The Films of Ingmar Bergman

Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007) was arguably the greatest filmmaker of the twentieth century. His career spanned over sixty years and includes such works as the sophisticated comedy *Smiles of a Summer Night* (1955), the allegorical *Seventh Seal* (1957), the avant-garde *Persona* (1966), the masterful television adaptation of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* (1975), and the television miniseries *Fanny and Alexander* (1982). He also wrote scripts for many other filmmakers, including Bille August and Liv Ullmann. In 2003, he directed the television film *Saraband* (2003), and in recent years many of his films have been adapted for the stage both in Sweden and elsewhere.

This course is intended as an introduction both to the films of Ingmar Bergman and to the viewing of films in general. We will look at representative films by this prolific and gifted filmmaker, considering them in the contexts of the director's life, Scandinavian culture, and issues of film theory and aesthetics.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING: One two-page paper (5%); one five-page paper which may be rewritten (25%); one storyboard (10%) accompanied by a five-page essay (25%), and five quizzes (25%; you may drop the lowest grade). Class participation will count 10%.

ATTENDANCE: This is a small class and your attendance and participation are important. If you are absent for more than three classes, your grade will go down by 1/3 of a grade for every subsequent absence – i.e. from B to B-, etc. It is also important that you come on time. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will be counted absent for ½ of that class.

ELECTRONICS POLICY: All electronic devices—including mobile phones, note- and netbooks, ipods, and ipads—must be put away before the start of class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Please let me know by the third day of class at the latest if you have a disability that has been certified by SSD, Services for Students with Disabilities. See [http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ SSD website](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/resp_fac.php) or the SSD website for more information.

Late papers will not be accepted unless you have made arrangements with me in advance.

REQUIRED TEXTS (for purchase and available on reserve at PCL):

- Braudy and Cohen: *Film Theory and Criticism* (FTC on syllabus), 6th ed. on
Films are on reserve for library use only at the UGL Media Center. Many of them can also be rented at local video stores, especially Vulcan Video, Waterloo Video, and I Love Video. Netflix has most of them, as well.

You may want to purchase some of these films, especially the one you choose for your sequence analysis. Criterion and MGM have put out excellent versions of many of the films required for this class. See also Criterion’s excellent box of five films Bergman either scripted or directed in the 1940s and very early 1950s (under their Eclipse label). *Prison* is available only in a PAL version (region 0) through Tartan Video. Try [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) or [www.tartanvideo.com](http://www.tartanvideo.com).

### SYLLABUS

**Week One:**

**FILMS:** *The Ingmar Bergman File; Fanny and Alexander, Document: Fanny and Alexander; Port of Call, Prison*

**READING:** Cowie: Chapters 1-3; Bordwell and Thompson: Chapter 2: “The Significance of Film Form,”

June 3 *The Ingmar Bergman File; Fanny and Alexander*

June 4 *Fanny and Alexander; Document: Fanny and Alexander, Saraband*

**Week Two:**

**FILMS:** *Port of Call; Prison, Sawdust and Tinsel; Monika*

**READING:** Cowie: Chapters 4-5; Bordwell and Thompson: Chapter 3: “Narrative as a Formal System,” and 4: “The Shot: Mise-en-Scène”; FTC Mulvey: “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (837-848); FTC: I: Film Language (1-8); Pudovkin and Eisenstein (9-42);

June 7 *Port of Call*

June 8 *Port of Call; Prison; Mulvey*

June 9 *Prison; Sawdust and Tinsel*

June 10 *Sawdust and Tinsel* Pudovkin and Eisenstein
Week Three:
FILMS: Monika; Smiles of a Summer Night; The Seventh Seal; Wild Strawberries
June 14 Monika; Bordwell and Thompson: Chapter 5; Lacan
2-PAGE PAPER DUE IN CLASS
June 15 Smiles of a Summer Night
June 16 Smiles of a Summer Night; The Seventh Seal
June 17 The Seventh Seal
June 18 Wild Strawberries
Quiz 2

Week Four:
FILMS: The Magician; Through a Glass Darkly; Persona
READING: Cowie: Chapters 8-9; Bordwell and Thompson: Chapter 7: “Sound in the Cinema,” and 8: Summary: Style as a Formal System”; FTC: Benjamin: “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (731-51); FTC: Balazs: “The Close-up” and “The Face of Man” (304-311); Barthes: “The Face of Garbo” (536-38)
June 21 Wild Strawberries; Balazs, Barthes
FIRST 5-PAGE PAPER DUE IN CLASS
June 22 The Magician
June 23 The Magician; Benjamin; Through a Glass Darkly
June 24 Through a Glass Darkly
June 25 Persona
Quiz 3

