

**FMP 403 – INDEPENDENT FILM**  
**Fall 2022 – Session B**  
**Course # 71501/80391**

**Course Website:** <https://courses.hol.asu.edu/courses/independentfilm-b/>

**Instructor:** Joe Fortunato  
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Office: Zoom, Skype, Vidyo, Google Meet, etc.  
Virtual Office Hours: By Appointment via E-Mail  
or click on <https://calendly.com/joseph-fortunato>

Email Subject: FMP 403[followed by your question]

**Teaching Assistants:**  
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**NOTE: This is a 7 WEEK COURSE that covers the same material as a 15-week semester. If you cannot handle a compressed schedule or rigid deadlines, you may want to consider a different course! NO late assignments or exams are permitted unless it is a documented medical emergency. If you are having difficulty, ask for help before things are due! All due dates and times are ARIZONA time zone.**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines the history of independent filmmaking, with a specific focus on the American independent filmmaking traditions and how those traditions are influenced by and in turn influence other filmmaking practices (including Hollywood studio filmmaking, foreign films, avant-garde films, etc.)

This is an ONLINE course, with material divided between online lectures, required readings, and both required and suggested viewings. Students will be evaluated through quizzes, participation and contribution to online discussions, and written assignments designed to meet and reflect course objectives.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Analyze independent filmmaking aesthetics in relation to conventional film aesthetics
- Evaluate independent film as a professional practice in relation to the mainstream American film industry

- Compare both the personal and political elements of independent film in relation to contemporary cultural studies and practices
- Apply advanced academic research to analyze independent filmmaking practices, theory, and independent film criticism

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon successfully completing this course, the student will:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the individuals, institutions, and innovative practices that significantly impacted the history of independent film
- Understand current industrial practice where independently made films intersect with popular film/media productions in a variety of media marketplaces
- Demonstrate an appreciation for the ways in which independent film represents the distinct and unique perspective of both individuals and groups that are not typically expressed or represented in contemporary culture

**Announcements and updates:** The professor will communicate with the students via email and through Announcements on the main page of the course website. Be sure your **ASU email** is working properly. **We ONLY USE ASU.EDU email! Check the Announcements and your email regularly for updates and pertinent information!**

**PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT PROFESSOR FORTUNATO HANDLES LECTURE AND COURSE CONTENT QUESTIONS ONLY. IF YOU HAVE TECHNICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COURSE WEBSITE OR HOW TO OPERATE IT, SEE BELOW.**

### **Technical Support (PLEASE READ!)**

**Please do not contact your instructor with technical questions.** Herberger Online handles all technical questions and issues that may arise in this course.

Please contact the support team **immediately** if you encounter technical issues while completing an assignment or exam and you are unable to resolve the problem and reset your work.

The Herberger Online support team is available to assist you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You may reach them anytime at:

- holsupport@asu.edu
- 1-888-298-4117
- 480-965-3057 (International)

When contacting support, please provide:

- The full name of this course (ABC 123: Long Name)
- The title(s) of any assignment(s) you're having trouble with
- A brief description of the problem
- Detailed, step-by-step instructions to reproduce the problem

## **WEBSITE & LOG-IN**

**Please note that ALL class activities take place at this Herberger website.**  
<https://courses.hol.asu.edu/courses/independentfilm-b/> We do NOT use Canvas for this class.

Your login for the FMP201 site is your normal ASURITE login name and password.  
Account information can be found at: <https://herbergeronline.asu.edu/services/accounts.php>

If you have any trouble using that name or password to log in, contact Herberger Online help as noted above. The Teaching Assistants and I cannot help in this area, so you MUST contact Herberger Online for all tech help now and, in the future, that includes any issues with the website, exams, or assignment submissions. You can copy the instructor via email after you create a report online as instructed above.

## **TECHNICAL MINIMUMS**

Since this course is delivered entirely via the Internet, the student is responsible for making sure the computer he or she uses to access course materials meets or exceeds the specified computer requirements as listed on the course website. Also, due to the media content of this course, you will be required to set up and configure a media player that will consistently play the digital audio or video files delivered via the course website.

