



## Film Noir Undergraduate Course Information Guide

**Course Number: CCA 215 - 2 credits, 5 Weeks**  
**Cross listed Course Number: AI 215 - 2 credits, 5 Weeks**  
**Delivery Formats: Online Async, On Campus, Online: Sync**

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### Course Description

In this course we will screen and discuss select noir films and develop skills of viewing and analyzing them closely. Highlighted topics will include the concept of genre in film; the relationship of genre codes to creativity; the dynamics of form and content; the tension between commerce and art; the auteur theory; psychologies of the divided self; representations of masculinity and femininity; and the question of what these films say about American society, post-World War II.

### Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Describe the concept of film noir and its key features
- Discuss, in both verbal and written discourse, select works of film noir
- Analyze such works closely in both verbal and written discourse

If in a SCPS competence program, (BAIFA, BAC, BAGB, BAECE), this course addresses the following requirements:

Competence	Competence Statement / Criteria
A1D	Think and write critically about the representation of phenomena such as subjectivity, gender, violence, desire and social status in such works.
A1X	Think and write critically about concepts such as form & content, film grammar, genre code, and the auteur theory.
A5	Think and write critically about ways in which theories of and

debates about creativity tie in with the subject matter.

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## Learning Strategies and Resources

Some learning activities, assignments and deadlines will vary depending on the delivery format of the course and may differ slightly from what is presented in this document.

A variety of learning strategies will be employed in the course, including screenings; classroom lectures and discussions; print readings; journals entries; and a short paper.

## Required Readings

Books and learning materials are available at the DePaul bookstore, at <http://depaul-loop.bncollege.com>, or through alternative sources.

Hirsch, Foster. *The Dark Side of the Screen: Film Noir*. Da Capo Press. 2008. ISBN 978 0 30681772 4.

Additional readings available on Electronic Reserve, at the [DePaul Library](#). Login to Ares Course Reserves and select the course. Log in using your Campus Connect User ID and password. You will then get a page listing the courses in which you're enrolled that have readings posted in Ares. Click on the title of this course and the list of our electronic reserve readings will be displayed.

Also, you're required to screen our Week 3 film *Laura* outside of class. It is widely available from streaming services or may be found at your local library.

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## Learning Deliverables

**Class participation.** Students are expected to do the appropriate reading for each class session in a timely fashion. They are also expected to demonstrate that they have done so by participating in class discussion. In addition, students will submit the following pieces of written work:

**Journal entries.** Each week (excepting week 1 and including week 6, when we do not meet), students will submit a journal entry (around 4-500 words, typed, double-spaced) on the previous week's film. A format for journal entries appears on p. 8 of this syllabus, after the Schedule of Screening, Readings and Topics.

**Final Paper.** By Week 6 (that is, by March 18th, when we do not meet), each student will submit a short paper (about 5-6 pages – i.e., 1200-1500 words long) on one of the films which the course has highlighted, approached through the lens of the competence she/he is fulfilling in the course. Details on the Final Paper assignment will be discussed and distributed in handout form in class.

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## Assessment of Student Learning

### Grading Practices

A single journal entry is worth a maximum of 9 points, with 9 points indicating excellent work; 4.5 points indicating average work; and 2 or fewer points indicating work that is somehow lacking. In addition to allotting points, the instructor will provide written feedback on each journal entry. In journal entries, I am mostly looking for you to register a thoughtful response to the viewing experience in light of the 6 questions contained in the journal format.

The Short Paper will be graded as follows:

A grade of A designates work of high quality, (36-40 pts).

A grade of B designates work of good quality, (32-35 pts).

A grade of C designates work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment, (28-34 pts).

A grade of D designates work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment, (24-27 pts).

Attendance Requirements. A student who misses more than one class session will not have met the requirements for a passing grade.

Late Submissions. Throughout the course, assignments that are submitted late will receive reduced points and assignments that are more than two weeks late will receive zero points.

### Distribution of Grade Points

Attendance	5 pts
Class participation	10 pts
Journal entries (5)	45 pts
Short paper	40 pts

### Grading Scale

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80

C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

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## Course Schedule

Week and Module Title	Readings	Assignments
Week 1, Module 1:		Screening of Double Indemnity  Discussion; The basics of film noir; The literary and cinematic sources of film noir style;
Week 2, Module 2:	Hirsch, chapter 4, "The Crazy Mirror: Noir Stylistics" [Do NOT read pp. 73-75]  Chandler, D., "An Introduction to Genre Theory" (E)  Chandler, R. "The Simple Art of Murder" (E)	Screening of Out of the Past;  Discussion; Icons, types and plots in film noir; Conceptions of genre in cinema; Culture, 'high' and 'low'  Submit: Journal entry on Double Indemnity
Week 3, Module 3:	Hirsch, chapter 5, "The Noir Director" [Do NOT read pp. 120-121; Stop at 139]  Blaser, "No Place for a Woman: The Family. . ." [Read sections 1-4 only] (E)  Boden, "Creativity in a Nutshell," [Read pp. 1-5 only] (E)	Screen Laura at home, before class meeting;  Discussion; Gender and psychology in film noir  Submit: Journal entry on Out of the Past

<p>Week 4, Module 4:</p>	<p>Hirsch, chapter 6, "The Noir Actor"  Sanford, "The Shadow" (E)  Blaser, "No Place for a Woman: The Family. . ." [Read sections 5-9] (E)</p>	<p>Screening of Shadow of a Doubt;  Discussion; The un-lived life; The anxieties of middle-class life; The country and the city in noir  Submit: Journal entry on Laura</p>
<p>Week 5, Module 5:</p>	<p>Hirsch, chapter 7, "Down These Mean Streets: Narrative Patterns"  Anderson, "Cold War America, "1945-1960" (E)</p>	<p>Screening of Kiss Me Deadly; The PI reconsidered; Noir and the Cold War; The "decadence" of noir; The legacy of noir  Submit: Journal entry on Shadow of a Doubt  Journal entry on Kiss Me Deadly  Short Paper</p>

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## Course Policies

For access to all SCPS and DePaul University academic policies, refer to the following links:

[SCPS Student Resources Website](#)

[DePaul Student Handbook](#)

The [D2L Course Website](#) for this course.

## Course Syllabus

The official syllabus for this course that includes course dates, instructor information and quarter specific details will be provided by the course instructor by the start of the course and available on the course D2L website.

## Course Registration

To find out when this course will be offered next, you can go to the [SCPS Registration website](#) for details on how to register for the course.

For information on how this course can apply to your program, contact your academic advisor.

### **School of Continuing and Professional Studies**

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