

**SYLLABUS**  
**EN 382.01 SHADES OF BLACK: *FILM NOIR* AND POST-WAR AMERICA**  
**Spring, 2009**

**Dr. Mark Osteen Office: HU 242B.**  
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**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

1. Dashiell Hammett, The Maltese Falcon. 1930. Vintage, 1992.
2. Raymond Chandler, Farewell, My Lovely. 1940. Vintage, 1988.
3. Robert Polito, ed. Crime Novels: American Noir of the 1930s & 40s. Library of America, 1997.
4. Vera Caspary. Laura. 1942. Reprint. Feminist Press, 2005.
5. Alain Silver and James Ursini, eds. Film Noir Reader. Limelight, 1996.
6. Foster Hirsch. The Dark Side of the Screen: Film Noir. Revised Edition. Da Capo, 2008.

**REQUIRED FILMS:**

1. Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography. Dirs: Glassman, McCarthy, and Samuels. 1993.
2. The Maltese Falcon. Dir: John Huston. 1940.
3. M. Dir: Fritz Lang. 1931.
4. Scarlet Street. Dir: Fritz Lang. 1944.
5. Murder, My Sweet. Dir: Edward Dmytryk. 1944.
6. Double Indemnity. Dir: Billy Wilder. 1944.
7. Out of the Past. Dir: Jacques Tourneur. 1947.
8. Detour. Dir: Edgar G. Ulmer. 1945.
9. The Killers. Dir: Robert Siodmak. 1946.
10. The Postman Always Rings Twice. Dir: Tay Garnett. 1946.
11. The Blue Dahlia. Dir: George Marshall. 1946.
12. Crossfire. Dir: Edward Dmytryk. 1947.
13. Somewhere in the Night. Dir: Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1946.
14. Act of Violence. Dir: Fred Zinnemann. 1949.
15. Laura. Dir: Otto Preminger. 1944.
16. Mildred Pierce. Dir: Michael Curtiz. 1945.
17. The Blue Gardenia. Dir. Fritz Lang. 1953.
18. They Live by Night. Dir: Nicholas Ray. 1949.
19. Gun Crazy. Dir: Joseph H. Lewis. 1949.
20. T- Men. Dir: Anthony Mann. 1947.
21. Raw Deal. Dir: Anthony Mann, 1948.
22. The Big Combo. Dir: Joseph H. Lewis. 1955.
23. The Big Heat. Dir: Fritz Lang, 1953
24. The Killing. Dir: Stanley Kubrick. 1956.
25. Touch of Evil. Dir: Orson Welles. 1958.
26. Kiss Me Deadly. Dir: Robert Aldrich. 1955.
27. Chinatown. Dir: Roman Polanski. 1974 (Widescreen version only)
28. Odds Against Tomorrow. Dir: Robert Wise. 1959.

29. Devil in a Blue Dress. Dir: Carl Franklin. 1995.

## **REQUIREMENTS:**

### **1. Daily Preparation.**

Each student is responsible for every film and text listed. The reading for this course is relatively light. However, you are required to watch more than twenty-five films, which means that you'll be viewing about two films every week until late April. That will require around four hours per week of attentive viewing and reviewing in the library or at home. If you cannot commit to that much work outside of class, you should drop the course immediately.

Early in the semester I will deliver a few lectures on film techniques. After that, the course will consist primarily of discussion. Your participation counts toward your final grade. Obviously you can't participate unless you're present and punctual. I allow one unexcused absence, no questions asked; after that every absence counts against your grade.

### **2. Film Viewings.**

A. Every student must watch every film for class. All are on reserve in the Media Center at the library. You may watch them at your leisure there, but may not take any of the reserved films out of the library. You may also rent the DVD or tape and watch at home.

B. To avoid a traffic jam in the Media Center, I have arranged for a screening of each film in the library. Please see the list at the end of the syllabus for dates and times.

### **3. Blackboard Posts.**

A. Course announcements and assignments will be posted on the Loyola Blackboard course management system. Click on "Assignments" before each class period to gain access to assignments, questions and links. I'll post study questions in advance for each class meeting. You should read and think about these before posting.

B. Click on "Discussion Board" to post your contributions and to respond to ongoing class discussions. We will divide the class in half; each half is responsible for at least one film per week. Every student must post a considered response to his/her assigned film each week. These should be between three and five paragraphs long. Each student must also post each week at least two responses to the film he/she is not discussing in a larger post; these responses may be short, but should be more substantial than "Sweet post, Tiff. You are brilliant. Can we hook up later?"