## **PLEASE NOTE**

The student is encouraged either not to enroll, or to drop this course immediately, if he or she does not have at least some computer experience, or if he or she is unwilling or unprepared to assume the added responsibility of an online course. Required skills include downloading files, surfing the net, conferring via email, and a general intermediate computer skill-set.

In addition, this course shall require considerable attention to deadline and prompt session-by-session attention as exams and assignments shall only remain open for a brief period of time and will not be re-opened on an individual basis. If you are unable to devote the time and attention required by the course on a regular basis, please do not remain enrolled, as this is not a course that can be "crammed" at the end of the term. See the Course Schedule

on the course website (follow the Schedule link) for a detailed course breakdown and exam and assignment due dates. **Note that you must read the Assignment and Exam columns separately as they each contain a specific set of due dates.**

**GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:**

DISCUSSION POSTS (3 @ 50 each)	150 points
UNIT ONE QUIZ	100 points
UNIT TWO QUIZ	100 points
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS	
Short Essays (2 @ 100 each)	200 points
72 Hour Assignment	100 points
FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL	50 points
FINAL PROJECT (Paper or Video)	300 points
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TOTAL	1000 points

**GRADING SCALE:**

A+	970-1000	B-	786-820
A	926-969	C+	761-785
A-	890-925	C	680-760
B+	861-889	D	600-679
B	821-860	E or other failing mark	– 0-599

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIAL:**

**Video Lectures**

The primary “text” of this course are the video lectures that are delivered by Professor Jason Davids Scott and produced by Herberger Online. These lectures vary in length up to about 40 minutes; be sure that you schedule your time appropriately.

**Films**

Many suggested films are available via the streaming website Fandor. ([www.fandor.com](http://www.fandor.com)): many are also available elsewhere, though they might require pay-per-view. We also recommend the resource Kanopy, which is free with your ASU tuition. <http://asu.kanopystreaming.com/>

There are also several assignments where your instructor will ask you to find a film of your own to watch and review. Most films on Fandor or Kanopy will qualify for

these assignments; if you want to watch a film available elsewhere (such as Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, etc.) then be sure to check with your instructor.

Finally, another great resource is [JustWatch.com](http://JustWatch.com). This site will tell you if/where a film (or tv show) streams and if it's free or costs money. Keep in mind some indie films might not be found on JustWatch.com, but it's definitely a good place to start your search!

## Readings

The course website will have a "Readings" section that will contain links to articles and other materials that are entirely accessible online. Some material will require you to log in with your ASU ID and password so that you may access the e-books available through the ASU library.

## TESTING PROCEDURES

**Should you experience problems logging on to a test, email Herberger Online tech help IMMEDIATELY so there is a record of your problem.** Also, fill out a computer help problem report. A link to the form is located on the course materials page of the class website. Tests will not be accepted in printed form or via email or attachment. Tests are NOT to be taken as a group effort. If such activity is observed, either physically or through computer records, all students involved will be called to account. Sanctions will be in accordance with the student code of conduct and the rules against academic dishonesty enforced by the university.

**NO early or late exams will be given.** The multiple-choice exams have a time limit of 40 minutes in which you must complete each test. You will lose 1 point as a penalty for every 2 minutes you go over the 40 minutes allowed so time yourself! **Only begin the exam when you are ready to complete it entirely.** You may not open it up, then go back to it later, or your score may not post. Also, **DO NOT have multiple windows or tabs open while taking an Exam or you may lose your work! Exam window/tab only!** Upon completion, your scores will be posted in the course grade checker that can be accessed via your course account. To find out what your course account is go to <http://herbergeronline.asu.edu/accounts>.

