

**EMF 476 – Section 101: Special Topics: Independent Filmmakers**  
FALL 2010 MONDAYS 5p-8p  
Media Center Room 108

**Dr. Dave Reiss**  
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**OFFICE HOURS:**  
**TUE 12:30-2P DROP IN**  
**WED 12:30-2P BY APPOINTMENT**  
**THU 12:30-2P DROP IN**  
**ALL OTHER TIMES BY APPOINTMENT**

Class Website: Blackboard – will announce in class.

**CLASS POLICIES**

No EATING or DRINKING is permitted at ANY time in the EMF classroom. The ONLY exception is a beverage bottle you can CLOSE and SEAL, and use occasionally.

**ATTENDANCE:**

This class meets ONCE a week for 15 weeks and attendance is mandatory. This is a vigorous film screenings, in-class assignments and discussions, so you will need to be sure you make it to every class.

Each unexcused absence will result a one full grade lowering of the final grade. More than three unexcused absences will result in a failed grade in the course. A written note from qualified individuals is required for absences resulting from illness, family emergency, etc. The instructor may allow absences in certain situations, but only if the student has talked with the instructor beforehand. For Emergencies the instructor can be notified via cell phone. The responsibility of making up for missed classes will be solely on the student.

**LATENESS:**

Since most of the class is commuting – I ask EACH of you to TEXT or CALL my cell phone – 301-806-2843 W/ Name in text, if you are going to be late. This is the ONLY acceptable way of coming into class late. PLEASE do everything you can – like leaving early to anticipate parking, and get here ON TIME – as we'll be covering key topics at the start of class.

Just as if you were working on JOB where you are PAID, chronic or frequent lateness is not an option. More than three late unannounced arrivals may result in lowering of final grade.

LATE WORK: The grade will be lowered by half point for each day after the due date.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

LAPTOPS and CELL PHONES are NOT Permitted to be used at ANY time in my class. PERIOD. If you use your laptop for NOTE TAKING, you'll need to instead WRITE notes into a SMALL Notebook EVERYONE needs to be FOCUSED on the FRONT of the class. Recent research findings indicate that some college students who multitask during class perform at the same level as those who NEVER came to the class, and my doctoral research <http://www.cjlt.ca/index.php/cjlt/article/view/164/154> has shown LEARNING requires a SINGULAR FOCUS for remembering information. We'll be screening films in class and the laptops screens are a distraction for OTHER students.

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

Students are expected to complete assigned exercises before class on the due dates listed in syllabus or as announced in class.

## **PARTICIPATION:**

Students are expected to participate in class critiques, discussions and exercises with undivided attention.

## **DISABILITY POLICY**

This class adheres the Towson University Disabilities Policy. If you have a documented disability, please see me right away after the first class privately, so we discuss how to best accommodate your specific needs.

## **PLAGARISM**

The EMF department has a published statement on Plagiarism, and Towson University has statements on both Academic Dishonesty and Student Academic Integrity, all of which pertains to your work in this course. ALL WORK must be newly created for THIS COURSE.

## **CIVILITY CODE**

All EMF students, staff, and faculty are committed to collegial and academic citizenship demonstrating high standards of humane, ethical, professional, and civil behavior in all interactions.

EMF places a priority on learning. We value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, thereby fostering a community of mutual respect. Students have the right to a learning environment free of disruptive behaviors. Faculty have the right to define appropriate behavioral expectations in the classroom and expect students to abide by them. Faculty have the responsibility to manage and address classroom disruption. Staff have the right and responsibility to define appropriate behaviors necessary to conduct any university activity free of disruption or obstruction.

The use offensive, threatening or abusive language, writing, or behavior will not be tolerated and can lead to academic dismissal. Further information about civility can be found in Appendix F of the university catalog.

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **SYLLABUS:**

Everything covered in this document.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Each week there will be WRITTEN assignments reflecting and analyzing the film presentations.

### **SCHEDULE**

Managing your schedule is critical for this course, and anticipating other course conflicting projects due dates.

### **ADVISING**

As stated in the Towson University catalog, it is YOUR responsibility to become familiar with the EMF program/track and monitor progress towards graduation - meaning YOU are ultimately responsible for completing the published degree requirements. An EMF faculty advisor will assist you every semester during SIX ADVISING WEEKS. Do not WAIT till the last weeks or days to meet with your advisor - PLEASE GO EARLY.

## **GRADING POLICY**

The grade of A is awarded for excellence. An A student turns in all work on time with consistently excellent standards of quality, creativity, and original thinking. This person is fully engaged in the content of the class and performs exceptionally in presentations and critiques. The student has mastered all of the basic and advanced content of the course.

The grade of B+ is awarded for VERY Good Work: students who have consistently completed all work on time and in a high quality manner. The work shows creative thinking and care in presentation. The student has mastered all of the basic and most of advanced content of the course.

The grade of B is awarded for Good Work: students who have consistently completed most work on time and in a high quality manner. The work shows some creative thinking, and care in presentation. The student has mastered all of the basic and some of advanced content of the course.

The grade of C is earned when most class work is turned in and the student has participated in to some extent. The student has mastered all of the basic and none of advanced content of the course.

