

Action Film

Dr. Anastasia Klimchynskaya

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Tue, 4:15-6:30

Office hours: by appt.

Required Texts:

All readings will be made available through Sakai. The majority of the films you will be asked to view are available via the Loyola University library subscriptions to services such as Kanopy (search the library catalog to access them) or will be screened during class; you will be asked to rent a small number of the films on the syllabus.

Assignments/Evaluations

Attendance and Participation – 20%

Weekly Sakai Posts – 25%

Be a Film Reviewer! – 15%

Group Reading Presentation – 15%

Final Paper – 25%

Attendance and Participation 20%

This includes attendance (I will take attendance!), paying attention (I can tell if you're scrolling social media on your laptop), and participation (the class is largely lecture-based, but there will be points where I will ask for your participation and comments). You are expected to complete all viewing/reading assignments in advance of class, and come prepared to offer your thoughts on them.

Group Reading Presentation 15%

In groups of 3-4, you will give a 5-7 minute presentation to the class on one of the readings. You should read the text carefully, research its context and author, and lay out the key arguments of the piece and their relevance to [what we've been talking about in class].

Be a film reviewer! 15%

Go to the movies! (Or, stay home and use a streaming service). In either case, you must watch a new action film (released at some point during the past year) and write a review of it (2 pages, ~1000 words) What is the film about? What genre is it? What conversations, ideas, or histories is it engaging with or responding to? What is it trying to do? Does it do it well?

Final Paper/Multimedia Research Project 20%

Instead of a final exam, you will write 6-8 pages (1200-1500 words) of text with sources, images and links. (Images do not count towards the page count). Focusing on a film(s) we have viewed in class (or another, in consultation with me), you will analyze it in its historical context, identifying internal structure and key motifs/tropes/conventions, and analyzing broadcast/distribution history and impact. You must include images, links, or creative forms of media analysis—e.g. interviews or emails with scholars, etc. If you have questions or need help seeking out sources or engaging in the research required for this project, do not hesitate to contact me. *You are strongly encouraged to discuss your topic with me beforehand.* Extensions will only be granted in extenuating circumstances. "I don't know what I'm writing about and the due date is

tomorrow” does not count as an extenuating circumstance.
You will present/screen a 2 minute overview of your work in class.

Course Policies and Expectations:

- Attendance is mandatory. Students must be in class on time to be considered present. Except in cases involving medical issues or a similar emergency (this includes being sick. PLEASE STAY HOME IF YOU'RE SICK), failure to do so will affect your attendance/participation grade.
- DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE SICK. *You will not be penalized for missing class due to illness.*
- You are expected to be present both physically *and* mentally during each class session. This includes participation in class discussions and note-taking.
- Note-taking is essential. This will help you absorb the material, be prepared to meaningfully contribute to in-class and Sakai discussions, and develop the analytical and critical skills that you can take from this class and into your lives.
- Cellphone use is not permitted in the classroom. This includes speaking on the phone, texting, other forms of messaging, watching videos, or scrolling social media. Cell phones should be silenced and put away for the duration of the class. This is a gesture of respect towards me and your classmates, and a way to ensure that you are fully present. Failure to do so *will* affect your attendance and participation grade.
- Similarly, laptops are allowed for taking notes. They are not allowed for scrolling Instagram/Facebook, messaging your friends, or doing homework for another class. This *will* affect your attendance and participation grade.
- Take notes while watching the assigned films/during in-class screenings! These will help you identify important stylistic elements, themes, motifs, representations, etc. that are important to the analysis of the film.
- Work must be turned in on time. Speak with me *before* the deadline if you have a conflict. We are still living through a pandemic, and we all have stressors outside of school. Emergencies happen, and I am understanding and empathetic to that fact. I am willing to give extensions, meet one-on-one, and offer guidance to help you succeed, but you *must* communicate with me when problems arise.
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question. Please see below for the School of Communication's full policy on academic integrity.

School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty. Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. These examples of academic dishonesty apply to both individual and group assignments. Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher;

- Providing information to another student during an examination;
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination;
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor;
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted;
- Taking an examination by proxy. Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy.
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom;
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit;
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.
- Submitting the same work for credit in two or more classes, even if the classes are taken in different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of F; or the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication. Instructors must provide the appropriate information and documentation when they suspect an instance of academic misconduct has occurred. The instructor must also notify the student of their findings and sanction. The Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of

multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans. Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.

