

**LCC 3256-H, Major Filmmakers (Communication Intensive):  
Dario Argento in Context**

**Fall 2010, Section F, T/R 3:05pm – 4:25pm, Skiles 302  
Film Screenings: Thursdays, 5:00pm, Skiles 368**

Instructor: L. Andrew Cooper  
Office Hours: T/R 1:30 – 3:00pm, Skiles 341  
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## **Course Description**

Georgia Tech's course catalog specifies that LCC 3256 "[t]races in depth an individual artist's career and affords students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the works of an important figure in the world of film." This section will examine the works of Italian horror film director Dario Argento, whose trademark combinations of irrational narratives, mind-blowing visuals, extreme violence, and intellectual subtexts have made him a cult icon among his genre's artists and fans. In addition to examining Argento's major works, including *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, *Deep Red*, *Suspiria*, *Inferno*, *Phenomena*, *Tenebre*, *Opera*, *The Stendhal Syndrome*, and *Mother of Tears*, we will also consider works that arguably influenced Argento's themes and aesthetic, including films by Alfred Hitchcock, Vittorio de Sica, Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Mario Bava. This course is communication intensive; in order to hone strategies for creating precise and concise documents and presentations, each student will write and revise a total of 25-30 pages in a series of short papers and will give two presentations, one an individually-produced poster and another a collaborative video. As a result, students will finish the course not only knowing a great deal about one of the most influential filmmakers in genre cinema, but also having a stronger foundation for their professional communication.

## **Course Materials**

### *Required Textbooks*

Thomas M. Sipos, *Horror Film Aesthetics*  
Mikel J. Koven, *La Dolce Morte*

### *Recommended Textbook*

WOVENText: *The Georgia Tech Writing and Communication E-Book*  
<http://ebooks.bfwpub.com/gatech>

### *Films*

Attendance at regularly scheduled screenings is strongly recommended; if you are unable to attend a screening, you must see the film on your own. Most of the films we watch and discuss in this course are readily available to rent or buy, and most of them will be on reserve in Georgia Tech's Library. Though you are not required to purchase copies of the films, I recommend securing copies of the films you use for major assignments.

### Computer and Software

You need a computer with word processing and presentation software, such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint. You also need a media player capable of capturing still images from films, such as the VLC media player, which is available online to download for free. Software such as Windows MovieMaker, iMovie, and FinalCutPro is useful but not required because you can access it at the Library's Multimedia Studio. You must also regularly check your Georgia Tech email and review this class's materials on T-Square. If you own a laptop computer, please bring it to each class meeting.

### Learning Outcomes

The table below details this course's specific learning outcomes.

Category	Communication	Film
<p><b>Critical Thinking</b> Critical thinking involves understanding social and cultural texts and contexts in ways that support productive communication and interaction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize the constructedness of language and social forms</li> <li>Analyze and critique constructs such as race, gender, and sexuality as they appear in cultural texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze film as a semiotic process that produces meanings both for the text and in the cultures that receive it</li> <li>Critique aesthetic elements that create the viewing experience</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rhetoric</b> Rhetoric focuses on available means of persuasion, considering the synergy of factors such as context, audience, purpose, role, argument, organization, design, visuals, and conventions of language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create artifacts that demonstrate the synergy of rhetorical elements</li> <li>Demonstrate adaptation of register, language, and conventions for specific contexts and audiences</li> <li>Apply strategies for communication in and across both academic disciplines and cultural contexts in the community and the workplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate mastery of film vocabulary through written and spoken communication, including quizzes, essays, and class discussions</li> <li>Create artifacts that analyze and/or use specific techniques and critical strategies for interpretation</li> <li>Write multimedia film reviews that state and defend evaluations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Process</b> Processes for communication—for example, creating, planning, drafting, designing, rehearsing, revising, presenting, publishing—are recursive, not linear. Learning productive processes is as important as creating products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct, select, and deploy information based on interpretation and critique of the accuracy, bias, credibility, authority, and appropriateness of sources</li> <li>Compose reflections that demonstrate understanding of the elements of iterative processes both specific to and transferable across rhetorical situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create artifacts that explain how culture, history, and genre affect form, narrative, reception, and interpretation</li> <li>Discuss how personal knowledge of and experience with films relate to the cultures, histories, and genres introduced in class</li> </ul>
<p><b>Modes and Media</b> Activities and assignments should use a variety of modes and media—written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal (WOVEN)—singly and in combination. The context and culture of multimodality and multimedia are critical.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create WOVEN (written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal) artifacts that demonstrate interpretation, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and judgment</li> <li>Demonstrate strategies for effective translation, transformation, and transference of communication across modes and media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convey analytical insights through papers, presentations, and films</li> <li>Enjoy films from formal, aesthetic, historical, generic, and cultural perspectives</li> </ul>

## Assignments

### *Major Assignments (800 points total after dropped essay)*

The outcomes in the preceding table relate to the following major assignments, which we will discuss in more detail during class:

