

SOCI 390: Special Topics in Sociology - Cinema and Society, Themes in Sociological Imagination

Summer 2021, Special Topics in Sociology - 32738 - SOCI 390 - A01

Synchronous time: Wed 4:30-6:50 PM, May 10-June 25, 2021

This is a blended online synchronous and asynchronous course!

Instructor: Dr. Peyman Vahabzadeh

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00-4:00 PM via Zoom

We acknowledge that we meet one another and hold our learning experience on the ancestral land of Lekwungen Peoples—the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples. University of Victoria operates on the unceded territory of the Coast and Strait Salish people.

Course Description:

Since its inception as an industry of popular culture in the early 20th century, cinema has dramatically changed human approach to storytelling and imagination. Visual representation, which is at heart of cinematic expression, has not only influenced our cultural learning, it has produced a global language shared across cultural differences.

This course uses cinematic expression as way of understanding selected social issues and the specific approaches to our societal dilemmas. The seven feature-length movies selected for this course speak to specific themes in sociological imagination. Alongside each film, we will read *key writings in social theory* for the purpose of our sociological analyses pertaining to the films we watch. Please note that this course is analytical and theoretical.

Content Alert:

As with any artistic expression, these films may entail violence, sexuality, nudity, course language, discriminatory slur, or expressions contrary to one's beliefs. I trust that as adults, each one of us can judge for ourselves whether this course is appropriate to take. You will be required to use film contents for the purpose of sociological analysis in your assignments.

Course Outcomes/Objectives:

The course will provide content analysis, visual literacy, and theoretical analysis. The readings are important in this course. We will learn about the way fiction is reality and reality is fictional. The expectation is that the assignments reflect how the story told in a film is sociologically significant through analysis and discussion. While this is a "fun" course, it pursues its objectives with rigour and is demanding.

Lectures Alert:

Please note that this course will not offer Power Point presentation. The live lectures will also be audio recorded and posted on Brightspace after each class.

Instructions for Office Hours and Live Contact with Instructor:

Live Zoom office hours will be held every Tuesday between 3:00 and 4:00 between May 10 and June 25. This is how it works.

1. Prior to meeting, the instructor will send a calendar invitation to all students. This invitation will contain a link to a Zoom session.
2. At the time of office hours, the students who wish to speak to the instructor will click on the link.
3. Students may have to wait to be admitted to the meeting because the instructor will admit students on first-come-first-serve basis.

It is expected that this system will work smoothly, but we should also be aware that some glitches and adjustments at the end are to be expected.

The Zoom link will be posted on Brightspace.

Course Pre/Co-requisites:

N/A

Course Evaluation:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. 7 <u>weekly</u> paragraph-long reflections on readings | 15% |
| 2. Zoom class attendance | 5% |
| 3. Critical Film Analysis 1 (3 pages) due May 30 before 11:55 PM | 20% |
| 4. Critical Film Analysis 2 (4 pages) due June 14 before 11:55 PM | 30% |
| 5. Critical Film Analysis 3 (4 pages) due June 28 before 11:55 PM | 30% |

See the instructions about the exams and term paper below.

NOTE: the above dates are non-negotiable!

NOTE: Student grades for assignments will not be posted on Brightspace but recorded only on instructor's spreadsheet. Students will receive marked assignments so they can keep track of their mark.

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Required Readings and Films:

Scholarly articles will be uploaded to Brightspace. It is the student's responsibility to acquire them. For the detailed list of readings and the films that are required for this course, please see the Reading List below.

How to Watch the Films:

These films are licenced to UVic and are available through UVic library. The links are provided below. You will need to log in to UVic library to watch these films. To ensure access, I suggest these steps:

1. Assuming you connect from home, use UVic VPN. If you're unfamiliar with it, download it from here and install it on your computer.
<https://www.uvic.ca/systems/services/internettelephone/remotearchive/>
2. Login to UVic.
3. Click on the movie links.

Note: Assigned films must be watched before our Wednesday class of each week.

Note: some of these films are also available on YouTube and Netflix.

Sociology 390	Summer 2021
Cinema and Society, Themes in Sociological Imagination	
READING LIST	

Week 1 (May 10-16; May 12 class): Labour, Class, Revolutionary Action

Reading:

Karl Marx, "Estranged Labour," in Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978). 70-81.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," "Chapter 1: Bourgeois and Proletarians." Available at:

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm#007>

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Proletarians and Communists." Available at:

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm>

Watch: *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940, dir. John Ford, 20th Century Fox, USA). Available at:

<https://media3.criterionpic.com/htbin/wwform/006?T=F00326> (if you use UVic VPN)

or:

https://ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/login?url=https://media3.criterionpic.com/htbin/wwform/006/wwk770?kw=*%&md=781&submit=1 (if you're not using UVic VPN; this link will take you to library's EZProxy and then to the film).

