

FILM 334 National Cinema: Film Noir

Trimester 2 2012

16 July to 17 November 2012

20 Points



The Big Clock (John Farrow, 1948)

TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates: 16 July to 19 October 2012
Mid-trimester break: 27 August to 9 September 2012
Study week: 22 to 26 October 2012
Public holidays this trimester: none
Last piece of assessment due: 29 October 2012

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: Dr Kirsten Moana Thompson, Professor Film
kirsten.thompson@vuw.ac.nz; Ph 04 463 6728; 85 Fairlie Terrace, Room 101
Office hours: Wednesday 12-2

Tutors: Dr Thompson
Simin Littschwager: simin.littschwager@vuw.ac.nz

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Screening: Monday 1.10-4pm Hunter Building Lecture Theatre 220
Lecture: Tuesday 2.10-4pm Murphy Building Lecture Theatre 220

Tutorials: Dates, times and rooms will be posted on Blackboard and S-cubed

Dr Thompson's Office Hours: Wednesday 12-2

Tutorials begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via the FILM 334 site on Blackboard: go to "Tutorials" and then follow the instructions under the "SCubed - Tutorial Enrolment Instructions" link. Please read the instructions carefully. Tutorial rooms will be listed on S-Cubed, Blackboard and on the notice board outside the SEFTMS Reception, 83 Fairlie Terrace.

Be prompt! Please switch off all cell phones before entering the classroom. Please do not walk out in the middle of films, and please do not start packing up to leave until the auditorium lights go up. In every class we watch the entire concluding credits until the end of the film. Please watch these and remain still until the lights are on.

TEACHING LEARNING SUMMARY

This course will involve one lecture and one screening session per week. Normally, the film will screen before the lecture. Lectures may be interactive. There will also be a weekly tutorial where students will discuss the issues raised by screenings, lectures and readings. You will be expected to come to class each week having seen the film by **Monday**, and having read the readings **in advance of** Tuesday's lecture and Wednesday's tutorial.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, you **MUST** forward your Victoria email system to the email address you do use. All communications will be done through Blackboard and additional required and recommended readings and other information (study guides, etc) will be posted there.

COURSE PRESCRIPTION

A study of the cinema of a selected country or countries from cultural, historical, and economic perspectives. In 2012, the course focuses on classic noir.

COURSE CONTENT

This class will introduce you to the group of films and the historical and critical debates around the term "film noir." It will focus specifically on classic noir or the group of films made between the early forties and the late fifties. With complex narrative structures and pessimistic themes, these films range from the heist film to the private eye story, crime melodrama and woman's picture. They had a striking visual style and continue to exert a powerful influence on contemporary filmmaking. Titles may include *Gilda*, *Out of the Past*, *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers*, *Double Indemnity*, *Kiss of Death*, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Raw Deal*, *T Men*, *The Big Heat*, *The Killers*, *The Hitchhiker*, *Naked City*, *The Big Clock*, *Mildred Pierce*, *Asphalt Jungle*, *Murder My Sweet*, *Gun Crazy*, (some of which you will be required to watch

on your own). We will look at theoretical and philosophical issues connecting noir to modernity, existentialism and urban space, historical changes in the war and post-war period, and particular auteurs like Ulmer, Lang, Mann, Huston, and Ray.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who pass this course will be able to:

- Have a general knowledge of classical film noir, and critical debates around its definition, aesthetic and formal characteristics, style, narrative structure and periodization.
- Have specific knowledge of particular subtypes of film noir, including the heist film, the melodrama, semi-documentary noir, gangster film.
- Have more detailed knowledge of specific critical issues in relation to noir such as existentialism, modernity/modernism and modern art, city spaces, the femme and homme fatale.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours spread evenly over the 12 week trimester and breaks, or 13 hours per teaching week. You will spend 6 hours in class, and should spend 9 additional hours watching additional films, doing the readings or other coursework. Equal emphasis is placed on the readings and on the films.