**4. Presentation.** Each student will give, with a partner, an oral presentation in class. We will sign up for presentation dates during the second or third class meeting.

a. Presentations should be no more than 20 minutes long. I will enforce the time limit, so please time your presentation in advance.

b. Each student should meet with me in advance to work out a topic.

c. The presentation must use film clips, but you shouldn't try to show more than two or three. The scenes are part of your 20 minutes.

d. Every student in the class will evaluate half of the other presentations by completing a

presentation evaluation form, which I'll hand out in class. Each student will be graded at the end of the semester on the helpfulness and accuracy of his or her evaluations; this grade will comprise part of your participation grade.

e. This presentation will lead to your research paper, which is ***due no more than two weeks after your presentation.***

**5. Research Paper.** Your research paper should be between 8 and 12 pages long.

a. This paper must use MLA style (i.e., a Works Cited page and parenthetical citations). It must employ at least 4 secondary sources other than the films. You should also use the MLA bibliography to find reputable, peer-reviewed scholarly sources. You may use other Internet sources, but they don't count as one of your four unless I approve them in advance. Ideally, your paper should build upon the research you undertook for your presentation, but you may explore a related topic instead.

b. The paper should be comparative; a close reading of a single film is not recommended. You might examine the work of a single director or cinematographer; investigate a theme or character that recurs in several films; write about a subgenre (e.g, the pseudo-documentary; the “woman’s *noir* picture”).

c. I have placed several books on film noir on reserve at the Loyola Notre Dame library. Please *use them for your research!*

d. All research papers **must** be submitted to me electronically as an e-mail attachment, as well as in hard copy. The English department subscribes to turnitin.com, a search engine designed to detect plagiarized work. I will therefore check any suspicious paper for plagiarism.

e. **Late papers are penalized one-third of a letter grade per day late**, beginning five minutes after class on the day it is due. If you need an extension, **see me in advance to make arrangements.**

**6. Exams:** There will be two short exams and a final exam.

**7. Ratios.** Your final grade is determined according to the following ratios:

Blackboard posts and daily participation:	25%
Short Exams:	20%
Presentation and Paper:	30%
Final Exam:	25%

### **DISABILITIES NOTICE**

If you have a letter from Disability Support Services (DSS) indicating that you have a disability requiring academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations that you might need in this class. Then schedule a meeting with me during office hours. If you need academic accommodations due to a disability and have not registered with DSS, please contact the Disability Support Services Office at (410) 617-2062.

### **HONOR CODE NOTICE: EVERYBODY READ THIS!**

This course is covered by the Loyola College Honor Code. All students guilty of plagiarizing or cheating on ANY assignment will fail the course, regardless of their grades on other assignments or activities.

The English department regards plagiarism and other forms of cheating as the antithesis of scholarship, learning, collegiality, and responsible citizenship. The department defines plagiarism as any unacknowledged use of another's words or ideas. This definition applies to non-print media, including (especially!) the Internet, as well as to books, magazines, journals, newspapers and other print media.

It is the student's responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid it in all assignments. Students should familiarize themselves with the Loyola Undergraduate Catalogue's statement on "Intellectual Honesty," and with the section "Avoiding Plagiarism" (pp. 344-47, R3-c) in Diana Hacker's A Writer's Reference, the Loyola grammar and style handbook. See also the statement in the Loyola College Guide in that book, LC-43. Anyone having questions or uncertainties about plagiarism should consult with the instructor before submitting any assignment. When in doubt, err on the side of safety! Neither ignorance of the definition of plagiarism nor the lack of intention to deceive constitutes an acceptable defense in matters of scholarly dishonesty.

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### **EN 382.01 SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **I. LITERARY AND CRITICAL BACKGROUNDS**

January 13: Introduction to the course. Watch "Film Noir" segment of *American Cinema* in class.

January 15: Readings: Hirsch, Dark Side of the Screen, 1-51. Hammett, The Maltese Falcon, through Chapter 13. Film: Visions of Light, which is broadcast on Loyola Channel 52, at 7:30 pm on January 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.

January 20: *Film Techniques Lecture*. Readings: The Maltese Falcon, to end; Borde and Chaumeton (Film Noir Reader 17-25), and Schrader (FNR 53-63). Film: The Maltese Falcon.

#### **II. CINEMATIC BACKGROUND: FRITZ LANG AND GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM**

January 22: Reading: Hirsch, Chapter Three (53-69). Films: M; Scarlet Street.

