



THE LABOUR STUDIES PROGRAM (LBST)

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

LBST 330 D200: Special Topics in Labour Studies: Studying Labour through Film Fall 2015

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Isitt

Class: Tuesday 11:30am - 2:20pm WMC 2200

Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00 am - 11:00 am or by appointment

Office: AQ 6219

Email Address: bisitt@sfu.ca

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A rich and diverse tapestry of films illuminates distinct aspects of the working-class experience — from the Russian silent film *Strike* (1925), to American classics such as *The Salt of the Earth* (1954) and *Norma Rae* (1979), to home-grown Canadian films such as *Margaret's Museum* (1995) and the recent British movie *Pride* (2014). This course, which is organized around weekly screenings and discussions, introduces students to the fascinating world of labour in film and the ways in which class has been depicted cinematically.

2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will engage ideas and approaches in film theory; develop the ability to critically evaluate films through class analysis and other critical tools; and develop an appreciation of the diverse ways in which filmmakers have engaged themes including the work process, class conflict, gender, race, sexuality, and globalization.

3a) REQUIRED READING:

Weekly Discussion Readings as indicated in this course outline.

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING STRUCTURE:

Participation	20%	All Term
Film Critique #1	10%	September 29
Film Critique #2	10%	October 27
Research Essay	35%	November 17
Final Take-Home Exam	25%	December 9

Participation

I expect you to attend each scheduled class. Participation means active listening and engagement, completing assigned readings in advance of each week's meeting, and critically engaging the films and readings so that you are able to contribute meaningfully to discussions.

Film Critique #1 Due by Email: September 29

You will write a 3-page review critically evaluating one of the films shown in September. Your review should apply methodology discussed in the course readings, examining how the film engages one or several aspects of the working-class experience.

Film Critique #2 Due by Email: October 27

You will write a 3-page review critically evaluating one of the films shown in October. Your review should apply methodology discussed in the course readings examining how the film engages one or several aspects of the working-class experience.

Research Essay Select Topic by: September 22
Due by Email: November 17

You will write an original research essay, 12-15 pages long, evaluating a feature-length film that illuminates one or several aspects relating to the working-class experience. You can choose the extent to which your essay focuses on the wider context within which the film was produced (including any controversy relating to its production or distribution) or whether your essay focuses on the content within the film itself, including the ways in which the filmmaker and screenwriter engage themes, events, and concepts in labour studies. Submit your Research Essay by email **no later than Tuesday, November 17**.

Take-Home Exam Pick up in class: December 1
Due by Email: December 9

The take-home exam will combine short-answer and essay questions, drawing from the films, readings, and discussion in class. Answers will be evaluated based on your command of course material and themes and the extent to which you draw from course materials. Wikipedia and other online sources are not appropriate sources for exam answers, and evidence of their use will result in a mark of zero. The instructor is very familiar with Wikipedia entries relating to labour in film. To avoid the appearance of plagiarism, please confine information in take-home exam answers to materials used in class. Submit your Take-Home Exam by email **no later than Wednesday, December 9 at 12 Noon**.

5. PREREQUISITES:

LBST 101 and LBST 301 are recommended.

6. COURSE OUTLINE:

September 8 Week 1: Introduction

Screening: Excerpt from *Strike* (1925)

September 15 Week 2: Approaches to Film Theory and Labour Studies

Readings: C. Jarvie, "Seeing Through Movies," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 8 (December 1978), pp. 374-397.

Robert Rosenstone, "The Historical Film: Looking at the Past in a Postliterate Age," in *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 45-79.

Screening: *Native Land* (1942)

September 22 Week 3: The Canadian Worker in Film

Reading: David Frank, "Short Takes: The Canadian Worker on Film," *Labour/Le Travail*, 46 (Fall 2000), pp. 417-37.

Excerpts from Malek Khouri and Darrell Varga, eds. *Working on Screen: Representations of the Working Class in Canadian Cinema* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

Screening: *Margaret's Museum* (1995)

* Submit your Essay Topic in a short email before the start of class *
--

September 29 Week 4: Cold War Hollywood

Reading: James J. Lorence, "The Suppression of Salt of the Earth in Midwest America," *Film History*, 10 (1998): 346-358.

Document: "Red Movie in Making," *Congressional Record*, 99 (24 February 1953): 1371. (Rep. Donald Jackson speech)

Screening: *Salt of the Earth* (1954)

* Submit your Film Critique #1 by email before the start of class *

October 6 Week 5: Women, Gender, and the Labour Movement

Reading: Christine Gledhill, "Image and Voice: Approaches to Marxist

Feminist Criticism,” in Diane Carson et al eds, *Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

- Screening: *Norma Rae* (1979)
- October 13 Week 6: Collective Bargaining on Film
- Reading: Martha Norby Fraundorf, “Collective Bargaining Films: A Critical Survey,” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 44, no. 1 (Oct. 1990), pp. 144-151.
- Screening: *Final Offer* (1985)
- October 20 Week 7: Globalization, Deindustrialization, and the “Rustbelt”
- Reading: Miles Orvell, “Documentary Film and the Power of Interrogation: American Dream & Roger and Me,” *Film Quarterly*, 48 (Winter 1994): pp. 10-18.
- Screening: *Roger & Me* (1989)
- October 27 Week 8: Working-Class Culture and the New Deal
- Reading: Joseph Gustaitis, “The Cradle that Rocked America,” *American History*, (February 2000): 16-22.
- Screening: *Cradle Will Rock* (1999)

* Submit your Film Critique #2 by email before the start of class *

- November 3 Week 9: Labour, LGBTQ and Human Rights
- Reading: Toronto and York Region Labour Council, *Labour Pride: What Have Our Unions Done for Us?* (2014).
- Screening: *Pride* (2014)
- All Out! Dancing in Doulais* (c. 2011)
- November 10 Week 10: Services Sector & Migrant Workers in the 21st Century
- Reading: Preston Rudy, “‘Justice for Janitors,’ not ‘Compensation for Custodians’: The Political Context and Organizing in San Jose and Sacramento,” in Ruth Milkman and Kim Voss, eds., *Rebuilding Labor: Organizing and Organizers in the*

New Union Movement (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 133-149.

Screening: *Bread & Roses* (2000)

November 17 Week 11: The 'Precariat,' Globalization & the New Working Class

Reading: Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011) (Introduction)

Screening: *The Hidden Face of Globalization* (2003)

* Submit your Research Essay by email before the start of class *

November 24 Week 12: Workers' Control and Self-Management on Film

Reading: Tom Zaniello, *The Cinema of Globalization: A Guide to Films about the New Economic Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007) (Introduction)

Screening: *The Take* (2004)

December 1 Week 13: Course Review

* Pick up Take-Home Exam in class *

* Submit your TAKE-HOME EXAM by email no later than Wednesday, Dec. 9 @ 12 Noon *
* Late assignments will not be accepted *

All students are expected to read SFU's policies concerning **academic honesty and student conduct** (S 10.01 - S10.04). The policies can be read at this website: www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student.html

=====

Labour Studies Undergraduate Grading System:

A+ 95 - 100	B+ 80 - 84	C+ 65 - 69
A 90 - 94	B 75 - 79	C 60 - 64
A- 85 - 89	B- 70 - 74	C- 55 - 59
D 50 - 54	F 0 - 49	N student did not complete