

DC270-801 TOPICS IN DIGITAL CINEMA: THE FILMS OF MICHAEL MANN

Winter Quarter 2015

Tuesday, 5:45PM-9:00PM, 14 E. Jackson Rm. LL105

Instructor: Eric Marsh

Office Hours: CDM Center, Rm. 408, Monday, 12PM-5:00PM or by appointment

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Course Description: Arguably the most influential stylist in American genre cinema of the last 30 years, Michael Mann has forged a unique career in both film and television. Bridging the gap between the gritty, realistic crime dramas of the 1970s and the stylish, fast-paced action films of today, Mann's early work fused a music-video-style look with ground-level authenticity, elevating the modern crime film with painterly visuals, dreamlike moods, brooding outlaw heroes, a serious dose of existentialism, and an obsession with procedure and details. His detailed and trailblazing work also includes investigations into American history and myths. More recently, he became one of the first mainstream filmmakers to embrace and explore the use of digital cameras and technology in ways no other filmmakers have. This class will explore and investigate the major themes and stylistic elements of Mann's work and their development, his unquestionable influence on contemporary film and television and, ultimately, his pioneering recent work that pushes the digital image to the brink.

Text Required: There is no required text, but there will be weekly readings and viewings provided by the instructor. These readings, clips, and video essays are essential in aiding our investigation and will be discussed in class.

Basis for Evaluation

Short Responses	15%
Analysis	30%
Midterm Paper	20%
Final Project	25%
Participation & Attendance ...	10%
TOTAL	100%

A = 100 – 94, A = 93 – 90, B+ = 89 – 88, B = 87 – 83, B = 82 – 80, C+ = 79 – 78, C = 77 – 73, C = 72 – 70, D+ = 69 – 68, D = 67 – 63, D = 62 – 60, F = 59 – 0.

WEEK 1 1/6 Introduction & Overview: Michael Mann, auteur?
In-class screening: *Thief* (1981)
Watch: *The Jericho Mile* (1979) on COLTUBE

WEEK 2	1/13	Existentialism & Mann's Outsiders In-class screening: <i>Manhunter</i> (1986) Watch: <i>Miami Vice</i> , "Smuggler's Blues" on COLTUBE
WEEK 3	1/20	Do You See? Expressive Style in <i>Manhunter</i> Forerunner, Showrunner: <i>Miami Vice</i> & <i>Crime Story</i>
WEEK 4	1/27	In-class screening: <i>Heat</i> (1995)
WEEK 5	2/3	Halftime: From <i>Thief</i> to <i>Heat</i> , a Group Exploration of Style & Meaning Watch: <i>The Insider</i> (1999) & <i>Ali</i> (2001) on COLTUBE
WEEK 6	2/10	Histoire du Mann: Media, Identity, & Perception
WEEK 7	2/17	In-class screening: <i>Miami Vice</i> Watch: <i>Collateral</i> (2004) on COLTUBE
WEEK 8	2/24	Digital Mann: On The Evolution (or Devolution) of Mann's Style
WEEK 9	3/3	In-class screening: <i>Public Enemies</i> (2009)
WEEK 10	3/10	Style, Myth & Meaning. Conclusion.
WEEK 11	3/17	Final Screenings & Presentations Due in Class

Content & Schedule Changes – The syllabus is subject to change depending on class progress, time constraints, or material availability. The overall workload, however, will not change. Make sure you pace yourself accordingly. You will be notified of any changes in the syllabus in a timely fashion.

Assignment Breakdown & Due Dates - Specific assignment parameters will be given and discussed in class, and posted on D2L.

Week 1 - Short Response #1 - *The Jericho Mile/Thief* (5 pts). Due 1/13.

Week 2 - Short Response #2 - *Manhunter* (5 pts). Due 1/20.

Week 2 - Analysis #1 - Mann TV (10 pts). Due 1/20.

Week 3 - Midterm Paper (20 pts). Due 2/3.

Week 6 - Analysis #2 - Mann's Histories (10 pts). Due 2/17.

Week 7 - Short Response #3 - *Collateral/Miami Vice* (5 pts). Due 2/24.

Week 8 - Analysis #3 - Digital Mann (10 pts). Due 3/10.

Final Exam - Final Project (25 pts). Due 3/17.

Grading - Grades and/or written feedback will be given for each assignment. In order to be accepted for grading, assignments must be turned in on time (all deadlines are on the syllabus and on D2L). Late work will receive zero points for grading. An assignment worth 10 points (10%) is equal to one full letter grade. Failure to turn in even one assignment has a significant impact on your grade.

Course Policies - In addition to the DePaul University course policies (see student handbook), the following policies apply to this course:

Attendance - Attendance and attention in class are mandatory. Any absence will impact your grade. Each student is allowed ONE absence before your grade is affected. We will be screening (long) films in this class, so it's important that everyone arrives promptly and comes prepared to discuss that week's reading and/or screening. Clips shown in class may not be available outside of class, and you are responsible for all class material.

In-Class Screenings - The screened films are required "texts" for the course, and as such, are not to be missed. If you miss a screening, you are responsible for seeking out the film on your own. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the screened films. Due to time constraints, several of the films are assigned as homework in the class schedule, and while I will make them available to stream on COLTUBE I **do not** recommend this- for maximum viewing experience, I suggest you seek them out on your own (Blu-ray, and even DVD, is better than streaming quality).

Illness - If you are sick, please contact me by email prior to missing a class due to illness and continue to keep me posted until you return. As long as I am aware of your situation and you take an active role in catching up, absences may be excused and extensions may be granted. Every situation will be handled according to individual circumstance at the instructor's discretion. Absolutely no consideration will be given for those who request special treatment without advanced notice, even with a doctor's note.

Reading Assignments - Reading assignments are *mandatory*. End of discussion.

D2L & COLTUBE - The course materials for this course, such as syllabus, announcements, course documents, and assignments will be available to you through D2L site at <https://d2l.depaul.edu/>. Please make sure you have access to D2L. Films screened in class will be made available to stream afterwards on <http://coltube.cdm.depaul.edu/> as a resource for your writing.

Computer/Smart Phone Use - This course involves a mixture of lecture, discussion, as well as screenings (clips, films, etc), and as such, requires your full attention (we watch movies with our eyes!). There will be no phones or computers allowed during class. Exceptions will be made on an individual basis.

Academic Integrity - Plagiarism is dishonest behavior and therefore violates collegiality as well as University policy. You should familiarize yourself with behavior that constitutes plagiarism by reviewing the University's policy regarding academic dishonesty at: <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/Resources/Students/index.html>. Any cases of plagiarism will automatically receive a zero and be reported to departmental and University officials for disciplinary action.

Special Needs - Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, instructors must make reasonable accommodations for students with physical, mental, or learning disabilities. Let me know at the beginning of the term if you require some modification of seating, testing, or other class adjustments so that appropriate arrangements may be made.