

FILM 238 AUTEUR STUDIES: ALMODÓVAR & TARANTINO

CRN 9524

Trimester 1 2010
1 March to 4 June 2010
20 Points



TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	1 March to 4 June 2010
Mid-trimester break:	5 April to 18 April 2010
Study week:	7 June to 11 June 2010
Last piece of assessment due:	14 June 2010

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator:	Violetta Petrova
Room:	83 Fairlie Terrace, Room 313
Telephone:	Ext. 6995
Email:	Violetta.Petrova@vuw.ac.nz
Office Hours:	Wednesday 3-4 pm
Tutor:	Violetta Petrova

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Tuesday and Friday 10am-1pm

Room: MT (Memorial Theatre) 228, Student Union Building

Tutorials

Will run on Monday; Film 238 will use S-Cubed to allocate students to tutorials. Details will be placed on Blackboard and advised of during the first lecture.

COURSE DELIVERY

Welcome to Film 238 Auteur Studies!

FILM 238 investigates the concept of authorship through the study of two cult directors: Pedro Almodóvar and Quentin Tarantino. By critically analysing and appreciating these authors' work, we will emphasise the concept of film *auteur* as transitional and problematic. We will be focusing on the directors' thematic preoccupations, controversial ideas and challenging stylistic experimentation. The primary goal is to consider Almodóvar's and Tarantino's unique artistic contribution, the concepts of filmmaking and the cultural context of their work. We will be looking at Almodóvar's and Tarantino's work individually and comparatively and discussing the postmodern status of charismatic star-directors acting on global scale. In the process of learning, debating and analysing the directors' work we will discuss key concepts of culture studies and film analysis and consider Almodóvar's and Tarantino's distinct approach to a range of cinematic, artistic, and humanistic problems.

The course is delivered by one three-hour and one two-and-a-half-hour sessions combining screening and lectures and a 50 min weekly tutorial. Some lectures may be detached from the screenings due to the films' longer running time; these irregularities are clearly indicated in the course timetable on pp.6-7 of this document. Lectures involve presentation of the critical arguments and debates on the two directors' work, interactive moments, and creative exercises. Tutorials will provide the opportunity for further discussion and debate, close reading, creative exercises, and raising of questions in relation to the reading, the screening and the lectures. Students will be encouraged to take active participation in both the lectures and the tutorials.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any additional information concerning the course, including changes, will be announced in classes, posted on the Film 238 course notice board in 85 Fairlie Terrace, and on Blackboard.

COURSE CONTENT

Film 238 opens with general discussion of Almodóvar's and Tarantino's authorship and their unique status in the international culture. The central idea - that the concept of authorship may change over time but is more alive today than ever in film history - is the infrastructure of the course. The exploration of the two directors' creative universe involves close reading of the narrative, formal and stylistic approaches unique to their films. We will have six weeks to explore different aspects of each director's work: narrative, genre bending/blending, mise-en-scene, lighting and colour, cinematography, performance, sound design, and editing as well as their methods of touching the spectator in the process. Each topic will proceed from a study of what is particular for each director to more general conceptual and theoretical approaches to film illuminated by these directors' work. The discussion involves key concepts in contemporary film culture, such as the various mutations of realism, the codes and conventions of national/transnational cinema, the shifting nature of authorship, the politics of cinematic representation, the invention/re-invention of artist's persona, and the historical and cultural context of Almodóvar's and Tarantino's authorship. We will be focusing on authorship as cultural commodity functioning in an industry of desire and the role of the fandom in establishing the figure of cult director. The wide scope of the discussion will enable us to examine the specific position that film auteur occupies in contemporary

mass culture and the effects of auteurist persona on the practice of filmmaking. We will also consider the analysis of ideology within films, the concepts of gender, transgression, and the representation of sexuality and violence in film.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Auteur studies are famously known as one of the best training fields in terms of learning and understanding cinema through unravelling the secrets of crafted filmmakers.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course you will be able:

- To understand contemporary and historically significant concepts of film auteur
- To understand the elements that constitute film authorship
- To identify and critically analyse various aspects of an author's style and ideas
- To discuss film auteur using appropriate approaches
- To observe critically the shifting landscape of international authorship
- To discuss authorship in the context of national culture and transnational filmmaking practice

The aim of this course is to introduce you to the analysis of film authorship and to the critical approaches applied to the study of film auteur. At the end of the course you should be able to undertake close analysis of directorial style based on your comprehension of the concept of authorship in film. You should also be able to apply that understanding to discussion of critical terms such as narrative structure, *mise-en-scene*, sound design and editing with confidence. You will extend the knowledge of the classical and most recent development of the concepts of authorship and art film. The course develops critical awareness of how film auteurs generate social and cultural meanings, affects us emotionally, and can become a site of ideological power in society. You will extend and deepen the understanding of film language and aesthetics and will get some practical experience of creating a text after the model(s) of cinematic authorship.

The course will equip you with a range of transferable skills that you can draw on throughout your entire degree, such as understanding the craft of filmmaking; extending the critical vocabulary; familiarity and application of method of comparative and cross-cultural analysis; effective communication of critical ideas and concepts; creative approach to solving critical tasks; and further development of analytical, writing, and oral skills. You will gain more confidence in conducting film analysis, independent research, and working creatively in small groups.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The university anticipates that you should be able to devote about 13 hours per week to a 20-point course at 200- level. Therefore you should expect to spend, on average, about 10 hours per week (apart from class time) in reading, viewing films, preparing for classes and writing assignments.

GROUP WORK

Two assignments for FILM 238 are group creative exercise and presentation. Your tutor will place you in a group of 4-5 people during week 2 or 3 of the course. Details of all assessments can be found in the **Assessment Guidelines hand-out**.