GROUP WORK

There will be some informal group discussion done during lectures and tutorials, and some of this group work will contribute to your in-class participation grade (assessed by your tutor)

READINGS

Required texts:

Andrew Spicer, *Film Noir* (Longman, 2002, Paperback)

Alain Silver and James Ursini (ed.), *Film Noir Reader* (vol 1) (Limelight, 2004). Available cheaply at <http://www.thenile.co.nz/search?s=film+noir&x=0&y=0> for \$ 31.99 with free shipping

Jim Hillier and Alastair Philips, *100 Film Noirs* (BFI Screen Guide, BFI 2009)=100FN

Recommended Reading:

Additional required and recommended readings will be assigned on blackboard each week, and will be listed in the week by week breakdown (see end of Course Outline)

Reading Key: FNR= Film Noir Reader; AS= Andrew Spicer, BLA= Blackboard Readings on pdf or closed course reserve (please download, print or bring digitally on computer to class each week)

In addition two excellent coffee table hardcover books for optional purchase/reading I recommend are:

Alain Silver, James Ursini and Elizabeth Ward et al, eds. *The Film Noir Encyclopedia*. NY: Overlook, 2010.

Alain Silver and James Ursini. *The Noir Style* (Overlook: Woodstock NY) 1999

All class films and many recommended films are available at Victoria Library on reserve for viewing on site.

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 9–27 July 2012, 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 of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks on Level 4 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 nominated collection points at each campus. You will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515. I also recommend considering Amazon.com or other US or UK websites such as bookdepository.co.uk (including second hand titles) as they may be cheaper overseas even with shipping costs.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Students may find small flashlights or penlights helpful to take notes during screenings of films (however light from the film's screen is usually visible to see by).

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

All assessment for the course will be internal. There are four assignments; further details of each assignment will be posted on Blackboard:

Tutorial Presentations and Participation 20%; First Essay 25 %; Test 25%; Final Essay 30 %.

Assignment 1: Tutorial Attendance, Active (vocal) Participation, and Presentations of Readings (20%).

Due Date: Tutorials Weeks 2-12

Description:

Attendance rolls are taken by your tutor, and **no more than 2 classes** (for a total of 9 out of 11 tutorials) may be missed without penalty to grade (with the exception of medical illness with doctor's note). Each week you are expected to come to your tutorial having attended the screening and lecture and completed the readings, and you will be expected to vocally demonstrate your comprehension of, or questions about issues raised in the course readings. In addition, each week one student must present one of the readings. Your task is to summarise the key arguments in the reading and to identify the theoretical approach the article employs.

Assessment Criteria:

Completion of the set task in a clear, direct, legible, relevant, complete and timely manner.

Evidence of engagement with the specified article.

Evidence of critical and analytical skills.

Quality and originality of the report.

Quality and fluency of your expression.

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will develop your understanding of key concepts and/or issues in film noir. It will also enhance your critical, conceptual and verbal skills, and improve your ability to work in pairs and small groups.

Assignment Two: Close Analysis Essay 1500-2000 words (25%)

Due Date: Wednesday, 15 August

This assignment will cover topics discussed in the first four weeks of the course, such as the definition and critical formation of the term "film noir", its historical conditions of production and reception, and thematic and narrative style. You will be required to watch an additional **classic** film noir on your own (from an approved list) and to write an essay discussing how it can be considered noir. All assignments must be submitted electronically to Turnitin AND submitted in physical form to the office at 83 Fairlie Terrace.

Assessment Criteria:

Completion of the set task in a clear, direct, legible, relevant, complete and timely manner.

Evidence of engagement with specific readings from Weeks 1-4.

Evidence of critical and analytical skills.

Quality and originality of the report.

Quality and fluency of your expression.