Week 2 (May 17-23; May 19 class): Social Memory

Reading: Paul Connerton, "Social Memory," in *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). 6-40.

Watch: *Roshomon* (1950, dir. Akira Kurasawa, Daiei Eiga, Japan). Available at:
<https://uvic.kanopy.com/video/rashomon>

Week 3 (May 24-30; May 26 class): Colonialism, Decolonization, Violence

Reading:
Frantz Fanon, "On Violence." In *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004). 1-62.

Watch: *The Battle of Algiers* (1966, dir. Gillo Pontecorvo, Cabash Film, Italy-Algeria). Available at:
<https://uvic.kanopy.com/video/battle-algiers-0>

NOTE – Critical Film Analysis 1 – on the theme from Week 1 (labour/class), Week 2 (memory), or Week 3 (colonialism).
Due May 30, before 11:55 PM to be uploaded to the Brightspace

Week 4 (May 31-June 6; June 2 class): Rights and Resistance

Reading: Arendt "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man," in *Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1973). 267-302.

Watch: *État de Siège* (1972, dir. Costa-Gavras, Cinema 5, France). Available at:
<https://webapp.library.uvic.ca/videos/view.php?vfn=Etat-de-Siege.mp4>

Week 5 (June 7-13; June 9 class): Repression and Life

Readings:

Giorgio Agamben, "The Paradox of Sovereignty." In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998). 15-29.

Giorgio Agamben, "Homo Sacer," "The Politicization of Life" Ambivalence of the Sacred," and "Sacred Life." In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998). 71-74.

Giorgio Agamben, "The Politicization of Life." In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998). 119-125.

Giorgio Agamben, "Life That Does Not Deserve to Live." In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998). 136-143.

Watch: *Camp X-Ray* (2014, dir. Peter Sattler, GNK Productions, USA). Available at:
The link to this item through UVic Library is not available yet. If it becomes available

by Week 5, I will post it to Brightspace. Otherwise, it is student responsibility to obtain it. It is available on Netflix (subscription) and Amazon Video (\$3.99 rent).

NOTE – Critical Film Analysis 2 – on the theme from Week 4 (rights/resistance) or Week 5 (repression and life).

Due June 14, before 11:55 PM to be uploaded to the Brightspace

Week 6 (June 14-20; June 16 class): Ideology

Reading:

Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus." In *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971). 121–176.

Watch: *They Live* (1988, dir. John Carpenter, Universal Pictures, USA).

<https://webapp.library.uvic.ca/videos/view.php?vfn=They-Live.mp4>

Week 7 (June 21-25; June 23 class): Intersectionality

Reading:

Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* Vol. 1989, No. 1. 139-167.

Available at: <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>

Watch: *Roma* (2018, dir. Alfonso Cuarón, Espectáculos Fílmicos El, Mexico).

<https://webapp.library.uvic.ca/videos/view.php?vfn=Roma.mp4>

NOTE – Critical Film Analysis 3 – on the theme from Week 6 (ideology) or Week 7 (intersectionality).

Due June 28, before 11:55 PM to be uploaded to the Brightspace

The Assignments:

1. Participation

Participation is worth 15% and is graded based on weekly written paragraph-long reflections on every week's readings (not films) that are uploaded to Brightspace. There will be 7 of these reflections, and they are to be uploaded within the designated week (from Monday to Sunday of the week). Each forum will become unavailable after the deadline (Sunday night of each week). Each uploaded reflection post on the forum is worth 2%. If you post all 7 posts, you will receive 15% for participation (instead of 14%).

2. Attendance

The students are required to attend each live Zoom class for its entire duration. The grade for attending all 7 classes is 5%. Attendance will be taken during the class randomly and for each class missed 1% will be deducted.

Note: attendance grade will be calculated at the end of the term.

3. The Three Critical Film Analyses

As indicated above, you will have to submit 3 Critical Film Analyses for this course. The first one is slightly shorter than the other two (3 pages for CFA-1 worth 20%, 4 pages for CFA-2 and CFA-3 worth 30% each).

Attend to These:

1. Your Critical Film Analyses should be within the page limits mentioned above plus a title page and Reference page.
2. All sources used or consulted must be cited properly. Any information you bring in your paper that is not your own, in any form presented (direct quote or paraphrase), must be cited. The citation for specific information must include a page number (where applicable).
3. The paper must be written using academic language. The submitted paper must be edited and readable.
4. The citation format is ASA. Please visit:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/asa_style/in_text_citation_references.html

Content:

Critical Film Analyses papers are meant to offer a critical and analytical engagement with the film. You will need to apply theory to the film and offer an interpretation of the film that reveals the social issue or theme that you wish to raise in relation to the topic of the week. Proceed as follows.