READINGS

The required readings for each tutorial are listed in the opening section of the Student Notes. *Student Notes* are available from the University bookshop. You should purchase a copy for your own use.

For the first two weeks of trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of VicBooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two all undergraduate

textbooks will be sold from VicBooks and student notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the Student Union Building. You can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to you or they can be picked up from the shop. You will be contacted when they are available.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

There will be four assessment items for this subject. All assessment will be internal. Full details of the assignments are given in the **Assessment Guidelines hand-out**, which will be distributed in week 1 of the course, and placed on Blackboard.

Assignment One: Small Group Creative Exercise

Topic: *Mise-en-scene* analysis

Weighting: 20%

Due Date: Week Six, 19 April

Length: 10 minutes audio-visual presentation (to be presented in the tutorials)

The assignment requires you to creatively apply your understanding of aesthetic, formal and structural terms and concepts introduced on the course.

Assignment Two: Research Essay

Areas to cover: Almodóvar's authorship

Weighting: 30%

Due date: Week Eight, 5 May, Wednesday, 2 pm

Length: 2500-3000 words

This assignment is connected to the learning objective that requires you to identify the concepts constituting film authorship, reading the auteur within the film text, and utilising the key terms and concepts of the course.

Assignment Three: Small Group Creative Exercise

Topic: Promotional trailer project

Weighting: 20%

Due Date: Week Eleven, 24 May, tutorial times

Length: 10 minutes audio-visual presentation (to be presented in the tutorials)

The assignment requires you to creatively apply your understanding of authorship and to translate the theoretical/logical knowledge into artistic audio-visual text.

Assignment Four: Critical analysis/Research Essay

Areas to cover: Tarantino's authorship

Weighting: 30%

Due date: 14 June, Monday 10am

Length: 3000 words

This assignment relates to the learning objectives that ask you to consider the ideological and cultural implications of Tarantino's authorship. As final assignment it may suggest some general topics for discussion of authorship as well as comparative analysis of the two directors' work.

Assessment Guidelines

Full assessment guidelines can be found in the **Assessment Guidelines handout**, which will be distributed in week 1 of the course, and placed on Blackboard.

Handing in Assignments:

Assignments should be placed in the drop box near the Film administration office at 85 Fairlie Terrace. *Do not submit your essay to your tutor.* You must keep a copy of your assignment before submitting it.

An aegrotat pass will normally be approved only when a candidate has completed at least 30% of the course assessment.

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office. Remember to fill in your tutor's name.

PENALTIES AND EXTENSIONS

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2 percent deduction from your total mark per work day or part work day, starting from the hour the work is due. This means late work will drop one 'grade-step' every second day—i.e. from C+ to C, or A- to B+. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

Extensions

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to pass this course, you must complete the assignments by the due dates unless you have mitigating circumstances. You must also attend at least eight (8) tutorials.

STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i.e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Work submitted in the final examination will obviously be handwritten. You are expected to write clearly. Where work is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

You should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>
 The AVC (Academic) website also provides information in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/Publications.aspx>

COURSE PROGRAMME

PART I: ALMODÓVAR

WEEK	Tuesday	Friday
ONE	2 MARCH Lecture: Auteur on the global scene (Course intro) Screening: Live Flesh, 1997, 103 min	5 MARCH Lecture: The Universe of Passion: Almodóvar's authorship Screening: Matador, 1986, 110 min
TWO	9 MARCH Lecture: Sexuality, pop culture & the new mentality Screening: The Flowers of My Secret, 1995, 103 min	12 MARCH Lecture: The sensual city: Madrid as text Screening: Labyrinth of Passion, 1982, 100 min
THREE	16 MARCH Lecture: Transsexuality/trans-subjectivity Screening: Law of Desire, 1987, 102 min.	19 MARCH Lecture: Gender & politics Screening: Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown, 1988, 90 min
FOUR	23 MARCH Lectures: Crying Games: The postmodern labyrinth Screening: Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down! 1989, 111 min.	26 MARCH Lecture: Reinventing identity Screening: All About My Mother, 1999, 101 min.
FIVE	30 MARCH Lecture: Pleasure, Pain & Transgression Screening: Talk to Her, 2002, 112 min.	2 APRIL No classes/ Easter holiday begins

Mid-trimester Break

WEEK	Tuesday	Friday
SIX	20 APRIL Lecture: Windmills & the return of magic realism Screening: Vovler, 2006, 121min.	23 APRIL Lecture: Marketing the director: auteur as cultural commodity Screening: Kika, 1993, 114 min.

PART II: QUENTIN TARANTINO

SEVEN	27 APRIL Lecture: Fan-turned-auteur Screening: Reservoir Dog, 100 min.	30 APRIL Lecture: The Performative & The postmodern Screening: CSI TV series
EIGHT	4 MAY Screening: Pulp Fiction, 154 min	7 MAY Double lecture: (1) Eroticising violence (2) Carnival, parody & irony
NINE	11 MAY Screening: Jackie Brown, 154 min	14 MAY Double lecture: (1) Styling gender & race (2) Audiovisual pleasures: The aural narrative
TEN	18 MAY Lecture: Going global I: Genre, narrative & The transnational appeal Screening: Kill Bill vol. I, 111min.	21 MAY Lecture: Going global II: Asian Connection Screening: Kill Bill vol. II (selected chapters)
ELEVEN	25 MAY Lecture: Tarantino's scripts Screening: True Romance, 1993, 121min.	28 MAY Lecture: The gang of mavericks: Remaking Hollywood Screening: Four Rooms, 98 min.
TWELVE	1 JUNE Lecture: Narrating the past: History as farce Screening: Inglorious Bastards, 147 min.	4 JUNE Lecture: The grindhouse effects Screening: Screening: Death Proof, 114 min.



"Let's go to work!"