: The* Film *Reader*, edited by Steven Cohan, Routledge, 2002, pp. 41-52.

Clover, Carol J. "Dancin' in the Rain." *Critical Inquiry*, 21 (Summer 1995): pp. 722-747. https://www-journals-uchicago-edu.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/doi/10.1086/448772

Cohan, Steven. "Defining the Musical." *Hollywood Musicals*, Routledge, 2020, pp. 1-25. https://www-taylorfrancis-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/books/9781351018746/chapters/10.4324/9781351018746-1

Cohan, Steven. "LaLa Land." *Hollywood Musicals*, Routledge, 2020, pp. 203-7.

Debord, Guy. "Separation Perfected. *Society of the Spectacle,* translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Zone Books, 1995, pp. 11-24.

Dyer, Richard. "The Color of Entertainment." *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond,* edited by Bill Marhsall and Robin Stilwell, Intellect Books, 2000, pp. 23-30.

Dyer, Richard. "Entertainment and Utopia." *Only Entertainment*, second edition, Routledge, 1992, pp. 19-35. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/lib/west/reader.action?docID=237341&ppg=28

Dyer, Richard. "The Perfection of *Meet Me In St. Louis.*" *In the Space of a Song: The Uses of Song in Film*, edited by Richard Dyer, Routledge, 2012, pp. 57-80.

Feuer, Jane. "Dream World and Dream Stages." *The Hollywood Musical*, second edition, Indiana University Press, 1993, pp. 67-86.

Feuer, Jane. "The Self-Reflective Musical and the Myth of Entertainment." *Hollywood Musicals: The* Film *Reader*, edited by Steven Cohan, Routledge, 2002, pp. 31-40.

Gittings, Christopher. "*Zero Patience,* Genre, Difference, and Ideology: Singing and Dancing Queer Nation." *Cinema Journal*, 41.1 (Autumn, 2001), pp. 28-39. https://www-jstor-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/stable/1225560?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Knabe, Susan and Wendy Gay Pearson. "History Lessons." *Zero Patience*, Arsenal Pulp Press, 2011, 36-70.

Laing, Heather. "Emotion by Numbers: Music, Song and the Musical." *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond*, edited by Bill Marshall and Robin Stilwell, Intellect Books, 2000, pp. 5-13.

Pearl, Monica. "Zero Patience: AIDS, Music and Reincarnation Films." *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond*, edited by Bill Marshall and Robin Stilwell, Intellect Books, 2000.

Roth, Mark. "Some Warner Brothers Musicals and the Spirit of the New Deal." *The Velvet Light Trap*, volume 1 (June 1971): pp. 20-25.
https://search-proquest-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/docview/1306635681/fulltextPDF/34D34523F9D5470BPQ/1?accountid=15115

Rubin, Martin. "Busby Berkeley and the Backstage Musical." *Hollywood Musicals: The* Film *Reader*, edited by Steven Cohan, Routledge, 2002, pp. 53-62.

Sutton, Martin. "Patterns of Meaning in the Musical." *Genre, The Musical: A Reader*, edited by Rick Altman, Routledge 1981.

Thompson, Kristin. "The Concept of Cinematic Excess."

Tinkcom, Matthew. "Working like a homosexual." *Cinema Journal*, 35.2 (Winter, 1996), pp. 24-42.
https://www-jstor-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/stable/1225754?sid=primo&origin=crossref&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

ASSIGNMENTS

See "Undergraduate Grading Criteria" on the Department of English website at:
https://www.uwo.ca/english/english_studies/courses/pdf/UndergradGradingCriteria.pdf

Film-clip analysis #1 (500 words); due **January 24**	**10%**
Film-clip analysis #2 (500 words); due **February 14**	**10%**
Seminar Presentation (10 minutes); list of dates TBA	**15%**
Essay (2,000 words); due **March 19**	**25%**
Final Exam (take home); due **April 4**	**30%**
Attendance	**5%**
Swing Percentage	**5%**

Film clip analysis: Write an analysis of one of the assigned film clips (I'll distribute a list ahead of time). Be sure to pay attention to various aspects of how the clip is filmed: mise-en-scène, camera work, point of view, editing, sound, music, etc. You don't need to do an secondary research for this assignment beyond the readings we'll have done in the class to the point that the assignment is due.

