



## THE LABOUR STUDIES PROGRAM (LBST)

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

### **LBST 330 D200: Special Topics in Labour Studies: Studying Labour through Film Spring 2016**

**Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Isitt**

**Office: AQ 6219**

**Class: Tuesday 11:30am - 2:20pm WMC 2200**

**Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00am - 11:00am or by appointment**

**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 and available on Canvas.

#### **4. PREREQUISITES:**

LBST 101 and LBST 301 are recommended.

#### **5. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING STRUCTURE:**

Participation	20%	All Term
Film Critique #1	10%	February 2
Film Critique #2	10%	March 1
Research Essay	35%	March 22
Final Take-Home Exam	25%	April 13

### *Participation*

I expect you to attend each scheduled class. Participation means active listening, completing assigned readings in advance of each week's meeting, and critically engaging films and readings so you are able to contribute meaningfully to discussions.

*Film Critique #1* Due by Email: February 2

You will write a 3-page review critically evaluating one of the films shown in January. Your review should apply methodology discussed in the course readings, examining how the film engages themes in labour studies and techniques in film studies.

*Film Critique #2* Due by Email: March 1

You will write a 3-page review critically evaluating one of the films shown in February. Your review should apply methodology discussed in the course readings, examining how the film engages themes in labour studies and techniques in film studies.

*Research Essay* Select Film by: January 26  
Due by Email: March 22

You will write a research essay, 10-12 pages long, critically evaluating a feature-length film that illuminates aspects of 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 of the film itself, including the ways in which the filmmaker engage themes, events, and concepts in labour studies. Essays will be evaluated based on engagement of labour themes and film theory; selection of secondary sources; discussion of techniques used by the filmmaker; writing; structure; and style. Submit your film title by January 26 and your Research Essay by email **no later than Tuesday, March 22**.

*Take-Home Exam* Pick up in class: April 5  
Due by Email: April 13

The take-home exam will evaluate your command of course themes and the extent to which you draw from course materials: films, lectures, readings, and class discussions. No additional materials should be used and evidence of their use may result in a mark of zero. Submit your Take-Home Exam by email **by Wednesday April 13 at 12 Noon**.

### **6. SOURCES & CITATION**

Wikipedia and other online sources are not appropriate sources for the Film Critiques, Research Essay, or Take-Home Exam. Evidence of use of these sources will result in a mark of zero. The instructor is very familiar with Wikipedia entries and online reviews relating to labour in film. To avoid the appearance of plagiarism, please confine

information in your Film Critiques and Take-Home Exam answers to materials used in class. All sources require proper citation using the Chicago Manual of Style (footnotes).

## **7. COURSE OUTLINE:**

- January 5                    Week 1: Introduction
- Screening:        Excerpts from *Strike* (1925) and *Spartacus* (1960)
- January 12                Week 2: Approaches to Film Theory and Labour Studies
- Readings:        C. Jarvie, "Seeing Through Movies," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 8 (December 1978), pp. 374-397.
- Robert Rosenstone, "The Historical Film: Looking at the Past in a Postliterate Age," in *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 45-79.
- Raymond Williams, "A Lecture on Realism," *Screen*, 18, no. 1 (Spring 1977), pp. 61-74.
- Screening:        *Land and Freedom* (1995)
- January 19                Week 3: The Canadian Worker on Film: Part 1
- Readings:        David Frank, "Short Takes: The Canadian Worker on Film," *Labour/Le Travail*, 46 (Fall 2000), pp. 417-37.
- Malek Khouri and Darrell Varga, "Introduction: Working on Screen," in Khouri and Varga, eds. *Working on Screen: Representations of the Working Class in Canadian Cinema* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 3-21.
- Screening:        *Final Offer* (1985)
- January 26                Week 4: The Canadian Worker on Film: Part 2
- Readings:        Peter Urquhart, "Whose Museum Is It, Anyway? Discourses of Resistance in the Adaptation of *The Glace Bay Miners' Museum* into *Margaret's Museum*," in Khouri and Varga, eds. *Working on Screen: Representations of the Working Class in Canadian Cinema* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 149-157.
- Martha Norby Fraundorf, "Collective Bargaining Films: A Critical Survey," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 44, no. 1 (Oct. 1990), pp. 144-151.

