

**DC 370/470 - ADVANCED TOPICS IN DIGITAL CINEMA  
THE FILMS OF JOHN CARPENTER  
SUMMER II 2016**

Class time: Tuesday & Thursday, 1:30PM - 4:45PM, CDM RM 708

Online Students: Lectures/discussions will be available to stream on D2L after in-class period

Instructor: Eric Marsh

Office Hours: CDM Center, Rm. 522, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10AM - 1PM

Email: marsh@cdm.depaul.edu

Phone: 630-664-7589 (emergencies only)

**Course Description** - This course will study the films of John Carpenter and his place in film history as a pivotal figure that bridged the gap between old and new Hollywood cinema -- through his work students will learn about the tradition and evolution of American genre filmmaking (horror, science fiction, western) and how to take inspiration from the past into the present. Additionally, through creative projects students will explore and utilize the key elements and techniques employed by Carpenter: economy of storytelling, mastery of anamorphic widescreen, genre mixing & twisting, steadicam & POV, and more!

**Text** - There is no *required* textbook for this course. All readings and viewings will be provided by instructor.

**Basis for Evaluation**

Responses .....	40%
Midterm .....	20%
Final Project .....	30%
Attendance & Participation .....	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.

**CLASS SCHEDULE & COURSE OUTLINE**

**WEEK 1**

Tuesday July 19

Discussion: Carpenter: Origins & Formulations

In-class screening: *The Resurrection of Bronco Billy* (1969); *Assault on Precinct 13* (1976)

Outside screening: *Rio Bravo* (Hawks, 1958)

Thursday July 21

Discussion: *Assault on the Western*: Carpenter, Hawks, and the Siege Film

In-class screening: *Halloween* (1978)

Outside screening: TBA (70s horror)

WEEK 2

Tuesday July 26

Discussion: *Halloween* & the 70s Horror Film

In-class screening: *The Fog* (1980)

Thursday July 28

Discussion: *The Fog* & H.P. Lovecraft

In-class screening: *Escape from New York* (1981)

Outside screening: *Elvis* (1979) & *Escape From L.A.* (1995)

WEEK 3

Tuesday August 2

Discussion: Kurt Russell & John Carpenter

In-class screening: *The Thing* (1982)

Outside screening: *The Thing From Another World* (Nyby/Hawks, 1951)

Thursday August 4

Discussion: The Three *Things*

In-class screening: *Big Trouble in Little China* (1986)

Outside screening: *Christine* (1983), *Starman* (1984), *Zu Warriors of Magic Mountain* (Hark, 1983)

WEEK 4

Tuesday August 9

Discussion: They Were Assignments: Breaking Out of Hollywood Jail

In-class screening: *Prince of Darkness* (1987)

Outside screening: *Quatermass and the Pit* (Roy Ward Baker, 1967)

### Thursday August 11

Discussion: The Prince of Darkness Returns

In-class screening: *They Live* (1988)

### WEEK 5

### Tuesday August 16

Discussion: Put on the Glasses! *They Live* & the Reagan Era

In-class screening: *In the Mouth of Madness* (1994)

Outside screening: *Body Bags* ("The Gas Station" & "Hair", 1993)

### Thursday August 18

Discussion: John Carpenter, American Movie Classic?

Final project and paper presentations.

**READING LIST** (subject to change; excerpts and/or select chapters will be provided when necessary):

#### Non-Fiction

"John Carpenter: American Movie Classic" by Kent Jones (from "Physical Evidence")

"John Carpenter: The Prince of Darkness" by Gilles Boulenger

"The Technique of Terror: The Cinema of John Carpenter" ed. Ian Conrich & David Woods

"Halloween" by Dave Kehr (from "When Movies Mattered")

"Hollywood From Vietnam to Reagan...and Beyond" by Robin Wood

"They Live" by Jonathan Lethem

"Hyperrealism & Simulation" by Jean Baudrillard

& more!

#### Fiction

"The Dunwich Horror" by H.P. Lovecraft

"The Outsider" by H.P. Lovecraft

"At the Mountains of Madness" by H.P. Lovecraft

"Who Goes There?" by John W. Campbell

"Eight O'Clock in the Morning" by Ray Nelson

**Content & Schedule Changes** – The syllabus is subject to change depending on class progress, time constraints, or material availability. This goes for the screenings as well. 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.

**Assignments & Due Dates** - Specific parameters for the assignments will be given weekly in class and posted to D2L.

**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 [FOR IN-CLASS STUDENTS]** - Each class consists of lecture, screenings, and discussion. Class time is most productive when everyone arrives promptly and comes prepared to discuss that week's reading and film screening. Clips and short films shown in class may not be available outside of class, and you are responsible for all of the class material. Absences will result in a major reduction of the participation grade. Each student is allowed ONE absence before your grade is severely affected.

**Attendance [FOR ONLINE STUDENTS]** - As an online student you are required to view EVERY class lecture & discussion unless I instruct otherwise. In order to receive participation credit, you must turn in notes from your viewing/listening to the lectures, discussions, and screenings. Your notes are due on D2L dropbox every week. They can be typed, handwritten (and uploaded), and do not have a specific criteria -- as long as you prove to me you are watching the lectures and engaging with the material. Failure to submit any notes will result in the loss of a letter grade. Each week's note = 1 point. You must submit notes for EACH week to receive full participation grade.

**Reading Assignments** - Reading assignments are *mandatory* and should be completed before class. The readings supplement and inform the lectures and discussions and will be crucial in a broad understanding of Carpenter's films. Lectures may introduce additional material not available in the readings, and the readings may explore concepts not mentioned in class. All readings will be available on D2L as the course progresses.

**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 and as such, it requires your full attention (we watch movies with our eyes, ears, and

minds!). There will be no phones or computers allowed during class. Exceptions will be made on an individual basis.

**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.

**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.