1. **Short Essays (7 essays, 50 points each).** Each essay of 750-1000 words (3 or 4 pages) should advance a thesis and defend it by analyzing details (such as dialogue and images) from one or two films viewed for this course. Do not make claims about a filmmaker's intentions unless you can support them with direct, cited evidence. **The lowest grade is dropped from the course total.** You must sign up for due dates for review essays; otherwise, rough drafts of essays are due on Tuesdays, and revisions are due the Tuesday after the instructor returns your rough draft. **You may submit only one essay per Tuesday; to avoid running out of opportunities to turn in work, keep track of your submissions. At least two are due by Oct. 5.** Rough drafts with editorial suggestions and according to the class rubric. Final drafts are graded with the class rubric. Only final drafts receive a grade, but you cannot get credit unless you submit a *complete* rough draft. Final drafts that do not show significant change from rough drafts receive no credit.
  - a. **Interpretive Essay (4 essays, 1 film each).** Focus the thesis on a meaning you see in a single film and prove its significance.
  - b. **Review Essay (2 essays, 1 film each).** Rate a film on a scale from zero to five, and focus the thesis on a reason or reasons why the film deserves your rating. Discuss details as you would in any of the other types of essays: *prove* that your evaluation is correct, and then discuss your evaluation in class on the Thursday after you submit your review.
  - c. **Influence Essay (1 essay, 2 films).** Focus the thesis on an interpretive or aesthetic relationship between a film by Argento and a film by another director.
2. **Poster: Argento in Historical or Aesthetic Perspective (200 points).** Create and present a poster that explores a single film studied in class. If the film is by Argento, demonstrate how the film relates to film history or accomplishes a specific aesthetic effect; if the film is not by Argento, demonstrate how its contribution to film history appears in a film by Argento.
3. **Video Proposal (50 points).** In your group for the short video essay (see next item), write a proposal for your film that includes your thesis and the evidence you intend to use.
4. **Short Video Essay: Argento and the Built Environment (250 points).** In a group of four or five students, create a ten-minute film that illustrates a thesis about how Argento uses built environments to create terror, horror, and suspense in his films. You may use clips from Argento's works as evidence, but you must also include original footage of group members and spaces at Georgia Tech or in Atlanta that are comparable—and might have effects comparable—to the effects you observe in Argento's works.

### *Participation (200 points total)*

During class on several unannounced (but predictable) occasions, I give quizzes that assess your knowledge of assigned readings and films. **At least once during the semester, you must make an appointment with me for an out-of-class conference about your writing.** The rest of the participation grade derives from active participation in class discussions and activities. Demonstrate your knowledge, and share your insights. Maintaining class decorum is part of participation: disruptions lower productivity and, therefore, your grade. Harassment of any kind, directed either at peers or at the instructor, is disruptive. All viewpoints are welcome, but avoid abusive language.

## Course Policies

### *Grading*

Each assignment has a point value. Assignments add up to a total of 1000 points. Convert point totals into percentages, and the letter grade equivalents are:

**A** = 90-100; **B** = 80-89; **C** = 70-79; **D** = 60-69; **F** = 0-59

*Failure to complete an assignment will result in 0 points.*

### *Attendance*

Attendance is required. If you must miss class, email me ahead of time. You have two “freebie” days, classes you may miss without grade penalties. For other absences, you must have official documentation of an illness, injury, or legal obligation that keeps you from class. I deduct 25 points from your grade for each non-freebie, undocumented absence. Three latenesses constitute an absence. If you arrive late, you must confirm that I have marked you as present or accept the consequences of an omission. After six absences, you may fail the course. *Even “excused,” documented absences affect your grade if they occur too often. Missing more than 25% of our class meetings for any reason could result in failure.*

### *Punctual Work*

Unless I approve a deadline extension in advance, which is unlikely, I will not accept major assignments after the deadline. You are responsible for all information covered during every class meeting.

### *Academic Conduct*

You are responsible for knowing and abiding by GT’s policy for academic integrity. Consult the Honor Code online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9>. The following text appears in the Honor Code:

“Academic misconduct is any act that does or could improperly distort Student grades or other Student academic records. Such acts include but need not be limited to the following:

- Possessing, using or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a Student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or person, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism);
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the claimant;
- Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Deliberate falsification of a written or verbal statement of fact to a member of the Faculty so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Forgery, alteration or misuse of any Institute document relating to the academic status of the Student.

While these acts constitute assured instances of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor.”

Work that violates the Honor Code will receive zero credit and may result in failure of the entire course. I will also report any misconduct to the Office of Student Integrity.

### *Laptop Computer Use*

Please bring your laptop to class. You may only use your laptop for class activities and note-taking. Using the laptop during class for other activities—such as email, web-surfing, or games—is rude and strictly prohibited. Inappropriate laptop use may result in grade penalties and/or expulsion from class.

