



English 530.1B – Development of Narrative Film

Spring 2026

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Office: Talbot Hall of Languages, 125

Department: Literature and Languages

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 11:00 am – 5:00 pm, or email for appointment

Course Meeting Time and Place:

Tuesdays 5:00 – 7:30 pm, Talbot 203

Phone: 903.468.3260

Preferred Form of Communication: office hours and email

Communication Response Time: within the day

Course Description:

This course explores the history of narrative film from its beginnings to the present day. Topics may include the silent era, the rise of classical Hollywood cinema, global post-war cinemas, major film movements, and the impact that digital technology has on narrative film, currently. This course will encourage students to view narrative film within the history of cinema, examining how technological advancement, industry developments, and social transformations have shaped and continue to influence cinematic storytelling.

The course begins with a survey of narrative film's movements from early cinema's innovations through Italian Neorealism and other movements, establishing a comparative framework for understanding how cinema developed as an art form worldwide. This three-week foundation will allow us to then transition into a more focused study of Eastern European and Balkan cinema and recognize it not as isolated or peripheral, but as part of international dialogue with aesthetic and political contributions.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course students will:

- Analyze formal and stylistic innovations of Eastern European film including montage theory, long-take aesthetics, and minimalist realism.
- Evaluate how political systems, censorship, and historical trauma shaped narrative strategies in Eastern European and Balkan films.
- Apply critical frameworks from film theory to produce original interpretations and scholarly analyses of individual films and movements.
- Compare transnational influences and regional distinctions across Eastern European national cinemas, recognizing shared experiences and unique trajectories.

Required Course Materials: (Subject to change)

If the required films are not available through the library, you will need to rent them through streaming services. Please plan for these rental costs as the films are primary course materials and just as important as the assigned books and articles. **Students are responsible for viewing assigned films and reading the assigned chapters before class discussion.**

All the films below can be found in the Criterion Channel, other streaming platforms, and on DVDs that will be available at the library. In the rare case that the DVD isn't available at the library, I will screen the film in class.

Films:

- *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, 1920, Robert Wiene, dir.
- *Battleship Potemkin*, 1925, Sergei Eisenstein, dir.
- *Un Chien Andalou*, 1929, Luis Buñuel, dir.
- *Bicycle Thieves*, 1948, Vittorio De Sica, dir.
- *Rashomon*, 1950, Akira Kurosawa, dir.
- *Ashes and Diamonds*, 1958, Andrzej Wajda, dir.
- *Breathless*, 1960, Jean-Luc Godard, dir.
- *8 ½*, 1963, Federico Fellini, dir.
- *Persona*, 1966, Ingmar Bergman
- *Closely Watched Trains*, 1966, Jiří Menzel, dir.
- *Slogans*, 2001, Gjergj Xhuvani, dir.
- *WR: Mysteries of the Organism*, 1971, Dušan Makavejev, dir.
- *Underground*, 1995, Emir Kusturica, dir.
- *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* (2007, Cristian Mungiu, dir.
- *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*, 2005, Cristi Puiu, dir.
- *Beyond the Hills*, 2012, Cristian Mungiu, dir.
- *Quo Vadis, Aida?*, 2020, Jasmila Žbanić, dir.
- *No Man's Land*, 2001, Danis Tanović, dir.
- *Hive*, 2021, Blerta Basholli, dir.

- *East, West, East: The Final Sprint*, 2008, Gjergj Xhuvani, dir.
- *Vera Dreams of the Sea*, 2021, Kaltrina Krasniqi, dir.

Articles and chapters will be provided by the professor as PDFs.

Grading

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale, and you can look up your grades anytime on the virtual course space:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Assignment	Percentage	Due Date
Participation and Class Discussion	15%	Various
Online Discussions	15%	Throughout the semester
Midterm Essay (5-7 pages)	25%	Week 8
Final Research Paper (12-15 pages)	35%	Finals Week
Presentation of Final Project	10%	Week 14

Assignments

Participation & Discussion Leadership (15%): Each student must attend each class and participate in class discussion.

