

***Hitchcock and Hitchcockians***  
**ENGL 381**

Professor Rashna Richards

Office: 307 Palmer

Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:30 and by appt.

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Semester: Fall 2011

Class: MW 3:00-4:15

Room: 206 Palmer

Screening: M 7:00-9:00

Room: 34 Barret

***Course Description***

Known as the master of suspense and regarded as one of the most influential directors of the twentieth century, Alfred Hitchcock helped define a genre, refine film style, and invent the notion of the director-artist or auteur. His career spanned half a century, participating in the evolution of cinema from silent to sound and black-and-white to color, from the rigid regulations of the studio system to the eventual collapse of the Production Code, from German Expression to postmodernism. His films, which are obsessed with issues of guilt and innocence, mistaken identity, hair-breadth escapes, morbid pathologies, and psychosexual dysfunctions, have compelled and exasperated audiences and critics worldwide. They have also been remade, offered sequels, imitated, parodied, and recycled by filmmakers as dissimilar as Claude Chabrol, Michelangelo Antonioni, Brian de Palma, Mel Brooks, Pedro Almodóvar, and Gus Van Sant. This course offers an investigation of Alfred Hitchcock's oeuvre and its influence on diverse films, filmmakers, genres, and even film studies as an academic discipline. We will begin by analyzing Hitchcock's texts; their thematic and stylistic preoccupations; and their formative impact on formalist, feminist, and psychoanalytic film criticism. Then, following Robert Stam's notion of "intertextual dialogism," we will examine how Hitchcockian films and filmmakers have engaged with Hitchcock's cinema.

**Standard of Work:** This is an advanced film studies course and is not recommended for students who are unfamiliar with rigorous film analysis. The readings are intellectually challenging, as are the films. Some films are black-and-white, and some are subtitled. You will need to take careful notes on the films, readings, and in-class discussions. In addition, assignments will expect you to engage critically with complex issues in film history and criticism and employ them in your writing. Therefore, you are encouraged to think seriously about your commitment to the course.

***Course Policies***

**Attendance:** You are required to attend all classes and screenings. You should not email me about your absences. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get information and/or handouts from a classmate. You are allowed two class absences and one screening absence over the course of the semester, no questions asked, for extracurricular activities or medical/personal emergencies. After the third absence, each subsequent absence will result in a deduction of 20 points from your final course grade. After six absences, you will fail the course.

**Tardiness:** You are required to be on time. Habitual tardiness, even if it's only a couple of minutes, will hurt your participation/professionalism grade.

**Late Work:** I do not accept late work. If you do not plan on being here when an assignment is due, it must be in my mailbox before the deadline. You will receive a zero on an assignment if it is not turned in when it is due. Please note that you are required to complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade.

**Class Participation:** You are required to come to class prepared with the assigned reading for that day. I expect constructive verbal contribution to each class meeting. A student who disrupts class, interrupts another student's presentation, or in any way creates a hostile environment will be subject to disciplinary action. A student who reads the newspaper, chats with a neighbor, or simply dozes off should expect a low participation grade even if they have contributed to class discussions on other occasions. I will likely say nothing at the time of the incident, but disruptive behavior will adversely affect your participation/professionalism grade.

**Screenings:** We will view a wide variety of films in class. You may find these films intellectually challenging or troubling. Learning how to watch and analyze them critically will be an important part of our discussions and assignments.

**Electronic Devices:** The use of all electronic devices is forbidden in this class. You should turn off all electronic devices, including laptops, before class begins.

**Food or Drink:** I don't mind if you bring something to drink, but please avoid bringing any food into the classroom or screening room.

**Consultation:** I'll be happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns you have about the class. Feel free to stop by during my office hours. If those times don't work, I can make an appointment to meet with you at a time that is mutually convenient. If you have questions about an assignment, do not wait until the last minute. Remember, I want you to do well in the class and am always willing to work with you.

