

General Education Course Submission Form

Date of Submission: 6-10-10

1. Check which area(s) this course applies to.

Inquiry – Arts & Creativity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Composition & Communications - II	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inquiry – Humanities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quant Reasoning – Math	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inquiry – Nat/Math/Phys Sci	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quant Reasoning – Stat	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inquiry – Social Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>	Citizenship – USA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Composition & Communications - I	<input type="checkbox"/>	Citizenship - Global	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Provide Course and Department Information.

Department: MCL

Course Prefix and Number: FR 225 Credit hours: 3

Course Title: French Film Noir

Expected Number of Students per Section: 60 Course Required for Majors in your Program? No

Prerequisite(s) for Course? None

This request is for (check one): A New Course An Existing Course

Departmental Contact Information

Name: Jeffrey Peters Email: jnp@uky.edu

Office Address: 1031 POT Phone: 576-3499

3. In addition to this form, the following must be submitted for consideration:

- A syllabus that conforms to the Senate Syllabi Guidelines, including listing of the Course Template Student Learning Outcomes.
- A narrative (2-3 pages max) that explains: 1) how the course will address the General Education and Course Template Learning outcomes; and 2) a description of the type(s) of course assignment(s) that could be used for Gen Ed assessment.
- If applicable, a major course change form for revision of an existing course, or a new course form for a new course.

4. Signatures

Department Chair: Theodore Fredler Date: 7-6-2000

Dean: Anna R. K. Bosch ARK Bosch Date: 9/21/10

College Deans: Submit all approved proposals electronically to:
Sharon Gill Sharon.Gill@uky.edu
Office of Undergraduate Education

FR 225
MWF 2:00-2:50

Dr. Jeffrey Peters
1031 POT
jnp@uky.edu

French Film Noir

Objectives

In this course, we will examine the evolution of the crime thriller in French cinema during the 1940s and 1950s. With origins in the detective serials of the 1910s in France and England, the crime film crucially informed the French poetic realist style during the 1930s, which in turn became an important basis for the “noir” style of 1940s Hollywood filmmaking. Fascinated by the plotlines, heroes, and obsessions of American *film noir*, French directors began to see in their own “dark” films an artistic outlet for related literary and philosophical inquiry. This course explores the origins of the crime film and its visual style in European surrealism, German expressionism, and French existentialism; the mutual influence of American and French cinema during this period; the vexed question of whether a noir style can be said to have existed in French cinema and/or whether such a style should be called noir at all; the role of the crime thriller in French visual culture more generally; and how noir expressed the cultural values, anxieties, and conflicts that shaped a renewed French identity in the wake of World War II and the German Occupation. Prior experience or coursework in cinema is not expected or assumed. No knowledge of French is necessary.

Student Outcomes

At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- analyze the formal and technical aspects of film language, particularly with respect to the narrative structure of the crime story;
- recognize and define the primary characteristics of the French crime film, and situate them in the proper historical, philosophical, and aesthetic context;
- develop a critical language appropriate to the analysis of film;
- communicate their analyses effectively in written form.

Course format

FR 225 is a lecture course which meets three times a week. On Mondays and Wednesdays, all students are required to attend lectures given by Dr. Peters. Each lecture will draw both on the films you will have watched for class (see syllabus below) and the assigned weekly readings. You are expected to take careful notes during the lectures and will be responsible for their content both on the exams and in discussion. On Fridays, students will attend a small break out discussion section led by Dr. Peters or a teaching assistant. Your participation grade (see below) will be based on your preparation for and active engagement in discussion group.

Readings

All readings for the seminar will be distributed on CD in the form of PDF files.

Films

Films for this course will be screened outside of class in AV Services at Young Library. (See below for hours.) The following list of films, all of which will be on reserve at AV Services, may be incomplete and is subject to change during the semester, with additions, deletions, and substitutions possible. You should plan to see the films on your own time prior to the class meeting for which they are listed.

AV Services (Young Library):

Hours:

M-R 9:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.; F 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.;

Sat noon-5:00 p.m.; Sun 1:00 p.m.-10:00 (check

AV website for exceptions and holiday hours)

257-0500, x2012

http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/lib.php?lib_id=3

<i>Elevator to the Gallows</i>	1957	Louis Malle
<i>Judex</i>	1916	Louis Feuillade
<i>Pépé le Moko</i>	1937	Julien Duvivier
<i>Double Indemnity</i>	1944	Billy Wilder
<i>The Raven</i>	1943	Henri-Georges Clouzot
<i>Don't Touch the Loot</i>	1954	Jacques Becker
<i>Rififi</i>	1955	Jules Dassin
<i>Diabolique</i>	1955	Henri-Georges Clouzot
<i>Bob the Gambler</i>	1956	Jean-Pierre Melville
<i>Pickpocket</i>	1959	Robert Bresson
<i>Band of Outsiders</i>	1964	Jean-Luc Godard
<i>The Samourai</i>	1967	Jean-Pierre Melville

Assignments and Expectations:

Exams:

This course will include a midterm exam and a comprehensive final exam. We will discuss the content and format of the final in class.