Critical Film Analysis 1 – write on a theme from Week 1 (labour/class) or Week 2 (memory) or Week 3 (colonialism). 3 pages.

Critical Film Analysis 2 – write on a theme from Week 4 (labour/class) or Week 5 (rights and resistance). 4 pages.

Critical Film Analysis 3 – write on the theme from Week 6 (ideology) or Week 7 (intersectionality). 4 pages.

You must apply theory to analyze the film or some aspect of it. Do make references both the film and the required reading and cite them both properly. Offer a sociological and theoretical review of the film. You are welcome to use outside sources if you wish. This an exercise in application of theory to the case study.

Grading:

1. An **'A'** paper contains an outstanding analysis—one that reports creative application of theory to the film and offers interpretations that are not usually offered by conventional wisdom. It offers precise elaboration of the issue in question; it is insightful and engaged, and it brings critical engagement to the theme it explores.
2. A **'B'** paper contains a good analytical engagement with the topic—one that offers a plausible interpretation of the film. The paper is written clearly and brings the themes to light. It contains critical engagements that are acceptable while needing elaboration.
3. A **'C'** paper contains a clear topic while making references to the themes of the film and readings in such a manner that it still needs clarification and development. It offers a glimpse of what the issue is, while it may not contain a critical engagement, but its critique still needs further development.

Legal Blurb:

Examination and Assignment Policy

As per university policy, absence is only permitted in cases of illness, accident, family affliction, or religious obligations. Missing an exam for other reasons will result in an "F." Students are responsible for providing official documentation to justify their absence, e.g. a doctor's note. In cases of justified absences, the student has the right to request a make-up exam. Please note that exams will not be rescheduled to accommodate students' personal circumstances, including travelling plans. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Grading

In accordance with Senate Regulations, grading on the curve is not permitted. The grades students receive in this course reflect their performance in relation to specified academic expectations. Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments (in case of loss) and should retain all their marked assignments in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standings. Students have the right to view their marked examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. All exams remain the property of the University of Victoria.

Official Grading Standards of University of Victoria is available for your viewing at:

<https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-05/undergrad/info/regulations/grading.html>

Attendance

As per university policy, attendance to all classes is mandatory. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness, accident or family affliction should report to the instructor as soon as possible. Absences that cannot be justified in accordance with university policies will be subject to penalty at the discretion of the instructor. If you are absent for reasons other than those specified under university policies, then it is not the responsibility of the instructor or the TA to help you catch up with missed lecture material.

Academic Integrity

The Department of Sociology fully and rigorously enforces the Senate Policy on Academic integrity. It is of utmost importance that students who do their work honestly be protected from those who do not. Because this policy is in place to ensure that students carry out and benefit from the learning activities assigned in each course, it is expected that students will cooperate in its implementation. Students caught cheating in the course will be expelled and reported to the Chair of the Department of Sociology and the Dean of Social Sciences for disciplinary action.

Accessibility Statement

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the [Centre for Accessible Learning \(CAL\)](#) as soon as possible. CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Students must note the statement on “Plagiarism” in the UVic Calendar, and all regulations under the “Policy on Academic Integrity.” Quotes and citations must be used for any material longer than 5 words in succession that is not the student’s original work.

Harassment

The Department of Sociology supports the University’s policies on harassment, and is committed to ensuring that all students, staff, and faculty are able to exercise fully their rights to participate in activities at the University without fear of harassment.

Classroom Etiquette

Distractions can easily hinder the difficult process of conveying knowledge. Please observe standard classroom etiquette. Entering the classroom after the instructor's presentation has started can be distracting both to the instructor as well as to other students. While occasional lateness may be unavoidable, your dedication to being on time is greatly appreciated. The use of electronic communication devices is also a distraction to both the instructor and classmates. This includes texting and surfing the Internet. **Please turn off your electronic communication devices before entering the classroom and refrain from using them during class.** If there is a justifiable reason for using your device during class (e.g., expecting an urgent call related to health or illness), please notify the instructor ahead of time, keep the device on vibrate, and exit the room if you must receive a message.

Departmental Equity Policy Statement

The Department of Sociology is committed to inclusiveness and to a welcoming, friendly learning and working environment where members of all genders, races, ethnicities, religions, abilities, and structurally disadvantaged groups are treated fairly. We will not tolerate sexism, racism, classism, ageism, ethnocentrism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and discrimination based on religious beliefs or any other form of prejudice which undermines people’s rights to fairness.