Online Discussions (15%): These will be brief responses to the week's reading prompts on the online portal's discussion boards. The due date and time for each discussion is posted on D2L ahead of time. Once the discussion post closes, it will not allow you to post your answer, so make sure you keep the deadlines as the system will not allow you any late submissions. I will read through and grade every post, responding individually when necessary. I will post a global response that will synthesize some of the major ideas emerging from your posts.

Midterm Essay: Analysis (25%, 8-10 pages, Due Week 8): Select 2-3 films from the first seven weeks of the course and develop an original analytical argument about the thematic connection between the films. Your essay should move beyond simple comparison to offer a sophisticated interpretation of how the films engage with the theme and the dialogue they facilitate. More detailed information in assignment prompt.

Final Research Paper: Researched Argument (35%, 15-20 pages, Due Finals Week): Conduct an original research project that makes a contribution to film scholarship. This paper should demonstrate your ability to identify a research question, engage with relevant theoretical

frameworks, and develop sustained analytical arguments. More detailed information in assignment prompt.

Final Presentation: Research Paper Findings (10%, 15-20 minutes, Week 14): Present the key findings of your final research paper to the class in a 15-minute presentation followed by 5 minutes of questions and discussion.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

I will be holding regular office hours (see the header on this syllabus) and I encourage you to schedule time with me ahead of time so I can supply a zoom link. Alternatively, you can come to my office in person. Consider these office visits as a way for you not only to ask questions, but to also develop your ideas for your assignments, and to engage with the material outside of class. If the office hours I have are not ideal for your schedule, I am also able to make individual appointments.

If you send an email I will answer it that same day if the email was sent between 8 am-4 pm on weekdays. If your email was sent after those specified times, I will reply the next morning or after the weekend. Please follow proper email etiquette. I do not check D2L email, so only send emails to the university address: LameborshiEralda@tamuc.edu

Things to Keep in Mind

1. Because this is a film course, some of the visual elements may present content that may be disturbing, violent, graphic, or triggering to some students. A crowdsourced website that gives information on possible triggers on films is the following and **I encourage you to filter the films through the site if you know that you may be disturbed by certain content:** <https://www.doesthedogdie.com/>
2. All Writing Projects must be turned in on D2L (see next section for access) on the due date and time. No make-up work is allowed on major assignments. Late work will be penalized 10% of the grade per day that it is late.
3. All work needs to adhere to MLA format with appropriate documentation.
4. Plagiarism, or turning in work that is not one's own, runs counter to the most basic purposes and presumptions of higher education. The minimum penalty for plagiarism will be failure of the assignment. In repeated cases, the penalty is failure of the course and filing paperwork with the department head (see section below on academic integrity).
5. Participation in class discussions must be engaged and informed and this also applies to participation in online discussions, which must be thorough and thoughtful.

Technology Requirements

We will often use D2L, and in the case of web-based courses, D2L will be our virtual classroom. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have all technology requirements met for a successful interaction with online learning spaces. For more on technology requirements see here:

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/facultystaffservices/academictechnology/readiness-for-online-courses.aspx>

Access and Navigation

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

Communication

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact me via email: LameborshiEralda@tamuc.edu

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for me to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance and an updated copy will be posted online.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail here:

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/campusservices/studentRights/Code%20of%20Conduct.aspx>

Student Grievance Procedure

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head or Assistant Department Head by completing a Student Grievance Form (available in the main office, HL 141). In the event that the instructor is the Department Head, the student should schedule a meeting with the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities after following the steps outlined above; if the instructor is the Assistant Department Head, students should schedule a meeting with the Department Head. Where applicable, students should also consult [University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 \(“Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation”\)](#).

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for this course. You will start losing 5% of your grade for each absence over three, and after six absences you are at risk for failing the class.

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the attendance webpage: <https://inside.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalinformation/attendance.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following: <https://www.tamuc.edu/college-of-business/integrity-policy/>

Use of AI

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

No use of AI tools is allowed in this course.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu, <https://www.tamuc.edu/student-disability-services/>

Mental Health Services

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community

resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained. For more on this see here: <https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/administrativeoffices/academicAffairs/handbook2016/section-iii.aspx>

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

For more on campus carry policy see here:

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/CampusCarry/FAQs.aspx#:~:text=to%20carry%20guns%3F-.Any%20individual%20who%20holds%20a%20current%20and%20valid%20license%20to,where%20permitted%20on%20university%20property.>

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

In order to measure the level of compliance with the accreditation, throughout the semester I may collect some of the ungraded texts you produce solely for an assessment of program effectiveness that in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs.