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will develop your understanding of key concepts and/or issues in film noir. It will also enhance your critical and expression skills

Assignment Three: In class Test (maximum of 1.5 hours) (25%)

Due Date: Wednesday, 11 September (in lecture slot)

Description:

This test will cover the readings and screenings from Weeks 1-6. You will be expected to answer a series of short/ fill in the blank/multiple choice and essay questions. Further details will be posted on Blackboard.

Assessment Criteria:

Ability to demonstrate knowledge of readings and screenings, and mastery of several more specialized topics in the class such as urban space.

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will develop your understanding of key concepts and/or issues in film noir. It will also enhance your critical skills.

Assignment Four: Final Essay 3000 words (30%)

Due Date: Monday 29 October, 12 noon.

Description:

For your final essay you may select a topic of your choice from the specific essay topics that will be posted on Blackboard. All assignments must be submitted electronically to Turnitin AND submitted in physical form to the film office at 83 Fairlie Terrace.

Assessment Criteria:

Completing the set task in a clear, direct, relevant, and complete manner

Clear evidence of engagement with the ideas and materials discussed in FILM 334

The originality and quality of your findings. This will include your ability to conduct independent research from reputable academic sources, synthesise research materials, engage in textual analysis, and develop and express your ideas

Coherency, structure and argumentation of your essay

Quality and fluency of your expression

Understanding and correct application of terms and concepts used in film analysis, as well as terms and conceptual ideas introduced throughout the course.

Accurate and complete referencing of all sources, including a bibliography and filmography

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will improve your knowledge of one of the topics studied in the weeks 7-12 of the course. It will enable you to develop your textual analysis, independent research, and critical and argumentation skills. It will also improve your written expression.

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.

EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

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. There will be no late work accepted more than **5 days past the due date**. Those who fail to hand in assignments by the due date without medical documentation will receive a failing grade for the assignment. You **MUST** complete all assignments in order to pass. Tutors cannot grant extensions. Late work receives only minimal/no comments from your marker.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To gain a pass in this course you must:

- Submit the written work specified for this course, ON the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work).
- Attend 9 out of 11 tutorials subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work, such as illness (and which require documentation).
- Complete ALL assignments.

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 (Dr Thompson) and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

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. Where handwritten work is required you are expected to write clearly. If this 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>

TURNITIN

Work provided for assessment in this course WILL be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. (Assignments 2 and 4). Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcademic

Syllabus

Dates include Monday Screening, Tuesday Lecture and Wednesday Tutorial.

For recommended films: see also capsule descriptions in *100 Film Noirs* Textbook

Week 1	16-18 July	<p>What is Film Noir? CRITICAL DEBATE</p> <p>Screenings: <i>Detour</i> (Edgar Ulmer, 1946)</p> <p><i>Documentary on Noir</i> (Scorsese)</p> <p>Reading: 1) AS (available as BLA chap 1 only) until you order it 2) Nino Frank "A New Kind of Police Drama" (1946) B; 3) "Detour" 100FN</p> <p>Recommended: Claude Chabrol "the Evolution of the Crime Drama" (1955), BLA</p>
Week 2	23- 25 July	<p>II SEMI-DOCUMENTARY NOIR & CONDITIONS OF PRODUCTION /CRITICAL DEBATE II</p> <p>Screenings: <i>Naked City</i> (Jules Dassin, 1948)</p> <p>Recommended Viewings: <i>Night and the City</i>, <i>He Walked By Night</i>, <i>House on 92nd Street</i>, <i>Phenix City Story</i>, <i>T-Men</i>, <i>Call Northside 777</i>, <i>Panic in the Streets</i>, <i>Boomerang</i>, <i>Kansas City Confidential</i></p> <p>Readings: 1) AS chap 2 2) "Towards a Definition of Noir" Border/Chaumeton FNR, 3) Paul Schrader "Notes on Film Noir FNR 4) Also look at Weegee photos at http://museum.icp.org/museum/collections/special/weegee/</p> <p>Recommended Readings: "Paint it Black" Raymond Durnat, FNR Carl Richardson "Film Noir on Location: <i>The Naked City</i>" BLA; Linda Brookover "Blanc et Noir: Crime as Art" BLA ; Penelope Pelizzon "Good Stories from the Mean Streets: Weegee and Hard-Boiled Autobiography"; <i>Police Pictures</i> (Grey Art Gallery) BLA</p>
Week 3	30-31 July August 1	<p>NOIR STYLE Sept 27</p> <p>Screening: <i>Double Indemnity</i> (Billy Wilder, 1944)</p> <p>Recommended Home Viewings: <i>Gun Crazy</i>, <i>Pickup on South Street</i>, <i>The</i></p>