**Email:** It is always preferable to meet in person to discuss any questions or concerns, since the impersonal medium of electronic communication is a poor substitute for a genuine face-to-face conversation. However, I'm available by email for simple queries (expect a response during business hours: 9am-5pm Monday-Friday). Please regard email correspondence as formal communication. It is always best to ask specific rather than general questions in an email and abide by rules of professional etiquette. It is not advisable to email me the evening before an assignment is due asking for help because there is very little I can do at that point; besides, last-minute emails are very unprofessional. Email is absolutely not the medium for negotiating special requests, addressing grade concerns, or discussing ideas for assignments; those issues must be handled in person.

**Format of Assignments:** All written assignments need to be typed and double spaced, in 12 pt. font, using Times New Roman, with one-inch margins on all sides. The format and citations must conform to MLA specifications, or the assignment may not be accepted. You do not need a

title page; instead, include your name, my name, course name/number, and date in the top left corner of the first page. Be sure to number and staple your pages; also, proofread your work before printing up the final draft. I do not accept any assignments via email. A paper copy is expected at the beginning of class on the day the assignment is due.

**Intellectual Honesty:** All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, google or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. You are advised against posting your work on the internet, since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. You are also advised to save drafts of your work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and, if convicted, the student will receive an F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, please consult me.

**Disability Issues:** Students with documented disabilities may be entitled to specific accommodations. Please contact the office of Student Disability Services for more information. In every case, it is your responsibility to provide me with an official letter from SDS.

### *Course Evaluation*

#### **Grade Distribution**

Participation/Professionalism	10%	100 points
Viewing Responses	10%	100 points
Essay #1	20%	200 points
Essay #2	20%	200 points
Research Paper	40%	400 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

**Assignments** (Additional guidelines will be provided when each assignment is introduced.)

**Participation/Professionalism:** You are required to contribute comments and questions that further class discussion. Simply agreeing or disagreeing with your classmates and/or the readings is not enough. You are expected to add thoughtful ideas to the debate by engaging with the texts in a sophisticated manner. Participation will be evaluated in terms of quantity and quality. Failure to follow any course policies or guidelines will hurt your professionalism grade.

**Viewing Responses (1 page x 5):** Over the course of the semester, you will write five responses to the screenings. Prompts will be provided.

**Essay #1 (4-5 pages):** For the first essay, you will be given several critical statements about Alfred Hitchcock as an auteur. You will choose one of those statements to write an analytical essay about Hitchcock's cinema. No research is expected for this paper.

**Essay #2 (4-5 pages):** For the second paper, you will assess how and why filmmakers continue to recycle Hitchcockian films, themes, visual style, and so on. Your essay will offer a comparative analysis of two films and evaluate the implications of Hitchcock's abiding resonance. Research guidelines will be provided.

**Research Paper (12-15 pages):** The final project for the class is a research paper on some aspect of the relationship between Hitchcock and Hitchcockians. You will be given several prompts, which you will use to develop your own topic for the project. You will be required to research your topic comprehensively. Your paper will be evaluated on the originality of your approach, the rigor of your analysis, and the thoroughness of your research.

### Grading Guidelines

**A** = 100-94; **A-** = 93-90

**B+** = 89-87; **B** = 86-84; **B-** = 83-80

**C+** = 79-77; **C** = 76-74; **C-** = 73-70

**D+** = 69-67; **D** = 66-64; **D-** = 63-60

**F** < 60

**A range (100-90):** Excellent work; exemplary in argument and organization; professionally presented; free of mechanical errors.

**B range (89-80):** Good, solid work; substantive in argument and organization; meets all requirements, but needs some revisions; no more than five mechanical errors.

**C range (79-70):** Satisfactory work; addresses the assignment adequately, but requires some significant revisions of content and/or mechanics.

**D range (69-60):** Below average work; misses one or more central aspects of the assignment; inadequate focus and/or development; awkwardly written; requires extensive rewriting.