### III. HARD-BOILED MEN AND FEMMES FATALES

January 27: *Further Film Techniques*. Reading: Chandler, Farewell, My Lovely.

January 29: Readings: Place and Peterson, “Some Visual Motifs” (FNR 64-76); Hirsch, Chapter Four (71-111). Film: Murder, My Sweet. Presentation.

**February 2: Extra Credit Event: Screening of Black Diamonds, with talk by filmmaker Catherine Pancake. Library Auditorium, 6 pm.**

February 3: Readings: Hirsch, Chapter Seven. Film: Double Indemnity. Presentation.

February 5: Film: Out of the Past. **First Exam.**

### IV. NO WAY OUT

February 10: Readings: Porfirio, “No Way Out” (FNR, 77-94); Hollinger, “Voice-over and the Femme Fatale” (FNR 243-59). Film: Detour.

February 12: Reading: Porfirio, “The Killers” (FNR 177-87); Hemingway, “The Killers” (handout). Film: The Killers. Presentation.

February 17: The Postman Always Rings Twice, in Crime Novels. Film: Postman. Presentation.

### V. VET NOIR

February 19: Films: The Blue Dahlia; Crossfire.

February 24: Films: Crossfire; Somewhere in the Night.

February 26: Film: Act of Violence. **Second Exam.**

### March 2-9: Spring Break

### VI. FEMMES NOT FATALE: THE WOMAN’S NOIR

March 10: Reading: Caspary, Laura. Film: Laura. Presentation.

March 12: Reading: Hollinger, “*Film Noir*, Voice-Over” in FNR (243-59). Films: Mildred

Pierce; The Blue Gardenia.

## **VII. AMOUR FOU: LOVERS ON THE RUN**

March 17: Reading: Anderson, Thieves Like Us, in Crime Novels.

March 19: Readings: Silver and Brookover, “What Is This Thing Called Noir?” (FNR 261-73).  
Films: They Live By Night; Gun Crazy.

## **VIII. DARK DOUBLES AND CRIMINAL COPS**

March 24: Readings: Smith, “Mann in the Dark” (FNR 189-202). Films: T-Men, Raw Deal.

March 26: Film: The Big Combo. Presentation.

March 31: Film: The Big Heat. Presentation.

## **IX. BAROQUE STYLISTICS**

April 2: Film: The Killing. Presentation.

April 7: Films: Touch of Evil (two versions). Presentation.

**April 9: No Class: Easter Holiday**

## **X. “BETTER OFF NOT KNOWING”: THE HARD-BOILED DETECTIVE REVISITED**

April 14: Readings: Hirsch, Chapter Eight; Silver, “Kiss Me Deadly” (FNR 209-36). Film: Kiss Me Deadly. Presentation.

April 16: Film: Chinatown. Presentation.

## **XI. NOIR NOIR**

April 21: Film: Odds Against Tomorrow. Presentation.

April 23: Reading: Devil in a Blue Dress. Film: Devil in a Blue Dress. Review.

**Screening Dates: EN 382  
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**All films begin at 7 pm in the Library Auditorium except where otherwise noted.**

Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography. Dirs: Glassman, McCarthy, and Samuels. 1993.  
Broadcast on Loyola Cable Channel 52 at 7:30 pm, January 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.

Jan. 18: The Maltese Falcon.

Jan. 20: M.

Jan. 21: Scarlet Street.

Jan. 27: Murder, My Sweet.

Feb. 1: Double Indemnity.

Feb. 3: Out of the Past. **Screening Room**

Feb. 8: Detour.

Feb. 10: The Killers. **Screening Room**.

Feb. 15: The Postman Always Rings Twice

Feb 17: The Blue Dahlia 7-9 **Screening Room**

Feb 18: Crossfire 6-7:30 **Screening Room**

Feb 22: Somewhere in the Night

Feb 24: Act of Violence

March 8: Laura

March 10: Mildred Pierce

March 11: The Blue Gardenia 7-8:30 **Screening Room**

March 17: They Live by Night **Screening Room**

March 18: Gun Crazy **Screening Room**

March 22: T-Men

March 23: Raw Deal 7-9 **Screening Room**

March 25: The Big Combo

March 29: The Big Heat

March 31: The Killing 7-8:30 **Screening Room**

April 5: Touch of Evil (original release version)

April 6: Touch of Evil (re-edited Version)

April 13: Kiss Me Deadly

April 14: Chinatown (wide screen version)

April 19: Odds Against Tomorrow

April 21: Devil in a Blue Dress