Bringing in the Bystander – Bystander Intervention Training at UVic

Offered by the Office of Student Life, "Bringing in the Bystander" is a free in-person workshop on campus that teaches students how to overcome resistance to checking in and intervening when they observe harmful situations and the potential for sexualized violence to occur. By empowering students to become active bystanders, we hope to create a compassionate community response to preventing sexualized violence and fostering a safer environment on campus.

Email: svptraining@uvic.ca

Web: www.uvic.ca/bystander

Course Experience Survey (CES)

Your feedback on this course is valued. Towards the end of the term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback regarding the course and the instructor’s teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall

program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an e-mail inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an e-mail invitation, you can go directly to <http://ces.uvic.ca>. You will need to use your UVic Netlink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. Please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

1. What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.
3. Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.

Grading

A primary purpose of evaluation and grading is to further effective teaching and learning. Any practices which assign a predetermined percentage of students a specific grade, that is, a certain percentage get A, another percentage get B and so on, without regard to individual achievement are prohibited.

The table on the next page shows the official grading system used by instructors in arriving at final assessments of student performance. For letter grades authorized for use in the Faculty of Law, see the entry under that faculty.

Undergraduate Grading Scale			
Passing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage *	Description
A+ A A-	9 8 7	90 – 100 85 – 89 80 – 84	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
B+ B B-	6 5 4	77 – 79 73 – 76 70 – 72	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
C+ C	3 2	65 – 69 60 – 64	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
D	1	50 – 59	A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
COM	Excluded Grade	N/A	Complete (pass). Used only for 0-unit courses and those credit courses designated by the Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings.
CTN	Excluded Grade	N/A	Continuing. Denotes the first half of a full-year course.
Failing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage *	Description
E	0	0 – 49	Conditional supplemental. Supplemental examinations are not offered by all departments and the allowable percentage may

			vary by program (e.g. 35-49). Students will be advised whether supplemental will be offered and if the percentage range varies when assessment techniques are announced at the beginning of the course.
F	0	0 - 49	F is earned by work, which after the completion of course requirements, is inadequate and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.
N	0	0 - 49	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.
N/X	Excluded Grade	N/A	Did not complete course requirements by the end of the term; no supplemental. Used only for Co-op work terms and for courses designated by Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings. The grade is EXCLUDED from the calculation of all grade point averages.
F/X	Excluded Grade	N/A	Unsatisfactory performance. Completed course requirements; no supplemental. Used only for Co-op work terms and for courses designated by Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings. The grade is EXCLUDED from the calculation of all grade point averages.
Temporary	Grade Point Value	Percentage *	Description
INC	N/A	N/A	Incomplete. Used only for those credit courses designated by the Senate, to be replaced with a final grade by June 1 for Winter Session courses and by October 1 for Summer Session courses. Such courses are identified in the course listings.
DEF	N/A	N/A	Deferred status granted. Used only when deferred status has been granted because of illness, an accident or family affliction. See Deferred Status.
INP	N/A	N/A	In Progress. Used only for courses designated by Senate, to be replaced with a final grade by the end of the next Winter Session except for TIED courses (identified in the Calendar). In TIED courses the INP must be replaced with a final grade by the end of the subsequent term (including Summer Session) or, where a COOP Work Term, or other activity approved by the academic unit, intervenes, within eight months. If a student fails to complete the second course of a TIED course sequence, then the final grade will be N.
CIC	N/A	N/A	Co-op Interrupted Course. See General Regulations: Undergraduate Co-op .
Grade Note			Note
AEG	N/A	N/A	Aegrotat. Transcript notation accompanying a letter grade, assigned where documented illness or similar affliction affected

			the student's performance or prevented completion of all course work.
WE	N/A	N/A	Withdrawal under extenuating circumstances. The WE registration status will replace a course registration or grade when approved by the Dean following a request for academic concession from a student. This registration status is excluded from the calculation of all grade point averages; it will appear on the official transcript.

* The grading scale for the evaluation of course achievement at the University of Victoria is a percentage scale that translates to a 9 point GPA/letter grade system. The 9 point GPA system is the sole basis for the calculation of grade point averages and academic standing. Standardized percentage ranges have been established as the basis for the assignment of letter grades. The percentage grades are displayed on the official and administrative transcripts in order to provide fine grained course assessment which will be useful to students particularly in their application to graduate studies and for external scholarships and funding. Comparative grading information (average grade [mean] for the class), along with the number of students in the class, is displayed for each course section for which percentage grades are assigned.