Seminar Presentation: Your seminar presentation to the class should take up that week's film in relation to one of the readings for that week. Keep your presentation to 10 minutes, no more. I'll post a list for your to sign up on the OWL site. Your presentation should pose questions for class discussion.

Essay: Write a longer paper on one of the assigned topics (I'll distribute a list of possible topics closer later in the term). You are also welcome to propose a topic of your own choice, just be sure to run the topic by me first. OR, you're welcome to take a completely different approach to the assignment, which you should also talk over with me first.

Final Exam: There will be a final take-home exam that takes in all material discussed in the course to that point. I'll distribute an outline of the exam structure later in the term.

For all matters related to writing grammar and style, essay format and documentation, and research practices, your tutorial leaders will refer to the Purdue Searchable Style Guide: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html. You are required to format all course assignments, with the exception of the Take Home Test and Final Examination, according to the Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines for the proper documentation of research papers, which you will find on the Purdue site. See also "Essay Tips and MLA Documentation" at: https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html and "Undergraduate Grading Criteria"at: https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/forms/grading_rubric_general.pdf

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html.

Late assignments: You must contact me with a valid reason for missing a deadline before the due date and arrange an extension. If not, late assignments will be penalized 2%/day up to 10 days (incl. weekends), after which they may not be accepted.

ACCOMMODATION POLICIES

Academic Consideration: Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of Faculty in which the student is registered.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
    a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
    b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
    c. Supporting documentation as relevant.

Requests without supporting documentation are limited to one per term per course.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner. Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term always require formal supporting documentation.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities.

Religious Accommodation: Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com http://www.turnitin.com. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence: The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools/software/apps to undertake the writing of your assignments is not permitted in this course.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic Advising: Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

Learning Development and Success: Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre https://learning.uwo.ca are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice

exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Additional Support Services
Registrarial Services http://www.registrar.uwo.ca
Student Support Services https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login
Academic Support & Engagement http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/
Services provided by the University Students' Council (USC) http://westernusc.ca/services/
Student Life in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities https://www.uwo.ca/arts/future_students/student_life.html

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence: Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Mental Health Support: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND SCREENINGS

The following is a schedule of lectures, readings, assignments, and screenings. **All readings should be done before the lectures in which they are discussed.**

January 8	Film: *Hollywoodism* Introduction Reading: Cohan, "Defining the Musical"; Dyer, "Entertainment and Utopia"
January 15	Film: *Golddiggers of 1933* Reading: Roth, "Some Warners Musicals and the Spirit of the New Deal"; Rubin, "Busby Berkeley and the Backstage Musical"
January 22	Film: *Meet Me in St. Louis* Reading: Dyer, "The Perfection of *Meet Me In St. Louis*"; Laing, "Emotion by Numbers: Music, Song and the Musical" **Film Clip Analysis #1 Due to OWL course site January 24**
January 29	Film: *Singin' in the Rain* Reading: Feuer, "The Self-Reflexive Musical and the Myth of Entertainment"; Clover, "Dancin' in the Rain"
February 5	Film: *Oklahoma!* Reading: Feuer, "Dream Worlds and Dream Stages"; Altman, "The American Film Musical as Dual-Focus Narrative"
February 12	Film: *West Side Story* (1961) Reading: Sutton, "Patterns of Meaning in the Musical" **Film Clip Analysis #2 due to OWL course site February 14**
February 19	**SPRING READING WEEK**
February 26	Film: *Cabaret* Reading: Adorno and Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry"; Debord, "Separation Perfected"
March 5	Film: *All That Jazz* Reading: Tinkcom, "'Working like a homosexual"; Thompson, "The Concept of Cinematic Excess"
March 12	Film: *Zero Patience*

	Reading: Pearl, “Zero Patience: AIDS, Music and Reincarnation Films”; Knabe and Pearson, “History Lessons”; Gittings, “*Zero Patience*, Genre, Difference, and Ideology”
March 19	Film: *Dreamgirls* Reading: Dyer, “The Colour of Entertainment” **Essay Due to OWL course site March 21**
March 26	Film: *La La Land* Reading: Cohan, “La La Land” **Final Exam Questions uploaded to OWL course site**
April 2	Film: *West Side Story* (2021) **Final Exam Due April 4**