Joseph Kispal-Kovacs, "Inscriptions of Class and Nationalism in Canadian 'Realist' Cinema: Final Offer and Canada's Sweetheart: The Saga of Hal C. Banks," in Malek Khouri and Darrell Varga, eds. *Working on Screen: Representations of the Working Class in Canadian Cinema* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 235-245.

Screening: *Margaret's Museum* (1995)

\* Submit your Essay Topic in a short email before the start of class \*

February 2                      Week 5: Women, Union Organizing, and the Labour Movement

Readings:                      Christine Gledhill, "Image and Voice: Approaches to Marxist Feminist Criticism," in Diane Carson et al eds, *Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 109-123.

Joey Fink, "In Good Faith: Working-Class Women, Feminism, and Religious Support in the Struggle to Organize J. P. Stevens Textile Workers in the Southern Piedmont, 1974–1980," *Southern Spaces* (2014) <  
<http://southernspaces.org/2014/good-faith-working-class-women-feminism-and-religious-support-struggle-organize-j-p-stevens> > (viewed 10 October 2015).

Screening:                      *Norma Rae* (1979)

\* Submit your Film Critique #1 by email before the start of class \*

February 9

\*\*\* NO CLASS – READING WEEK \*\*\*

February 16                      Week 6: Labour, LGBTQ and Human Rights

Readings:                      Leonard Quart, "The Religion of the Market: Thatcherite Politics and the British Film of the 1980s," in Lester Friedman, ed., *Fires Were Started: British Cinema and Thatcherism* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993), pp. 15-34.

Toronto and York Region Labour Council, *Labour Pride: What Have Our Unions Done for Us?* (2014).

- Screening: *Pride* (2014)  
*All Out! Dancing in Doulais* (c. 2011)
- February 23      Week 7: Globalization, Deindustrialization, and the “Rustbelt”
- Reading:      Miles Orvell, “Documentary Film and the Power of Interrogation: American Dream & Roger and Me,” *Film Quarterly*, 48 (Winter 1994), pp. 10-18.
- Screening:      *Roger & Me* (1989)
- March 1      Week 8: Class Conflict and Class Solidarity on Film
- Reading:      Peter Stead, “Workers and the Film,” *Film and the Working Class: The Feature Film in British and American Society* (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 233-249.
- Screening:      *Matewan* (1987)

* Submit your Film Critique #2 by email before the start of class *
---

- March 8      Week 9: Services Sector & Migrant Workers in the 21st Century
- Readings:      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 New Union Movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 133-149.
- Screening:      *Bread & Roses* (2000)
- March 15      Week 10: To Be Announced
- March 22      Week 11: The ‘Precariat,’ Globalization & the New Working Class
- Reading:      Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011) (Chapter 1, pp. 1-25)
- Screening:      *The Hidden Face of Globalization* (2003)

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

- March 29      Week 12: Workers’ Control and Co-operative Enterprise on Film

Reading: Tom Zaniello, *The Cinema of Globalization: A Guide to Films about the New Economic Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007) (Introduction, pp. 1-21)

Screening: *The Take* (2004)

April 5 Week 13: Course Review

\* Pick up Take-Home Exam in class \*

April 13

\* Submit your TAKE-HOME EXAM by email no later than Wed. April 13 @ 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](http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student.html)

=====

**Labour Studies Undergraduate Grading System:**

A+ 95 - 100	B+ 80 - 84	C+ 65 - 69
A 90 - 94	B 75 - 79	C 60 - 64
A- 85 - 89	B- 70 - 74	C- 55 - 59
D 50 - 54	F 0 - 49	N student did not complete