**I highly suggest getting a screenshot of your successful completion of an exam (and even an assignment submission). This could protect you if there is a tech error and we don't have any record of your submission.**

## STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

*I strongly suggest making a schedule for yourself week-by-week, so you can set aside time to watch lectures, do readings/research, watch appropriate films, and complete*

*assignments and quizzes on time. Whether it is 60 minutes a day, or two or three days where you can devote a couple of hours, try to pace yourself and not Spring behind. What follows is a suggested “order” to approach all of the course material on a unit-by-unit basis.*

*Another tip is to watch movies and lectures uninterrupted and without distraction. Shut off your phones and close the other tabs on your web browser; consider taking notes that recall key points from lecture.*

### **Writing Assignments**

**Make sure to use MLA in-text citations AND include a Works Cited page for each assignment** (citation page is not part of your page/word count). **You must cite any information that comes from the text or lecture (whether you quote it directly or not).** The most common way students lose points on assignments is by NOT citing all sources. Do not make this mistake! **For help in formatting MLA style, buy the MLA Handbook, or use The Owl at Purdue online:**

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>. For an online class, you would use either the examples for “electronic sources” or “Lectures” (and replace location with URL).

**You should also read the “writing guidelines” document on the front page of our class website.**

**COURSE SCHEDULE BEGINS NEXT PAGE:**

## COURSE SCHEDULE

This course is divided into three units, with a quiz scheduled at the conclusion of units 1 and 2.

### WEEK 1-2: UNIT ONE – INDIE FORM AND TECHNIQUE

#### Objectives for this unit:

- Describe how independent films use specific formal techniques that differ from conventional filmmaking.
- Explain the relationship between independent film techniques and non-cinematic forms, including visual art, music, literature, and performance.

#### Lesson One: Introduction

Video Lecture: What is an Indie Film?

Discussion Post 1: Introduction Assignment  
**DUE MONDAY OCT 17, 11:59 PM**

#### Lesson Two: Formal Techniques

Video Lectures: Part One: Indie Film History  
Part Two: Basic Film Form and Conventions  
Part Three: A History of Avant-Garde Films

Readings: Articles by Rabinowitz and Metz  
Reviews of “Shadows”  
“Shadows” website

Watch: “Shadows”  
(<http://asu.kanopystreaming.com/video/shadows-0>) or  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPGM3nH0\\_2Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPGM3nH0_2Y)

Assignment: Essay #1 – “Shadows” and Formal Technique  
700-900 word essay  
**DUE FRIDAY October 21, 11:59 PM**

**Lesson Three: Indie Films and Narrative**

**Video Lectures: Narrative and Storytelling**

**Readings: Articles about “Slacker”**

**Watch: “Slacker”**

<https://youtu.be/jB4xLYKAVCQ>

<https://www.fandor.com/films/slacker>

**Watch an ADDITIONAL film from list provided on the Essay 2 prompt; Or suggest one via e-mail or discussion post**

**END OF UNIT QUIZ: WEDNESDAY, October 26, 11:59 PM**

**Assignment: Essay #2 – Your selected film and narrative  
700-900 word essay**

**DUE WEDNESDAY, October 26, 11:59 PM**

**WEEK 3-4: UNIT TWO - INDIE BUSINESS**

**Objectives for this unit:**

- Explain how “independent” has been historically defined in comparison to conventional filmmaking financing, production, and distribution.
- Identify the ways in which specific terms relate to the production and distribution of independent film as defined by various film communities.
- Determine how current independent films and their position and place affect today’s film/media marketplace.

**Lesson Four: Understanding Studio and Indie Filmmaking Practices**

**Video Lecture: Early Indie Pioneers and the Studio System**

**Readings: Articles about Oscar Micheaux  
Articles about Alice Guy-Blache**



Watch: Short Films

“The Immigrant”

<https://youtu.be/ycLOeCLJ9V0>

“The Playhouse”

<https://youtu.be/YtQz6tpBN3A>

“The Life and Death of 9413: A Hollywood Extra”

<https://vimeo.com/212551702>

“Mystery of the Leaping Fish”

<https://youtu.be/fprVONwmYnc>

“The Musketeers of Pig Alley”

<https://archive.org/details/TheMusketeersOfPigAlley>

Discussion Post 2: Who Would You Want to Work With?  
**DUE FRIDAY, November 4, 11:59 PM**