Week Five:
FILMS: The Passion of Anna; Cries and Whispers; The Magic Flute
READING: Cowie: Chapters 10-12; Bordwell and Thompson: Chapter 11: “Film Criticism: Critical Analyses,” and Appendix: “Writing a Critical Analysis of a Film”
June 28 Persona
June 29 The Passion of Anna
June 30 The Passion of Anna; Cries and Whispers
July 1 Cries and Whispers; The Magic Flute
SECOND 5-PAGE PAPER DUE IN CLASS
July 2 The Magic Flute
Quiz 4

Week Six:
FILMS: Scenes from a Marriage; Saraband
READING: Cowie: Chapters 13-16; Bordwell and Thompson: Chapter 12: “Film Art and Film History”

July 5  
*Scenes from a Marriage*

July 6  
*Scenes from a Marriage; Saraband*

July 7  
*Saraband*

**LAST DAY TO TURN IN REWRITES**

July 8  
Concluding discussion

**Quiz 5**
Writing Assignments

“The Films of Ingmar Bergman” satisfies the writing flag and substantial writing component requirements.

Assignments include one two-page paper (ungraded) and two five-page papers, one of which may be rewritten to replace the first grade.

The due dates are marked on your syllabus. These dates are firm. I will not accept late papers unless you have made arrangements with me in advance at least two days before the paper is due. If an illness prevents you from turning in your assignment on time, I will need a signed doctor’s statement that this is the case.

EXTENSION POLICY: If you have an unusually busy schedule at the time one of the papers is due or an unusual circumstance, such as a wedding out of town, please inform me and we can arrange another deadline.

1. You must ask for the extension by the time class meets BEFORE the deadline on the syllabus, i.e. at least one class in advance. You may also ask for an extension any time before the class meeting before the deadline.

2. You must get my permission—and the new deadline—in writing. The best way to do this is by sending me an email message outlining the reasons for your request. Keep a copy of my reply.

Your writing must be your own work. If you plagiarize, I will report you to Student Judicial Services and you will fail the entire class. Simple rule of thumb: “If you use words or ideas that are not your own you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism.” If you have any questions as to what constitutes plagiarism, please see the page on the Student Judicial website: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php

All of your papers should be typed or keyboarded. Please double space.

The first two-page paper will be an analysis of a frame of one of the films required for the class that takes into account framing, lighting, color, proximity relationships, mise-en-scène, and any other relevant aspects of the image. Note as well how the frame fits into the film as a whole.

The topic of your first five-page paper is open, but see the list of suggested topics below. If you choose your own, you will probably find it helpful to discuss it with me in advance.

Your final paper, also five pages, will be an analysis of a storyboard.
Each of your papers should discuss a different film by Bergman.

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THE STORYBOARD ANALYSIS:
Your assignment is to storyboard and label a sequence of two to three minutes (it should comprise a minimum of 25 shots), and then to write an essay analyzing the style of the shot. This essay should tell me how and why this passage is representative of the film it comes from and of Bergman’s production as a whole (or why it is unusual). And you should comment on the rhythm of the sequence, the role of sound, the mise-en-scène, proximity relationships, and the quality of the acting. What is the overall effect of the sequence. DON’T FORGET TO TIME AND LABEL EACH SHOT.

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SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR THE FIVE-PAGE PAPER:
1. To what extent does the version of Fanny and Alexander we have seen represent a coherent film or work of art? What elements lend it unity? What aspects of the film point beyond what we see onscreen, suggesting an unfinished, incomplete, or open-ended work of art?

2. Discuss the representation of the interior in Fanny and Alexander.

3. Compare and contrast different versions of any film by Bergman. There are at least three versions of Fanny and Alexander, for example: the short version, the television mini-series, and the screenplay. Screenplays for many of his other films have also been published. Others are accompanied by narratives. How faithful are the textual versions to the films? Do they introduce new material that changes our interpretation of the film?

4. Compare and contrast any two films by Bergman. Some questions you may want to consider include the following: To what extent do these two films appear to belong to the work of a single auteur? Do the films’ ending provide a sense of closure? How similar is the mise-en-scène in the films? Remember that your paper should not only establish a basis for comparison, but also develop a thesis.

5. Discuss the role of performances within the performance in any film or films by Bergman.

6. Discuss the representation and significance of dreams in any one or two works by Bergman.

7. Discuss the representation of social and/or sexual differences in any one or two films by Bergman.

8. Discuss the use of close-ups in one or two films by Bergman. You may want to use the essays by Balazs and Barthes as a point of departure for your discussion.
9. Discuss any film by Bergman in relation to a literary or dramatic work. Some possibilities might include Fanny and Alexander and Strindberg’s A Dream Play and/or The Ghost Sonata or Smiles of a Summer Night and Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

10. Compare one film by Bergman and one by Woody Allen. Remember that your paper should not only establish a basis for comparison, but also develop a thesis.