The grade of D or F is given for work that is incomplete, late, and/or does not demonstrate mastery of the basic material of the course. This grade is below average or failing work in the class.

**COURSE EVALUATION**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Grade Value</u>
Weekly Online Discussion	10%
Essays (5 X 10% each)	50%
Final Paper	30%
Attendance & Class Participation	10%

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COURSE Assignments:

**5 (five) X 500 Two-Page Essays (1 DUE every 3 weeks.)**

You will select Film screened in class, and write a 2-3 page analysis:

Filmmaker's Biography

Film's Year Cultural references

Technique: 5 EXAMPLES about a specific SCENE or SHOT.

**FINAL Paper: 2000 word 5-7 pages**

A Filmmaker or Director NOT screened & write a 5-7 page in-depth analysis:

Filmmaker's Biography

Film's Year Cultural references

Technique: 5 EXAMPLES about a specific SCENE or SHOT.

**All Essays will be graded with the following percentages:**

20% -- Director

40% -- Technique

20% -- Cultural Aspects

20% -- mechanics (spelling, grammar, clarity, cohesion)

**All students are required to participate on Black Board WEEKLY:**

1. Reading Assignments
2. Themed Threaded Discussion
3. Film Clips and other media

**Class Meetings:** Each week will consist of an Introduction to the film and filmmaker, the feature film screening, followed by a discussion on the Director's Films, Genre & Techniques, and Cultural Aspects of film's year.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

*Please Note: The following assignment calendar is the framework for all the projects and content that will be covered. As the semester progresses, I may change or adjust the nature of some screenings, assignments and deadlines.*

### **Week 1 – September 6:**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: The Graduate - Mike Nichols
3. Film Discussion

### **Week 2 – September 13**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: A Hard Days Night - Richard Lester
3. Film Discussion

### **Week 3 – September 20**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: Closely Watched Trains - Jirí Menzel
3. Film Discussion

*REVIEW PAPER #1 DUE*

### **Week 4 – September 27**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: The Wild Bunch - Sam Peckinpah
3. Film Discussion

### **Week 5 – October 4**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: 2001: A Space Odyssey - Stanley Kubrick
3. Film Discussion

### **Week 6 – October 11**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: Easy Rider - Dennis Hopper
3. Film Discussion

*REVIEW PAPER #2 DUE*

### **Week 7 – October 18**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: Local Hero - Bill Forsyth
3. Film Discussion

**Week 8 – October 25**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: Sex Lies & Videotape - Steven Soderbergh
3. Film Discussion

**Week 9 – November 1**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: Raising Arizona- Joel and Ethan Coen
3. Film Discussion

*REVIEW PAPER #3 DUE*

**Week 10 – November 8**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: Into The Wild – Sean Penn
3. Film Discussion

**Week 11 – November 15**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: Drugstore Cowboy - Gus Van Sant
3. Film Discussion

**Week 12 – November 22**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

Fall Film Series Night – VB 204 Hall at 7PM – NO Class Meeting at 5pm.

Good Will Hunting - Gus Van Sant

*REVIEW PAPER #4 DUE*

**Week 13 – Nov 17**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: Finding Forrester - Gus Van Sant
3. Film Discussion

**Week 14 – November 29**

*READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD*

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: The Milagro Beanfield War - Robert Redford
3. Film Discussion

*REVIEW PAPER #5 DUE*

## **Week 15 – December 6**

### **READING & Threaded Discussion Assignment ON BLACKBOARD**

1. Film Introduction
2. Film Screening: Jeremiah Johnson, Sydney Pollack
3. Film Discussion

## **Week 16 – EXAMS**

### **FINAL PAPER DUE December 15<sup>th</sup>.**

Final Paper: You will select a film NOT screened in class, and write a 5-7 page in-depth analysis about the filmmaker and film, modeled after the instructor's presentations and analysis throughout the semester.

### **Course Bibliography:**

Ascher Steven. & Pincus E. (1999) *The Filmmaker's Handbook : A Comprehensive Guide for the Digital Age, Completely Revised and Updated*. Plume.

Tzioumakis, Yannis. (2006) *American Independent Cinema: An Introduction*. Rutgers University Press.

Musburger, R. (2005) *Single-Camera Video Production*. Focal Press.

Fabe, M. (2004) *Closely Watched Films: An Introduction to the Art of Narrative Film Technique*. University of California Press.

Rabiger, Michael. *Directing the Documentary 2nd ed.*, Focal Press, 1992.

Barry, A. M. S. (1997). *Visual intelligence: Perception, image and manipulation in visual communication*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Dixon, N. (1981). *Preconscious processing*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Halloran, J. D. (1970). *The effects of television*. London: Panther Books.

Krugman, H. (1970). *Electroencephalographic aspects of low involvement: Implications for the McLuhan hypothesis*. Cambridge, MA: Marketing Science Institute.

Mayer, R. E., & Anderson, R. B. (1991). *Animations need narrations: An experimental test of a dual coding hypothesis*. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83(4), 484-490.

Mayer, R. E. (2001). *Multi-media learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press