		<p><i>Killers, DOA, Force of Evil,</i></p> <p>Readings: 1) AS chap 3</p> <p>2) Porfirio “Noir Title Sequence” BLA</p> <p>Recommended Additional Readings:</p> <p>Porfirio “No Way: Out Some Existential Motifs in the Film Noir” FNR</p>
Week 4	6-8 August	<p>IV THE HARD BOILED DETECTIVE: BLOOD MELODRAMA AND PULP MODERNISM</p> <p>Screening <i>Murder My Sweet</i> (Edward Dmytryk, 1944);</p> <p>Recommended Home Viewings, <i>The Big Sleep, Kiss Me Deadly, Maltese Falcon, The Third Man, Where the Sidewalk Ends, DOA, Lady in the Lake</i></p> <p>Readings: 1) chap 4 (Noir Themes) AS;</p> <p>2) Raymond Chandler ‘Simple Art of Murder’ (available at http://www.en.utexas.edu/amlit/amlitprivate/scans/chandlerart.html)</p> <p>3) <i>Murder My Sweet</i>, 100 FN</p> <p>Recommended Readings: Frank Krutnik “Hard Boiled Crime Fiction” chap 3 from <i>In a Lonely Street</i>, BLA</p> <p>Paula Rabinowitz: “Introduction”, <i>Black and White and Noir</i>, BLA</p>
Week 5	13 -15 August	<p>Assignment 2/First Essay handed in to your tutor ****</p> <p>THE FEMME FATALE AND THE HOMME FATALE</p> <p>Screening <i>Out of the Past</i> (Jacques Tourneur, 1947); clip <i>Sudden Fear</i> (David Miller, 1952)</p> <p>Recommended Home Viewings <i>Lady from Shanghai; Force of Evil, Scarlet Street, Woman in the Window, The Strange Love of Martha Ivers, The Killers; Dead Reckoning, Crime of Passion, Too Late for Tears, Gun Crazy</i></p> <p>Readings: 1) AS chap 5</p> <p>2) Janey Place “Some Visual Motifs in Film Noir: FNR</p> <p>3) “Out of the Past”, 100FN</p> <p>Recommended Additional Readings: Laura Mulvey “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” BLA; Linda Williams “Feminist Film Theory: Mildred Pierce and World War Two” BLA; Elizabeth Cowie “Shades of Noir” BLA</p> <p>Lecturer to Be Announced, Dr Thompson away on Tuesday</p>
Week 6	20-22 August	<p>MODERNITY AND CENTRIPETAL SPACE (GANGSTER NOIR)</p> <p>Screening: <i>Raw Deal</i> (Anthony Mann, 1948); clips <i>T Men</i> (Anthony Mann, 1947)</p> <p>Recommended Screenings: <i>The Big Heat White Heat; Le Samourai, Bob Le Flambeur, The Killers, I Walk Alone, White Heat, Body and Soul</i></p> <p>Readings: AS chap 6</p> <p>2) Ed Dimendberg, Intro and Chap 1 “Naked Cities” BLA</p> <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <p>Robert Smith ‘Mann in the Dark’ FNR;</p> <p>Todd McCarthy “Through a Lens Darkly” The Life and Films of John Alton” BLA</p>
Mid Trimester Break:		<p>Monday 27 August to Sunday 9 September 2012</p>