Papers:

Three essays will be assigned this semester. The first two assignments will consist of three-page analyses of a conceptual problem. The goal of these two critical essays is to produce coherent, well written, and tightly structured pieces of writing that present a thesis and its careful development. The third will be a research paper of between eight and twelve pages. The paper will treat any aspect of the French crimer thriller tradition that you wish (see below). You will be required to turn in a paper topic, an annotated

bibliography, an outline, and a rough draft prior to completing the final version. We will discuss each of these assignments in greater detail in class.

Suggested research paper topics on French film noir

The following topics are suggestions only. You can choose one of these, combine two or more of them, take inspiration for your own topic from them, or come up with something entirely on your own. Whatever the case, you should discuss your topic with me before you begin your work.

- relation to French poetic realism (style; themes; individual films)
- the context of World War II and/or the German Occupation
- forced or voluntary exile to the U.S.; Jews and the cinema during the war
- the surrealist heritage
- philosophical contexts (existentialism, psychoanalysis, etc.)
- gender (the masculine hero and/or anti-hero; the *femme fatale*; representations of men and/or women)
- relation to the New Wave
- adaptation (French films noirs remade in the U.S.; or filmic adaptations of literary works)
- relation to French police novel (the *roman policier*)
- importance of German expressionism
- the noir heritage in France (the neo-noir in later years)
- political contexts: decolonization; instability during the Fourth Republic
- music
- relation to Hollywood and/or French classical cinema
- importance of American culture

Participation:

Participation will constitute 15% of your final course grade. It is a crucial component of this class and consists not only of your active involvement in class discussions, but also your general preparation and the enthusiasm with which you approach our activities in class. I will be looking in particular for evidence of careful reading of the texts and films you are assigned.

Attendance

In this course, your attendance is linked directly to your grade. More than three absences from class will adversely affect your final grade, which will be lowered by one letter. If you know you are going to be absent from class, please notify me before class (by e-mail). If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to find out from a classmate what you missed.

Final grade

Midterm exam	15%
Final exam	20%
First two papers (averaged)	20%
Research paper	30%
Participation	15%

In conformity with College of Arts and Sciences policy, all grades for this course will be letter grades (A, B, C, etc., no +/-). Numerical equivalents are simply: 90s = A, 80s = B, 70s = C, etc.

Since this course has such a large enrollment, exams will not be handed back to you in class; doing so would be extremely cumbersome and time consuming. Instead, grades will be posted online. You may request to see your exam from the person who graded it, but you may not leave the office with it or keep it. If, upon receiving your grade, you think you may have done better and there was a mistake in grading, contact the person who graded your exam as soon as possible to retrieve your exam, look it over, and see if you have questions regarding the grading of specific questions. Exams are kept by the person who graded them. Again, due to the size of the class, all requests to see exams and any appeals to reconsider grades **must be made within 2 weeks** of the posting of the grade for that exam. No appeals will be considered after 2 weeks.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

Be aware that I, as well as the University of Kentucky as a whole, take cases of academic dishonesty – cheating and plagiarism – with the utmost seriousness. It is very important that you read the policies concerning cheating and plagiarism in *Student Rights & Responsibilities* carefully (<http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/>). If you have doubts or questions in this or any course as to whether something can be construed as dishonest, ask your instructor. Please note that the minimum punishment for cheating or plagiarism is an “E” for the course in question.

FR 225
French Film Noir
Dr. Peters

August

W 27 Introduction to course

Defining Noir

F 29 **Discussion section**
Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton, "Toward a Definition of Film Noir" (1955), pp. 5-13

September

M 1 NO CLASS – Labor Day

W 3 Film: Louis Malle, *Elevator to the Gallows* (1957)

F 5 **Discussion section**
Film: Louis Malle, *Elevator to the Gallows* (1957)

M 8 Kristin Ross, "La belle Américaine," *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies. Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (1995), pp. 15-70

W 10 Discussion: mise-en-scène and cinematography

F 12 **Discussion section**
Janey Place and Lowell Peterson, "Some Visual Motifs of *Film Noir*" (1974)
Film: Louis Malle, *Elevator to the Gallows* (1957)