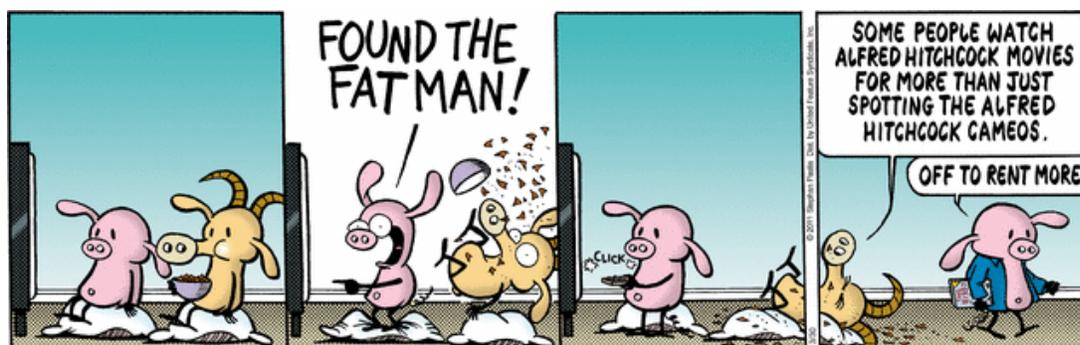
**F range (< 60):** Unacceptable work; fails to meet the requirements of the assignment; incomplete or irrelevant material; lack of focus or development.

### *Course Materials*

- Allen, Richard and S. Ishii Gonzalès, eds. *Alfred Hitchcock: Centenary Essays*. London: BFI, 1999. Print. (AH)
- David Boyd and R. Barton Palmer, eds. *After Hitchcock: Influence, Imitation, and Intertextuality*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2006. Print. (III)
- Additional essays--handouts

*Course Schedule (subject to change)*

**Unit I: Hitchcock**



**Week 1**

**Wed., Aug. 24** Introduction to the course

**Week 2: Auteurism and Its Discontents**

**Mon., Aug. 29** Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962" (handout)  
Introduction to Viewing Responses

**Screening** Hitchcock, *Rear Window* (1954)

**Wed., Aug. 31** **Viewing Response #1 due**

Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (handout)  
Modleski, "The Master's Dollhouse" (handout)

**Week 3: Moralist, Modernist, or Aesthete?**

**Mon., Sept. 5** No Classes: Labor Day

**No Screening**

**Wed., Sept. 7** Elsaesser, "The Dandy in Hitchcock" (AH 3-13)  
Clips: Hitchcock, *Strangers on a Train* (1951)

**Week 4: Guilt and Innocence**

**Mon., Sept. 12** Wollen, "*Rope*: Three Hypotheses" (AH 75-85)  
Clips: Hitchcock, *Rope* (1948)

**Screening** Hitchcock, *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943)

**Wed., Sept. 14** **Viewing Response #2 due**

Naremore, "Hitchcock at the Margins of *Noir*" (AH 263-77)  
Clips: Wilder, *Double Indemnity* (1944); Hitchcock, *The Wrong Man* (1957)

**Week 5: The Psychopathology of Romance**

**Mon., Sept. 19** Allen, "Hitchcock, or the Pleasures of Metaskepticism" (AH 221-37)  
Introduction to Essay #1

Clips: Hitchcock, *Rebecca* (1940); Hitchcock, *Suspicion* (1941)

**Screening** Hitchcock, *Vertigo* (1958)

**Wed., Sept. 21** White, "Vertigo and Problems of Knowledge in Feminist Film Theory" (AH 279-98)  
Corber, "'You Wanna Check My Thumbprints?'" (AH 301-14)

**Week 6: The Trauma of Suspense**

**Mon., Sept. 26** Knight and McKnight, "Suspense and Its Master" (AH 107-21)  
Clips: Hitchcock, *Notorious* (1946)

**Screening** Hitchcock, *Psycho* (1960)

**Wed., Sept. 28** Toles, "If Thine Eye Offend Thee . . ." (AH 159-74)

**Week 7: Repetition Compulsion**

**Mon., Oct. 3** Peucker, "The Cut of Representation" (AH 141-56)  
Clips: Hitchcock, *Spellbound* (1945); Hitchcock, *North by Northwest* (1959)

