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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>All Term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Critique #1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>September 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Critique #2</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>October 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>November 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Take-Home Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>December 9</td>
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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  

Screening: *Native Land* (1942)

September 22  
Week 3: The Canadian Worker in Film  


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  


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

Screening: *Norma Rae* (1979)

October 13

Week 6: Collective Bargaining on Film


Screening: *Final Offer* (1985)

October 20

Week 7: Globalization, Deindustrialization, and the “Rustbelt”


October 27

Week 8: Working-Class Culture and the New Deal


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


Screening: *Pride* (2014)

* All Out! Dancing in Doula* (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*

Screening:  Bread & Roses (2000)

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

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

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

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

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Labour Studies Undergraduate Grading System:

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<td>90 - 94</td>
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