M 15 Conclusions: *Elevator to the Gallows* and French "noir" in '57

The Sources of the French Crime Film

W 17 Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton, "The Sources of Film Noir" (1955), pp. 15-28
Film: Billy Wilder, *Double Indemnity* (1944)
Due: Shot Analysis

F 19 **Discussion section**
Raymond Chandler, "Spanish Blood" (1935)

M 22 Georges Simenon, "The Man in the Street" (1939)

W 24 Ginette Vincendeau, "Noir Is Also a French Word. The French Antecedents of Film noir" (1992)

F 26 **Discussion section**
Film: Julien Duvivier, *Pépé le moko* (1937)

M 29 Film: Julien Duvivier, *Pépé le moko* (1937)

October

W 1 Thomas Elsaesser, "A German Ancestry to Film Noir? Film History and Its Imaginary" (1996)

F 3 **Discussion section**
Thomas Elsaesser, "A German Ancestry to Film Noir? Film History and Its Imaginary" (1996)

M 6 Between Germany and Hollywood: Poetic Realism and American "Noir"

W 8 Film: Julien Duvivier, *Pépé le moko* (1937)

F 10 **Discussion section**
Richard Abel, "The Thrills of *Grande Peur*: Crime Series and Serials in the *Belle Epoque*" (1996)
Film: Louis Feuillade, *Judex* (1916)

M 13 André Breton, *The Surrealist Manifesto*
Robin Walz, "Serial Killings: Fantômas, Feuillade, and the Mass-Culture Genealogy of Surrealism"

W 15 Conclusions: France and/in Noir

French Noir Under the Occupation

F 17 **Discussion section**
Film: Henri-Georges Clouzot, *The Raven* (1943)
In-class shot analysis

M 20 Evelyn Ehrlich, *Cinema of Paradox. French Filmmaking Under the German Occupation* (1985), pp. 1-55

W 22 Clouzot, *The Raven* (1943)

Social Noir and Gender in the Post-War Period

F 24 **Discussion section**
Film: Jacques Becker, *Don't Touch the Loot* (1954)

M 27 Roland Barthes, "Strength and Off-Handedness" (1957)

W 29 Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies. Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (1995)

F	31	Discussion section <u>Film</u> : Jules Dassin, <i>Rififi</i> (1955)
<u>November</u>		
M	3	Jean-Paul Sartre, "Situation of the Writer in 1947" (1948), pp. 204-40
W	5	Albert Camus, "The Myth of Sisyphus" (1955)
F	7	Discussion section <u>Film</u> : Henri-Georges Clouzot, <i>Diabolique</i> (1955)
M	10	Robert G. Porfirio, "No Way Out: Existential Motifs in the <i>Film Noir</i> " (1976) Due : final paper bibliography
W	12	Claude Chabrol, "The Evolution of the Crime Drama" (1955)
F	14	Discussion section <u>Film</u> : Jean-Pierre Melville, <i>Bob the Gambler</i> (1956)
M	17	André Bazin, "The Evolution of Cinematic Language" (1958) Due : Shot analysis 2
W	19	Melville, <i>Bob the Gambler</i> (1956)
Anti-Noir		
F	21	Discussion section <u>Film</u> : Robert Bresson, <i>Pickpocket</i> (1959)
M	24	Bresson, <i>Pickpocket</i> (1959) Due : final paper annotated bibliography and draft thesis statement
W	26	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break
F	28	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break
<u>December</u>		
M	1	François Truffaut, "A Certain Tendency of French Cinema" (date) Due : final paper outline
W	3	<u>Film</u> : Jean-Luc Godard, <i>Band of Outsiders</i> (1964)
F	5	Discussion section Godard, <i>Band of Outsiders</i> (1964)

M	8	Godard, <i>Band of Outsiders</i> (1964)
W	10	<u>Film</u> : Jean-Pierre Melville, <i>The Samurai</i> (1967)
F	12	Discussion section Last day of class: conclusions
T	16	<u>Due</u> : final paper

FR 225, French Film Noir

Overview

This course examines the evolution of the crime thriller in French cinema during the 1940s and 1950s. I propose to offer FR 225 as a Gen Ed course in the area of Intellectual Inquiry (Humanities). In Fall 2008 I taught this course as a UK Honors Program senior proseminar. The proposed FR 225 reconfigures that Honors course as a follow-up to the proposed Gen Ed course, FR 103 (French Cinema), though FR 103 will not be a prerequisite for FR 225. FR 225 will be a lecture course and will enroll sixty students with weekly breakout discussion sections capped at 30 or fewer students, as per the “delivery model” for the Humanities (Curriculum Template Appendix A, I, A, p. 1). The lecturer in French who currently serves as my assistant in the existing FR 103 will be able to continue to work in that capacity for FR 225 and lead several of the proposed discussion groups. The course is taught entirely in English and requires no French language skills.

