

# RTVF 111-02: Alternative Cinema

# International Film

Spring 2012, San José State University  
Tuesdays, 3:00 - 5:45 p.m., HGH 118

---

**Instructor:** Drew Todd, Ph.D.  
**Email:** drew.todd@sjsu.edu  
**Office & phone:** Hugh Gillis Hall 213 / (408) 924-4575  
**Office hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.  
**Faculty website:** www.sjsu.edu/people/drew.todd  
**Dept. info. online:** www.rtvf.info • <http://groups.google.com/group/rtvf-info> • RTVF at SJSU

**Course Prerequisites:** Completion of core GE, satisfaction of Writing Skills Test and upper division standing. For students who begin continuous enrollment at a CCC or a CSU in Fall 2005 or later, completion of or concurrent enrollment in a 100W course is required.

---

## REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Course Reader (**CR**) – sold *in-class* on the first day of class
2. All in-class film screenings (*Screening note:* It is absolutely necessary that students remain quiet throughout all screenings, if only out of respect for your fellow students.)

## COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to survey the breadth of international cinema made around the world. Our focus will be on narrative movies produced not only outside of the United States, but also throughout film history. We will concentrate on earlier generations of filmmaking in order to locate traditions and influences, but we will also cover more recent filmmaking practices. In both cases, we will gain a better sense of how and why these productions may be labeled “alternative.”

On the whole, this class is structured chronologically so as to impose upon the curriculum an historical perspective. History will be only one avenue of understanding cinematic traditions in this class, however. In addition, we will consider these films in light of theoretical, aesthetic, industrial, economic, social-cultural, and also thematic matters, touching upon a range of important movements – cinematic, artistic, political, and historical – that will help us contextualize the subject of study.

While this sort of survey is imperative to any thorough study of film, it is also inherently impossible as a *thorough* study. Many important national cinemas, film movements, and directors are necessarily left out of this course. You will have opportunities, however, to fill in some of these gaps in the course of your own research and writing.

**Content Note:** *This class will show a few movies that depict the following: violence, sexuality, and content that some might deem offensive; if this kind of material – even if infrequent and in small doses – upsets you, please make a point of speaking with me.*

## GE AREA V — STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES (SLOs)

*Upon successful completion of this course, students will:*

1. Ascertain and analyze the ways that culture and nation impact how films are made around the world.
2. Recognize the diversity of filmmaking styles and purposes outside of the United States.
3. Identify the powerful relationship between film and history in the modern age of colonization, industrialization, and globalization.
4. Understand how a culture's filmmaking patterns change in response to both domestic and global pressures.
5. Compare systematically — through cinema — the ideas, values, representations, images, cultural artifacts, political cultures, economic structures, technological developments, and attitudes of people from other societies.

(Courses to meet Areas R, S, and V of SJSU Studies must be taken from three different departments, or distinct academic units.)

## RTVF STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES (SLOs)

*Upon successful completion of the RTVF major, students will:*

- A. Become media literate: Know the history, processes and current structure of the electronic media, its ethical parameters, and the social and political effects of electronic and mass communication (radio, television, film) on an audience.
- B. Tell meaningful stories through production of good narratives in radio, television, and film. Appreciate the art and aesthetics of media.
- C. Communicate information and entertainment to diverse cultures using radio, television and film. Be sensitive to the ways and processes of, and the attitudes held by races, religions, political and social groups that are not their own.
- D. Understand how to plan, produce, write and direct radio, television and film/cinema projects. Achieve professional-level skills of production. Select and operate video/television, film, and audio/radio technologies.
- E. Determine what type of information is needed for a research question, problem, or issue, and be able to retrieve, evaluate and effectively use such information to produce scholarship and production in radio, television, and film.

## COURSE FORMAT & ASSIGNMENTS

Typically the class will be a mixture of lecture, discussion of texts, and in-class screenings. We will often begin each class period with a lecture that sets the work we are examining in particular contexts and will follow with some discussion of the readings and films we have just completed. Consider all the screenings a kind of lab period: They are compulsory and vital to your succeeding and learning in this course.

### Assignment Breakdown

### SLO Assessment

**Writings (45% — response essay = 10% / research essay = 35%)**

**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, A,  
B, C, E**

In the response essay you will respond personally and analytically to one of the screened movies in tandem with the critical article assigned for that movie. The essay will be a mixture of research and analysis, calling on you to pursue some relevant topic within international cinema. Assignment sheets will further detail each assignment. *For*

RTVF majors, the research essay will count as your portfolio piece for this class.