11. Discuss Wild Strawberries in relation to Victor Sjöström’s The Phantom Chariot. Remember that your paper should not only establish a basis for comparison, but also develop a thesis.

12. Discuss the use of color in Bergman’s work.

13. Use Laura Mulvey’s essay as a point of departure for a discussion of the representation of women and/or men in any film by Bergman.

14. Discuss Bergman’s use of the close-up in one or two of his films with reference to the essays by Barthes and Balasz.

15. Discuss the relationship between narrative structure and meaning in any film by Bergman. Your discussion should include an outline of the film narrative.

16. Discuss the political or ideological implications of any one or two of Bergman’s films.

**Writing Center:** I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center, FAC 211, 471-6222: [http://uwc.utexas.edu/](http://uwc.utexas.edu/) The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Any undergraduate enrolled in a course at UT can visit the UWC for assistance with any writing project. They work with students from every department on campus, for both academic and non-academic writing. Whether you are writing a lab report, a resume, a term paper, a statement for an application, or your own poetry, UWC consultants will be happy to work with you. Their services are not just for writing with “problems.” Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance they provide is intended to foster independence. Each student determines how to use the consultant’s advice. The consultants are trained to help you work on your writing in ways that preserve the integrity of your work.
Examples of the storyboarding part of the sequence analysis assignment:

Shot 15B, time - 3:58
Vergerus - "Very interesting." The mirror breaks again, Vergerus moves away.

Shot 15C, time - 4:07
MS. Vergerus moves towards camera; a hand (punctuated by drumbeat) reaches out and chokes him.

Shot 16, time - 4:15
LS. After breaking free from hand, Vergerus moves to back of attic. Drumbeat continues.

Shot 17A, time - 4:26
LS of Vergerus as he stumbles into a shallow pit. Drumbeat continues, rising and descending in volume.

Shot 17B, time - 4:39
Drumbeat ceases. Vergerus moves towards camera and gate-like structure, hears noise to his right.

Shot 17C, time - 4:50
Camera tracks Vergerus as he moves left. Drumbeat resumes.
11. E.C.U. Film reel spinning. (.5)

12. C.U. Film exits reel, like in shot 3, but at a faster speed. (3)

13. C.U. Two arms, possibly belonging to different people, twist playfully around each other. (2)

14. Blank, white screen (5)

15a, 15b, and 15c. L.S. A silent film, originally from Fängelse, plays in the lower right hand portion of the screen. In the film, a man is cornered by death and the devil, and then jumps into his bed. (3)

16a, 16b, and 16c. M.S. A white screen fades to the image of a spider filmed from under a pane of glass. Spider disappears, and a white screen is left. (18)

17. C.U. A man vigorously squeezes the blood from a lamb. (14)

18. C.U. The man moves the lambs head around, and proceeds to poke the lambs eye. (8)

19. C.U. The lambs internal organs are pulled from its body. (2)

20. Blank, white screen (5)

21. E.C.U. A nail is driven into the hand of a man to be crucified. (2)

22. E.C.U. The nail from shot 21 is hammered deeper. (=2)

23. E.C.U. Hammer hits nail one last time, and the camera lingers on the stigmatized hand. (10)
Shot 3a | 62:09
Cut to a long, high-key lit, straight shot of Johan in his family's hotel room, reading a book.

Shot 3b | 62:35
Johan moves about the room restlessly and finally approaches Ester's bedroom door.

Shot 4a | 62:51
Cut to a slightly low-angle, medium close-up of Johan in Ester's bedroom as he closes the door behind him and gazes across the room.

Shot 4b | 63:17
The camera keeps Johan in a medium close-up as he slowly approaches Ester's bed.

Shot 4c | 63:37
Johan moves to the left into a medium shot at Ester's bedside.

Shot 5a | 63:40
Cut to a medium shot of Ester asleep, struggling for breath, from the point of view of Johan.
Shot 5b | 63:45
The camera pans down for a close-up of Ester’s hand, which sporadically flexes while she sleeps. Her labored breathing continues.

Shot 6a | 63:54
Cut to a medium close-up of Johan looking at Ester from her bedside as her wheezing continues, then staring into space beyond her.

Shot 6b | 63:57
Johan hears a soft rattling sound to his left and turns his head to look at the bedside table.

Shot 6c | 64:00
The camera pans down to a close-up of a water carafe and glass rattling on a glass tray. Ester’s breathing stops.

Shot 6d | 64:03
The camera pans back up to Johan as the glass objects continue to rattle.

Shot 6e | 64:08
Johan turns his head to the hotel window as the sound of a distant motor begins to be heard.
Jean-Pierre Léaud, Patrick Auffray, and Harriet Andersson in François Truffaut’s *Les quatre cents coups* (*The 400 Blows*).