The history of the French crime film and of the enormously influential “noir style” are areas of inquiry which lend themselves well to an integration of the Humanities learning outcomes described in the Gen Ed curricular templates, as well as to the assessment methods intended to evaluate student achievement of those goals. Students who complete FR 225 are able to identify and describe the primary formal characteristics of the crime film and the noir style. At the same time, they learn in detail the vocabulary of film analysis and are given the critical tools necessary to analyze systematically the properties of the film shot, cinematography, sound, and editing in the specific context of the crime thriller.

French film noir is of crucial importance to a critical identification of the values and presuppositions that underlie world views of different cultures. The story of the French crime film is also the history of Franco-American relations and the cultural and aesthetic exchanges that informed the film traditions of both France and the U.S. The crime films made in Hollywood during the 1940s were heavily influenced by the French poetic realist style of the 1930s. The American films made during and following World War II in turn transformed French film styles in the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, the first formal studies of the American crime thriller were written by French scholars and published in France, and the French coined the term “film noir.” FR 225 is therefore concerned with the nature of American film traditions, as well as with those of France. The importation of Hollywood film styles into France during the 1940s is part and parcel of a larger, more general reception of American culture in France following the war.

In addition to reading and viewing assignments intended to introduce students to the historical context underlying the aesthetic characteristics of the French crime thriller, students engage in FR 225 in a number of critical projects which require them to put the skills of analysis they have learned into practice. Students write several short shot analyses and one longer, more sustained piece of research, both of which develop disciplinary literacy and skills of argumentation. In the case of this latter assignment, students are required to submit thesis statements, annotated bibliographies, abstracts, and rough drafts prior to completing their final papers. They learn to use the library and digital sources of film scholarship, and to make critical use of the secondary research they identify and bring to bear on their own writing.

FR 225: French Film Noir

Additions to syllabus: January 31, 2011

Contact: Jeffrey Peters (jnp@uky.edu)

1. Midterm grades:

The midterm grade for the course will be posted through MyUK no later than the [date]. The midterm grade will be calculated based on exams and assignments submitted before this date.

2. Making up missed exams:

Since the exams are listed on the syllabus well in advance, no excuses will be accepted for missing an exam. The ONLY exceptions to this policy are those occasions of need specified in *Student Rights & Responsibilities*. For situations that meet these criteria, the specified make-up procedure will be followed. The student is always responsible for contacting the instructor in these cases; I will not seek you out if we notice you have not turned in an exam. Please note that if you miss a make-up exam time, you will not be able to make up the exam at another time. The make-up exam must be taken, if circumstances allow, within one week of the original exam date, or within one week of your return from an excused absence. Failure to fulfill these conditions will result in a grade of **zero** on that exam.

3. Submission of assignments:

Late work is not be accepted. All late work will be scored as a zero. Assignments are due at the beginning of class (within the first five minutes of the start of class) and are to be typed, double spaced, Times New Roman 12. Emailed assignments are not accepted and will be scored as a zero. For excused absences, the assignment is due within one week after the student returns to class. See policy on excused absences for more information.

4. Unexcused absences:

In order for unexcused absences to be counted by the instructor, students must provide written, verifiable evidence of the reasons for the absence.

5. Classroom behavior:

Despite the large enrollment of the class, I *do* know you're there and I *can* see you.

Please note the following (these guidelines pertain both to lecture and to discussion sections):

- You may bring a drink to class, but please DO NOT EAT in class;
- Don't chat with friends or do distracting things if you're occasionally bored. If you *are* bored from time to time, please humor your instructor and pretend you're not. Otherwise, bring a book to read quietly and unobtrusively or do homework for another class. At the very least, sit quietly and wait for the pain to subside at the end of the hour;
- Do not under any circumstances read a newspaper during class;
- Do not pack up your books before class is over. Class ends at 1:50 and I promise that I will let you out of class on time. Students packing up early is annoying to all instructors;

- **LAPTOPS:** you may not use a laptop in this class to take notes; legitimate exceptions to this policy (learning disability, etc.) need to be worked out with the instructor at the start of the semester;
- **CELL PHONES:** turn them off – before you enter the classroom;
- **TEXT MESSAGING:** don't do it - ever; if I see you texting in this class, I will tell you to leave;
- **TALKING/MAKING NOISE:** If you cannot sit for 50 minutes without talking, please do not come to class. If you talk to your friends in class, I will tell you to stop. If you continue to talk, I will tell you to leave class. And if that doesn't work, I will drop you from the class.