Student Accommodations

Loyola University Chicago provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC). Professors will receive an accommodation notification from SAC, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with their professor individually in order to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential. Please note that in this class, software may be used to audio record class lectures in order to provide equitable access to students with disabilities. Students approved for this accommodation use recordings for their personal study only and recordings may not be shared with other people or used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are recorded as part of the class activity. Recordings are deleted at the end of the semester. For more information about registering with SAC or questions about accommodations, please contact SAC at 773-508-3700 or SAC@luc.edu. **You are also welcome to reach out to me personally for help navigating this process, questions or concerns, or regarding any needs you feel have not been addressed.**

Title IX Notice of Reporting Obligations for Responsible Campus Partners

As an instructor, I am considered a Responsible Campus Partner ("RCP") under Loyola's Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation (located at www.luc.edu/equity). While my goal is for you to be able to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, I want to be transparent that as a RCP I am required to report certain disclosures of sexual misconduct (such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner and/or domestic violence, and/or stalking) to the University's Title IX Coordinator. As an instructor, I also have a mandatory obligation under Illinois law to report disclosures of or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect (<https://www.luc.edu/hr/legalnotices/mandatedreportingofchildabuseandneglect/>). The purpose of these reporting requirements is for the University to inform students who have experienced sexual/gender-based violence of available resources and support. Such a report will not generate a report to law enforcement (no student will ever be forced to file a report with the police). Furthermore, the University's resources and supports are available to all students even if a student

chooses that they do not want any other action taken. Please note that in certain situations, based on the nature of the disclosure, the University may need to take additional action to ensure the safety of the University community. If you have any questions about this policy, you may contact the Office for Equity & Compliance at equity@luc.edu or 773-508-7766. If you wish to speak with a confidential resource regarding gender-based violence, I encourage you to call The Line at 773-494-3810. The Line is staffed by confidential advocates from 8:30am-5pm M-F and 24 hours on the weekend when school is in session. Advocates can provide support, talk through your options (medical, legal, LUC reporting, safety planning, etc.), and connect you with additional resources as needed. More information can be found at luc.edu/coalition or luc.edu/wellness.

Schedule

September 5 Introduction; The Swashbuckler and Early Action Film

Introductory discussion; presentation sign-ups

Watch: *Captain Blood* (in class)

September 12 The Western

Film: *A Fistful of Dollars* (in class)

Discuss *Fistful of Dollars* and *Captain Blood*

Read: Neale, "Action Adventure as a Hollywood Genre"

September 19 Hard Bodies; the Action-Adventure Blockbuster

Film: *Rambo: First Blood* (in class)

Read: Y. Tasker, "Masculinity, Politics and National Identity"

September 26

Film: *Die Hard*

Yvonne Tasker, "Masculinity, the body, and the voice in contemporary action cinema."

Presentations on both Tasker texts

October 3 Masculinity and Technology in the Action Film

Film: *The Terminator* (in class)

Read: Yvonne Tasker, "Tough Guys and Wise-Guys: Masculinities and Star Images"

October 10 NO CLASS; FALL BREAK

October 17 Revising Hypermasculinity and the Female Action Hero

Film: *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*

Read: Marianne Kac-Vergne, « Losing Visibility? The Rise and Fall of Hypermasculinity in Science Fiction Films, » *InMedia*, <https://journals.openedition.org/inmedia/491>

Presentations on all *Terminator* readings

October 24 Masculinity and Technology (Revised)

Film: *The Matrix* (in class)

Read: Ndalianis, Angela. "The Frenzy of the Visible: Spectacle and Motion in the Era of the Digital." *Senses of Cinema*; Aylish Wood, "The Collapse of Reality and Illusion in the Matrix."

Optional reading: Jenkins on transmedia storytelling

October 31 Authenticity and Spectacle in the Action Movie

Mission Impossible Rogue Nation (in class)

FILM REVIEW DUE

November 7 *Mission Impossible* continued

Read: Justin Owen Rawlins, "The Authentically Bruised Cruise: Tom Cruise, *Mission: Impossible*, and Extreme Performative Labor."

November 14 Superhero Movies and Spectacle

Film: *Wonder Woman*

Read: "Wonder Woman" (review by Cait Coker), *The Last Amazon*

Optional reading: Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

November 21 *The Video Game Action Movie*

Film: *Edge of Tomorrow* (in class)

Read: Nick Schager. "Edge of Tomorrow: The Pinnacle of Video-Game Cinema" *Vulture.com* (2014)

November 28 (virtual)

Film: *The Old Guard* (in class)

Read: TBD

December 5 (virtual)

Final presentations!