Tentative Calendar

Week 1 (February 3): Visual Language and Early Innovation

- *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, 1920, Robert Wiene, Germany - German Expressionism [Criterion Channel, DVD]
- *Battleship Potemkin*, 1925, Sergei Eisenstein, Soviet Union - Montage theory [Criterion Channel, DVD]
- *Un Chien Andalou*, 1929, Luis Buñuel, France/Spain - Surrealism [Criterion Channel, DVD]

Week 2 (February 10): Neorealism and Humanism

- *Bicycle Thieves*, 1948, Vittorio De Sica, Italy - Italian Neorealism [Criterion Channel, DVD]
- *Rashomon*, 1950, Akira Kurosawa, Japan - Multiple perspectives [Criterion Channel, HBO Max, DVD]

- *Ashes and Diamonds*, 1958, Andrzej Wajda, Poland - Post-war trauma [Criterion Channel, DVD]

Week 3 (February 17): Modernist Narrative and New Waves

- *Breathless*, 1960, Jean-Luc Godard, France - French New Wave [Criterion Channel, DVD]
- *8½* 1963, Federico Fellini, Italy - Modernist autobiography [Criterion Channel, DVD]
- *Persona*, 1966, Ingmar Bergman, Sweden - Psychological fragmentation [Criterion Channel, DVD]

Week 4 (February 24): Absurdity and Dark Comedy

- *Closely Watched Trains*, 1966, Jiří Menzel, Czechoslovakia [Criterion Channel, DVD]
- Recommended: *The Firemen's Ball*, 1967, Miloš Forman, Czechoslovakia

Week 5 (March 3): State Power and Radical Cinema

- *Slogans*, 2001, Gjergj Xhuvani, Albania
- *WR: Mysteries of the Organism*, 1971, Dušan Makavejev, Yugoslavia [Criterion Channel, DVD]
- Recommended: *When Father Was Away on Business*, 1985, Emir Kusturica, Yugoslavia

March 10 - SPRING BREAK (No Class)

Week 7 (March 17): Memory and Historical Trauma

- *Underground*, 1995, Emir Kusturica, Serbia/France/Germany [DVD available]
- Recommended: *Before the Rain*, 1994, Milcho Manchevski, North Macedonia

Week 8 (March 24):

- *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*, 2007, Cristian Mungiu, Romania [Criterion Channel, DVD]
- Recommended: *Grbavica*, 2006, Jasmila Žbanić, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Mid-term analysis due**

Week 9 (March 31): Post-Communist Realism

- *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*, 2005, Cristi Puiu, Romania [Criterion Channel, DVD]
- Recommended: *12:08 East of Bucharest*, 2006, Corneliu Porumboiu, Romania

Week 10 (April 7): Faith and Fanaticism

- *Beyond the Hills*, 2012, Cristian Mungiu, Romania [Various streaming platforms, DVD]
- Recommended: *Ida*, 2013, Paweł Pawlikowski, Poland

Week 11 (April 14): War and Its Aftermath

- *Quo Vadis, Aida?*, 2020, Jasmila Žbanić, Bosnia and Herzegovina [Various streaming platforms, DVD]
- *No Man's Land*, 2001, Danis Tanović, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Week 12 (April 21): Post-War Reconstruction

- *Hive*, 2021, Blerta Basholli, Kosova/Switzerland/North Macedonia/Albania [Available on various platforms, DVD]

Week 13 (April 28): Identity, Transition

- *East, West, East: The Final Sprint*, 2008, Gjergj Xhuvani, Albania [DVD]
- *Vera Dreams of the Sea*, 2021, Kaltrina Krasniqi, Kosova [DVD]
- Recommended: *Cold War*, 2018, Paweł Pawlikowski, Poland

Week 14: May 5

- **Research Paper Due**
- **Presentations Due**