

OLLI at DU Syllabus

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Course Title	Film Noir: What Makes It Enduring, What Makes It Great
Site	OLLI Central
Term	Spring 2025
Course Sessions	6 Weeks
Required or Recommended Readings	Movies only (see below)
Week 1	April 1 - What is film noir? Film noir has a very distinctive feel, but it's hard to define exactly. We'll discuss the themes and tropes that define it as well as the iconic visual style. Movie: Double Indemnity
Week 2	April 8 - The literary roots of the genre. The written word was a major inspiration for the motion pictures. You can see the fingerprints of hard-boiled detective fiction, the pulps, and Realism on the screen, but film noir is also its own distinct genre. Movie: The Big Sleep
Week 3	April 15 - The themes We'll dig further into the major themes and discuss some of the movies that fall within these categories. We'll also explore why filmmakers enjoyed these often dark subjects and why they resonated with the audiences. Movie: The Third Man
Week 4	April 22 - The directors. The classic era of film noir was a time for directors, many of whom were emigres, to put their stamp on this

rapidly evolving genre. Both this week and next, we'll also discuss the intersection between movie-making and politics at this time. Movie: Scarlet Street

Week 5

April 29 - The actors. Film noir could be an actor's showcase. Some became standard fixtures of noir movies. Others had careers outside of noir but often used noir to play against type. We'll discuss the actors who defined film noir and how noir's focus on character made it a vehicle for great acting. Movie: Out Of The Past

Week 6

May 6 - The future of noir The classic era of film noir may have ended in the late 1950s, but the genre hardly ended there. Noir continues to this day in the form of neo-noir, Nordic noir, and other incarnations. Movie: Blade Runner