Lesson Five: New Definitions and Post-War Paradigms

Video Lecture: Deregulation and the Indie Audience

Readings: Article by Kinkade and Katovich  
Selections from AFI History of Amer. Cinema

Assignment: FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL  
**DUE TUESDAY, November 8, 11:59 PM**

Lesson Six: Indie Practices Today

Video Lecture: The Festival Era

Readings: Selections from AFI History of Amer. Cinema

**END OF UNIT QUIZ: FRIDAY, November 11, 11:59 PM**

Assignment: 72 Hour Assignment  
**Due MONDAY, November 14, 11:59 PM**

WEEK 5-6: UNIT THREE - INDIE SPIRIT

Objectives for this unit:

- Explain how independent films can be understood and examined in relation to a specific filmmaker's cultural identity and personal/political beliefs.
- Analyze how independent films represent specific identities and practices from underrepresented groups including consideration of gender, race, region, religion, sexual identity, class, etc.

**Lesson Seven: Understanding Independent Films**

**Video Lectures:** Part One: Indie Film and Race/Ethnicity  
 Part Two: Queer Identity and Politics  
 Part Three: Regional Film  
 Part Four: Technology and Indie Film

**Discussion Post 3:** Underrepresented groups and identities  
**DUE BY FRIDAY, November 18 – 11:59 PM**

**Lesson Eight: Understanding Independent Filmmakers**

**Video Lectures:** Part One: Indie and the Auteur Filmmaker  
 Part Two: Case Study – Linklater  
 Part Three: Final Remarks

**Readings:** As required for your project (research)

**Assignment:** Final Paper or Video Project  
 1500-1750 word essay or 5-7 minute video or  
 Pedagogy Portfolio  
**DUE BY MON, November 28 – 11:59 PM**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY / PLAGIARISM**

All students are expected to abide by the policies located on the ASU website at <https://provost.asu.edu/academic-integrity>. This policy lists violations in detail that include but are not limited to:

1. Cheating on an academic evaluation or assignment.
2. Plagiarizing.
3. Academic deceit, such as fabricating data or information.
4. Aiding academic integrity policy violations and inappropriately collaborating.
5. Falsifying academic records.

Many students receive conflicting information on what is or is not considered a violation of the academic integrity policy: if you have a question, please ask the instructor for clarification.

Students who violate these policies will be subject to penalty at the discretion of the instructor, who may issue a penalty related to the assignment or the final grade, as appropriate, and according to the procedures detailed in the policy. The instructor may also choose to report the violation to University administration and/or administer a grade of “XE” for violations of the academic integrity policy.

### **POLICY REGARDING THREATENING BEHAVIOR**

Even though this is an online course, all students are expected to behave and communicate in accordance with the ASU Student Code of Conduct (<https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct>). Any discussion posts, e-mails, or other forms of communication that include threatening, demeaning, or deliberately inflammatory language will be subject to discipline under this policy and may result in discipline, including a reduced grade, removal from the class, and/or reporting to ASU administration.

### **NOTICE ABOUT MATERIAL**

Some of the material that students watch or that is referred to in the lectures might be considered unusual, challenging, or unappealing to certain viewers. Viewers with particular sensitivities might want to communicate with the instructor before class starts about any concerns.

### **DRC ACCOMMODATIONS**

Any student who requires special accommodations for quizzes, exams, assignment, or accessing course material must complete an evaluation and request through the Disabilities Resource Center. Further information is available at <https://eoss.asu.edu/drc>. DRC will work with the instructor to ensure that all students have appropriate access and resources to facilitate success in this class.

### **TITLE IX**

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at:

<http://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs/students>

As an employee of ASU, I am a mandated reporter and obligated to report instances of reported or suspected incidences of sexual harassment.

### **Course Copyright**

Students must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student's original work, unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement.

Helpful Contact numbers:

- Counseling Services (Tempe campus) (480) 965-6146
- Empact 24 Hour Crisis Line (480) 921-1006
- Health Services (480) 965-3349
- Student Success Center (480) 965-9072
- Student Rights and Responsibilities (480) 965-6547
- Disability Resource Center (480) 965-1234