**Exams (45% — pop quizzes = 5% / midterm quiz = 15% / final = 25%)**

**1, 2, 3, 4,5,A,B,C**

Sprinkled through the semester will be pop quizzes on the reading due for that day and/or the film screened the week before. The midterm quiz, comprised solely of multiple choice, will cover the first half of the course, while the final exam will be partially cumulative and made up of multiple-choice and essay questions. Bring a small green scantron sheet #882, blank pieces of paper, and a pen and #2 pencil to both the midterm and final exams.

***Note: By enrolling in this class, you commit to taking the midterm and final exams at their scheduled times below; there will be no make-ups, unless there is documentation for serious illness or emergency.***

**Participation (10%)**

**1, 2, 3, 4,5,A,B,C**

Constructive participation in class discussions will have a positive effect on your grade. You also owe it to yourself to attend regularly. Be sure to come to class having read the assigned readings and prepared to discuss the material with others in the class. I encourage you to introduce yourself either in class or during my office hours.

**Grading Scale**

**Points**

A+	97 – 100%	965 – 1,000
A	93 – 96%	925 – 964
A-	90 – 92	895 – 924
B+	87 – 89	865 – 894
B	83 – 86	825 – 864
B-	80 – 82	795 – 824
C+	77 – 79	765 – 794
C	73 – 76	725 – 764
C-	70 – 72	695 – 724
D	60 – 69	595 – 694
F	<60	<594

**CLASSROOM POLICIES & PROTOCOL**

- **LATE POLICY:** Late papers will be docked one **grade** (e.g., from A to A-, B- to a C+) each day late, including weekend days; late work must be **emailed** to me.
- To receive an "**incomplete**" a student must have **completed** at least **2/3** of the semester work and be passing the class.
- It is **your** responsibility to obtain **discussion notes** for class days you miss; your best bet is to keep in touch with a classmate about whatever you miss.
- I strongly encourage students to read the **online lecture notes** *before each class*, as we will not always have time in class to go over them thoroughly.
- Upon entering the classroom, students must **turn off** all **electronic devices**, other than computers — and during the screenings, even the computers must be turned off.

- It is absolutely necessary that students remain **quiet and respectful of others** throughout all screenings, but generally throughout the lecture and discussion sessions as well.
- **Save all graded work**, both for study purposes but also as proof of assignment completion.
- I reserve the right to alter class assignments and/or screenings, depending on timing issues and film availability.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES & SERVICES**

### **Academic integrity**

Students should know that the University's Academic Integrity Policy is available at [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial\\_affairs/Academic\\_Integrity\\_Policy\\_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy FO6-1 requires approval of instructors.

### **Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

### **Learning Assistance Resource Center**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The LARC website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/>.

### **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/>.

### **Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Information on add/drops is available at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html>. Information about late drop is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

# CLASS SCHEDULE

**WEEK ONE**  
T JAN 31

**Course Introduction**  
Introduce course; lecture on Hollywood's *continuity system* & first unit

## **UNIT I: NEOREALISM(S) & NATIONAL CULTURE ON FILM**

**WEEK TWO**  
T FEB 07

**Italian Neorealism**  
Finish lecture on neorealism as a cinematic response to World War II  
**CR:** Bordwell; Gordon (13-30)  
**Reading:**  
**Screening:** *LADRI DI BICICLETTI • BICYCLE THIEVES* (Vittorio de Sica, 1948, Italy, 93 min)

**WEEK THREE**  
T FEB 14

**Classical Japanese Cinema, Post-World War II: Yasujiro Ozu**  
Discuss *BICYCLE*; lecture on post-World War II Japan, Japanese cinema, & Ozu  
**CR:** Gordon (37-61); Komatsu  
**Reading:**  
**Screening:** *BANSHUN • LATE SPRING* (Yasujiro Ozu, 1949, Japan, 108 min.)

**WEEK FOUR**  
T FEB 21

**Jafar Panahi and the Iranian Renaissance**  
Discuss *BANSHUN*; lecture on Iranian cinema  
**CR:** Geist; Naficy; interview of filmmaker J. Panahi  
**Reading:**  
**Screening:** *DAYEREH • IL CERCHIO • THE CIRCLE* (Jafar Panahi, 2001, Iran, 90 min.)  
**Due:** *Response essay on Late Spring*

## **UNIT II: FILM MOVEMENTS & MANIFESTOES**

**WEEK FIVE**  
T FEB 28

**Surrealism and Film**  
Discuss *CIRCLE*; lecture on Surrealism and Buñuel  
**CR:** Gönül; Baxter; Breton; Breton, et al; paintings; Richards (23-27)  
**Reading:**  
**Screening:** *L'AGE D'OR • THE GOLDEN AGE* (Luis Buñuel, 1930, France-Spain, 60 min.)  
**Due:** *Response essay on The Circle*