**No Screening**

**Wed., Oct. 5** Essay #1 due

**Week 8: Representing the Unrepresentable**

**Mon., Oct. 10** McElhaney, "Touching the Surface" (AH 87-105)  
Clips: Hitchcock, *Marnie* (1964)

**Screening** Hitchcock, *The Birds* (1963)

**Wed., Oct. 12** Žižek, "The Hitchcockian Blot" (AH 123-39)  
Edelman, "Hitchcock's Future" (AH 239-58)

**Unit II: . . . And After**



**Week 9: Influence, Imitation, and Intertextuality**

**Mon., Oct. 17** No Classes: Fall Recess

**No Screening**

**Wed., Oct. 19** Boyd and Palmer, "Introduction" (III 1-11)  
Stam, "From Text to Intertext" (handout)  
Clips: Brooks, *High Anxiety* (1977); De Palma, *Dressed to Kill* (1980)

**Week 10: Direct Remakes**

- Mon., Oct. 24** McDougal, "The Director Who Knew Too Much" (handout)  
Introduction to Essay #2  
Clips: Hitchcock, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934); Hitchcock, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956)
- Screening** Van Sant, *Psycho* (1998)
- Wed., Oct. 26** **Viewing Response #3 due**  
Rothman, "Some Thoughts on Hitchcock's Authorship" (AH 29-42)  
Verevis, "For Ever Hitchcock" (III 15-29)

**Week 11: Echoes**

- Mon., Oct. 31** Brill, "Hitchcockian *Silence*" (III 31-46)  
Clips: Demme, *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991)
- Screening** Branagh, *Dead Again* (1991)
- Wed., Nov. 2** Hark, "Psycho or Psychic?" (III 65-82)  
Clips: Singer, *The Usual Suspects* (1995); Lynch, *Mulholland Drive* (2001)

**Week 12: Transformations**

- Mon., Nov. 7** Metz, "Exposing the Lies of Hitchcock's Truth" (III 109-24)  
Clips: Cameron, *True Lies* (1994)
- Screening** Coppola, *The Conversation* (1974)
- Wed., Nov. 9** **Viewing Response #4 due**  
Palmer, "The Hitchcock Romance and the '70s Paranoid Thriller" (III 85-108)  
Introduction to Research Paper  
Clips: Pakula, *The Parallax View* (1974)
- Thurs., Nov. 10** **Film Studies Lecture**

**Week 13: Translations**

- Mon., Nov. 14** Neupert, "Red Blood on White Bread" (III 127-43)  
Clips: Chabrol, *La Femme Infidèle* (1968); Lyne, *Unfaithful* (2002)
- Screening** Antonioni, *Blow-Up* (1966)
- Wed., Nov. 16** Tomasulo, "'You're Tellin' Me You Didn't See'" (III 145-72)  
Clips: Powell, *Peeping Tom* (1960)

**Week 14: Quotations**

- Mon., Nov. 21** **Essay #2 due**  
Acevedo-Muñoz, "Melo-Thriller" (III 173-94)  
Clips: Almodóvar, *Mujeres al Borde de un Ataque de Nervios* (1988); Almodóvar, *Todo Sobre Mi Madre* (1999); Ford, *A Single Man* (2009)
- No Screening**
- Wed., Nov. 23** No Classes: Thanksgiving Recess

**Week 15: Stealing****Mon., Nov. 28**

Leitch, "How to Steal from Hitchcock" (III 251-70)

Clips: De Palma, *Blow Out* (1981); De Palma, *Body Double* (1984)**Screening**Scorsese, *Cape Fear* (1991)**Wed., Nov. 30****Viewing Response #5 due**

Kolker, "Algebraic Figures" (handout)

Clips: Verhoeven, *Basic Instinct* (1992)**Week 16: Borrowing****Mon., Dec. 5**Episodes from Weiner, *Mad Men***Screening**Episodes from Weiner, *Mad Men***Wed., Dec. 7**

Discussion

**Fri., Dec. 9****Research Paper due by noon (leave in box on my office door--307 Palmer)**