Week 7	10-12 September	<p>RANDOM PSYCHOPATHS AND CENTRIFUGAL SPACE Nov 8</p> <p>Screening: <i>The Hitchhiker</i> (Ida Lupino, 1953); clips <i>Kiss of Death</i> (Henry Hathaway, 1946)</p> <p>Recommended Home Viewings : <i>The Outrage</i> (Lupino), <i>Kiss of Death</i>, <i>Crossfire</i></p> <p>Readings: 1) “The Hitchhiker” 100 FN 2) Ed Dimendberg, “Centrifugal Space” BLA</p> <p>Assignment 3/Exam in Lectures September 11 ***</p>
Week 8	17-19 September	<p>THE HEIST</p> <p>Screening: <i>The Asphalt Jungle</i> (John Huston, 1950): clips <i>Gun Crazy</i> (Joseph Lewis, 1950), <i>The Killing</i> (Stanley Kubrick, 1956)</p> <p>Recommended Home Viewing: <i>Rififi</i>, <i>Bob le Flambeur</i></p> <p>Readings: “The Asphalt Jungle, 100FN</p>
Week 9	24-26 September	<p>HOM(M)OSEXUALITY & THE FEMME FATALE OCT 25</p> <p>Screening: <i>Gilda</i> (Charles Vidor, 1946)</p> <p>Recommended Home Viewings: <i>Crossfire</i>, <i>Laura</i>, <i>Strange Love of Martha Ivers</i></p> <p>Readings: 1) Karen Hollinger “Film Noir, Voice Over and the Femme Fatale” FNR 2) Richard Dyer Resistance through Charisma: Rita Hayworth and Gilda” 3) “Gilda” 100FN</p> <p>Recommended Additional Readings: 1) Gilda Press Pack, BLA</p>
Week 10	October 1-3	<p>NECROPHILIA, AESTHETICS, MODERNITY AND NOIR</p> <p>Screening <i>Laura</i> (Otto Preminger, 1944) ; <i>Kiss Me Deadly</i> (Robert Aldrich, 1955)</p> <p>Dr Thompson’s will not be in the country for her lecture and tutorial this week. Alternative arrangements will be announced</p> <p>Recommended Home Viewings: <i>Portrait of Jennie</i>, <i>Woman in the Window</i>, <i>Scarlet Street</i>, <i>I Wake Up Screaming</i>, <i>Rebecca</i>, <i>Phantom Lady</i></p> <p>Readings: Kente Minturn ‘Peinture Noir: Abstract Expressionism and Film Noir’ BLA; Robert Porfirio “Dark Jazz: Music in Film Noir” BLA</p> <p>Recommended Readings: Robert Corber “Resisting the Lure of the Commodity: Laura and the Spectacle of the Gay Male Body” BLA</p>
Week 11	October 8-10	<p>TICK-TOCK: TEMPORALITY, SPACE AND NOIR.</p> <p><i>The Big Clock</i> (John Farrow, 1948)</p> <p>Recommended Home Viewings: <i>The Stranger</i>, <i>Journey Into Fear</i>, <i>The Third Man</i>, <i>The Killers</i>, <i>Crisis Cross</i></p> <p>Readings: 1) Vivian Sobchack: Lounge Time: Postwar Crises and the Chronotope of Film Noir” BLA 2) Alain Silver And James Ursini “John Farrow: Anonymous Noir” FNR</p>
Week 12	October 15-	<p>EVERYBODY DIES</p> <p>Screening: <i>Strange Love of Martha Ivers</i> (Lewis Milestone, 1946);</p>

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Recommended viewings: *Postman Always Rings Twice*, *They Live By Night*, *Kiss Me Deadly*, *Cross-Cross*, *Night and the City*, *Asphalt Jungle*, *Elevator to the Gallows*, *The Killers*, *Lady From Shanghai*

Readings: Roy Grundmann “Business and the Bitch” BLA

Assignment 4 (Final Essay) due: Monday October 29, 12 pm