**WEEK SIX**  
T MAR 06

**The Surrealist in the Factory: Buñuel in the Mexican Studio System**  
Discuss *L'AGE D'OR*; screening  
**CR:** Richards (27-43) Acevedo-Muñoz (Chapter 1)  
**Reading:**  
**Screening:** *SUSANA* (Buñuel, 1951, Mexico, 86 min.)  
**Due:** *Response essay on L'Age d'or*

**WEEK SEVEN**  
T MAR 13

**Brazil's Cinema Novo**  
Discuss *SUSANA*; lecture on Brazilian history and cinema  
**CR:** Acevedo-Muñoz (Chapter 4); Chanan; Stam/Johnson; Diegues  
**Reading:**  
**Screening:** *VIDAS SECAS • BARREN LIVES* (Nelson P. dos Santos, 1962, Brazil, 100 min.)  
**Due:** *Response essay on Susana*

**WEEK EIGHT**  
T MAR 20

**Dogme 95**  
Discuss *VIDAS SECAS*; lecture on Dogme cinema  
**CR:** Rocha; Bordwell; "Dogme Manifesto"; "Vow of Chastity"  
**Reading:**  
**Screening:** *DOGME #1: FESTEN • THE CELEBRATION* (1998, Denmark, 105 min.)  
**Due:** *Response essay on Vidas Secas*  
⇒⇒ *LAST CHANCE TO COMPLETE RESPONSE ESSAY* ⇐⇐

**WEEK NINE**  
T MAR 27

**SPRING BREAK**  
*no class today*

**WEEK TEN**

T APR 03

**Discussion & MIDTERM QUIZ**Discuss *FESTEN*; midterm quiz in class (bring a small green scantron sheet #882 along with a #2 pencil)**Reading:****CR:** Interview of filmmaker Vinterberg**Exam:****MIDTERM** (last 45-60 minutes of class)**UNIT III: GENRES AROUND THE WORLD****WEEK ELEVEN**

T APR 10

**Film Noir, Egyptian Style**

Lecture on Youssef Chahine and Egyptian cinema; screening

**Reading:****CR:** Altman; Armes; Fawal (37-57)**Screening:***BAB EL HADID* • *CAIRO STATION* (Youssef Chahine, 1958, Egypt, 77 min.)**WEEK TWELVE**

T APR 17

**War Melodrama and Soviet Thaw Cinema**Discuss *CAIRO*; lecture on Operation Barbarossa and the Soviet Thaw**Reading:****CR:** Fawal (57-65); Kenez**Screening:***LETYAT ZHURAVLI* • *THE CRANES ARE FLYING* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1957, Soviet Union, 94 min)**WEEK THIRTEEN**

T APR 24

**International, Indie Comedy**Discuss *CRANES*; lecture on independent cinema and the contexts of production**Reading:****CR:** Prokhorov; Lafrance**Screening:***DOWN BY LAW* (Jim Jarmusch, 1986, U.S.-West Germany, 107 min.)**UNIT IV: NEW WAVES, NEW WAYS****WEEK FOURTEEN**

T MAY 01

**French New Wave**Discuss *DOWN BY LAW*; lecture on new wave cinema**Reading:****CR:** Stiller; Graham; Insdorf**Screening:***LES QUATRE CENTS COUPS* • *THE 400 BLOWS* (François Truffaut, 1959, France, 99 min.)**WEEK FIFTEEN**

T MAY 08

**Pedro Almodóvar, *la Movida*, and Spain After Franco**Discuss *400 BLOWS*; lecture on Spain, both under and after Franco**Reading:****CR:** Nottingham; Cowans; “La Movida Madrileña”**Screening:***¿QUÉ HE HECHO PARA MERECER ESTO!* • *WHAT HAVE I DONE TO DESERVE THIS?!* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1984, Spain, 101 min.)**WEEK SIXTEEN**

T MAY 15

**TBA**Discuss *QUE HECHO*; screening TBA**Reading:****CR:** Smith / **pdf:** reading will be announced and uploaded onto course website**Screening:**

TBA

**Final Exam:**

Thursday, May 17, 2:45 – 5:00 p.m., in our classroom

1. Discuss last movie screened
2. Final exam (last 1.5 hours)
3. Remember to bring a small green scantron sheet #882 along w/ blank pieces of paper, a #2 pencil, and a pen.