### *Accommodations*

If you need accommodations for a disability, please contact me at the beginning of the semester so that we can discuss them. You should also contact the Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) within the first two weeks of the semester so that they can help us to develop reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor call (404) 894-2564 (voice) / (404) 894-1664 (voice/TDD) or visit 220 Student Services Building. For more information visit <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>.

### *The Fine Print*

I reserve the right to alter policies and assignments. I exercise this right rarely, but I often provide more detailed information during class. This syllabus is your guide. Keep it. Know it. Love it.

## Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

NOTE: DM stands for *La Dolce Morte*; HFA stands for *Horror Film Aesthetics*.

	Readings	Due Dates and Screenings
Tu., Aug. 24	[Introduction]	
Th., Aug. 26	DM ch. 1; HFA ch. 1	
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Bird with the Crystal Plumage</i>
Tu., Aug. 31	DM ch. 2; HFA ch. 9	<b>Review Essay 1</b>
Th., Sept. 2	HFA ch. 2 – 3	
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Vertigo</i>
Tu., Sept. 7	DM ch. 3; TBA	<b>Review Essay 2</b>
Th., Sept. 9	HFA ch. 4	
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Bicycle Thieves</i>
Tu., Sept. 14	Klawans, "Nothing but the Truth?"	<b>Review Essay 3</b>
Th., Sept. 16	HFA ch. 5	
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Deep Red</i>
Tu., Sept. 21	DM ch. 4 – 5	<b>Review Essay 4</b>
Th., Sept. 23	HFA ch. 6	
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Blow Up</i>
Tu., Sept. 28		<b>Review Essay 5</b>
Th., Sept. 30	HFA ch. 7	
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Blood and Black Lace</i>
Tu., Oct. 5		<b>≥ two essays by today</b> <b>Review Essay 6</b>
Th., Oct. 7	HFA ch. 8	
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Suspiria</i>
Tu., Oct. 12	<a href="http://www.kinoeye.org/02/11/schultesasse11.php">http://www.kinoeye.org/02/11/schultesasse11.php</a>	<b>Review Essay 7</b>
Th., Oct. 14	Schneider, "Murder as Art" from <i>Dark Thoughts</i>	
<b>Screening</b>		8 ½
Tu., Oct. 19	<b>FALL RECESS</b>	
Th., Oct. 21		<b>Review Essay 8</b>
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Inferno</i>
Tu., Oct. 26	<a href="http://www.kinoeye.org/02/11/castricano11.php">http://www.kinoeye.org/02/11/castricano11.php</a> [posters presented in class]	<b>Posters</b> <b>Review Essay 9</b>
Th., Oct. 28	[posters presented in class]	
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Mother of Tears</i>
Tu., Nov. 2		<b>Review Essay 10</b>
Th., Nov. 4	TBA: professional reviews	
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Tenebre</i>
Tu., Nov. 9	DM ch. 6; <a href="http://www.kinoeye.org/02/12/mendik12.php">http://www.kinoeye.org/02/12/mendik12.php</a>	<b>Proposals</b> <b>Review Essay 11</b>
Th., Nov. 11	DM ch. 7	
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Phenomena</i>
Tu., Nov. 16	DM. ch. 8	<b>Review Essay 12</b>
Th., Nov. 18	DM ch. 9	
<b>Screening</b>		<i>Opera</i>
Tu., Nov. 23	DM ch. 10	
Th., Nov. 25	<b>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</b>	
Tu., Nov. 30	<a href="http://www.kinoeye.org/02/12/sevastakis12.php">http://www.kinoeye.org/02/12/sevastakis12.php</a>	<b>Review Essay 13</b>
Th., Dec. 2		
<b>Screening</b>		<i>The Stendhal Syndrome</i>
Tu., Dec. 7	<a href="http://www.kinoeye.org/02/12/balmain12.php">http://www.kinoeye.org/02/12/balmain12.php</a>	<b>Review Essay 14 (discussed)</b>
Th., Dec. 9	SHORT VIDEOS SCREENED IN CLASS	<b>Short Video Essay</b>

**PLEASE READ, SIGN, AND RETURN THESE STATEMENTS TO DR. COOPER.**

**I affirm that I have read the entire syllabus and policy sheet for LCC 3256-H and understand the information and the responsibilities specified.**

\_\_\_\_\_

print name

\_\_\_\_\_

signature

\_\_\_\_\_

date

DIRECTIONS: Read carefully and check all that apply.

- I give my instructor, Dr. L. Andrew Cooper, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, LCC 3256-H, as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.
- I do NOT give my instructor, Dr. L. Andrew Cooper, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, LCC 3256-H, as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.

Please indicate whether you want to be acknowledged if your work is used:

- Please use my name in association with my work.
- Please use my work, but do NOT acknowledge me.

If your instructor decides to use your work, he//she may wish to contact you. Please provide your contact information below:

\_\_\_\_\_

print name

\_\_\_\_\_

signature

\_\_\_\_\_

email address

\_\_\_\_\_

phone number

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print permanent address

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print campus address

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date