

English 110: Introduction to Film & Media

Summer 2013
M/W 12-1:50pm
Condon 260
CRN 40852

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Hours: M/W 10:30am-12pm
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People respond to movies in different ways, and there are many reasons for this. We have all stood in the lobby of a theater and heard conflicting opinions from people who have just seen the same film. Some loved it, some hated it, some found it just OK. Perhaps we've thought, "What do they know? Maybe they just didn't get it." What thrills one person may bore or offend another. Disagreements, however, can reveal a great deal about the assumptions underlying these various responses. In this course we will see that there are many ways of thinking about movies and approaches that we can use to analyze them. We will cover key aspects of film theory and history as well in the spirit of intellectual investigation of the most exciting aspects of contemporary visual culture. Overall, the goal of "Intro to Film & Media" is to introduce you to the basic skills necessary for a critical knowledge of the movies as art and culture. We will also consider the relationship between movies and other forms of media such as tv and the internet.

Required Text: *Thinking About Movies: Watching, Questioning, Enjoying. Third Edition.* Peter Lehman & William Luhr (New York: Blackwell Publishing). You must bring this text to class every day (even on screening days). If you don't bring the text (including PDFs) to class, your participation grade will suffer. *Access to Blackboard is also required.

Class Meetings & Procedures: We will meet twice each week, on Mondays and Wednesdays. Attendance is required and checked daily. You are expected to attend all class meetings and participate in all discussions. Screening and discussing films in a group setting is vital to critical learning. If you plan to be absent on a given day you must contact me *in advance* to arrange make-up work/exams. The following attendance policy is straightforward and non-negotiable:

Two absences excused, no questions asked. However, you are still responsible for any missed screenings, notes, or assignments due that day. A **third, fourth, and fifth** absence, for any reason, will each result in the automatic deduction of one-third letter grade from your final grade (e.g., from an A to an A-, A- to B+). On the **sixth** absence the student will automatically receive a failing grade for the course.

Reading Assignments: Be sure to read the assigned text carefully and mark any passages that strike you as interesting or challenging. Besides your required books you will be responsible for regularly reading the course discussion forum on Blackboard (see below). Regular reading assignments for the week must be completed **before each Monday's class meeting**.

Screenings: You are required to attend the screenings each week and take notes on the films. If you are absent during a screening day you will need to make arrangements to see the movie at Knight Library or at home before exams. Watching films in a classroom requires different ways of seeing (and note-taking), as you will need to pay close attention to *how* the events unfold on screen and *why* each film takes its own specific form. Finally, a few films are R rated as this course was developed with a mature viewing audience in mind. Please see me in advance if this will be an issue for you.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism: The University of Oregon values academic integrity. You are responsible for understanding and adhering to the standards of academic honesty outlined in the student handbook. **Document ALL sources** consulted in preparing your work. **At a minimum, documented plagiarism will result in course failure. See the course Blackboard site for resources and information on citation styles and practices.**

Access For Students With Disabilities: If you have a (registered) disability, which you believe may affect your performance in this course, please see or contact me the first week of the term so we can make the necessary arrangements for your fullest access to the course and its activities.

Evaluation: (A= 93%, A- = 90%, B+ = 87%, etc.). Course grades will be based on:

Weekly Reading and Film Responses	350 pts
Vocabulary Worksheet	200 pts
Group Presentation	100 pts
<u>Final exam</u>	<u>350 pts</u>
Total	1000 pts

Blackboard: The Blackboard site for this course contains important course-related materials including assignments and weekly lecture and reading notes. Please check the site on a regular basis, as it will be updated weekly.

Weekly Reading and Film Responses: For weeks 1-7 you will compose a one-page, single-spaced response to the readings and film assigned each week and post this to the Blackboard Discussion Board before class on Wednesday of each week. Do not attempt to summarize the entire reading, instead your writing should make an informed assertion (thesis) about a specific moment, image, idea or character from the week's film(s) and support that assertion with evidence from the reading. *Your response must include at least two direct quotes from the assigned reading to support your assertion.* Late responses accepted for up to one week at a 40% penalty.

Keys to success: Strive to write fun but thought-provoking, engaging and even controversial responses, as any good media scholar would. The goal here is not only to produce insightful comments, but also to provoke discussion and generate interest. Uninspired or irrelevant responses will be graded accordingly.

Guidelines for Presentations:

Each student must sign up for a group presentation during the term. Presentations will take place according to the dates listed on the schedule. Your presentation will relate to the textbook reading and terms assigned that week but will not simply repeat the information in the textbook. Presentation groups will include approx. **7-8 students**. Your group will bring in **one** 1-3 minute clip that relates to the reading/film that is our focus for the week. (This clip could be from a film, TV series, YouTube, etc. It is YOUR responsibility to make sure our classroom technology can support the media you plan to show.) The group will introduce and screen the clip and each student should prepare a **2 minute** presentation related to the clip and the week's reading. Each student should prepare **two** slides using Prezi, Powerpoint, or Google Docs that relates to the content of the presentation. Prepare a thesis and back that thesis up with evidence from the text and film clip. Your group must collaborate outside of class to decide on presentation topics, coordinate slides, and practice your presentation. Presentations will be cut off at **25 minutes max**, although they may lead to class discussion. One group member will serve as coordinator/moderator to organize and keep time for the group. You **MUST** know the names of fellow presenters as you will need to be in contact with them before your presentation. Get contact information in class or via our Blackboard site. (Hit the Tools tab to link to email).

Class Schedule:

Week One: Introduction to Film Narrative

- 6/24 Course overview & Screen: *Scarface* (Howard Hawks, 1932)
- 6/26 Discuss: *Thinking About Movies* Chapters 1 and 2

Week Two: Formal Analysis and Authorship in the Classical Era

- 7/1 Screen: *Rules of the Game* (Jean Renoir, 1939)
- 7/3 Discuss: *Thinking About Movies* Chapters 3 & 4

Week Three: Genres and the Blockbuster Era

- 7/8 Screen: *Sin City* (Frank Miller, Robert Rodriguez, Quentin Tarantino, 2005)
- 7/10 Discuss: *Thinking About Movies* Chapters 5 & 6; **Group 1 Presentation**

Week Four: Actors and Audiences

- 7/15 Screen: *The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing* (Wendy Apple, 2004)
- 7/17 Discuss: *Thinking About Movies* Chapters 7 and 8; and **Group 2 Presentation**

Week Five: Realism and Gender

- 7/22 Screen: Avant-Garde Films, **Vocabulary Worksheet Due**
- 7/24 Discuss: *Thinking About Movies* Chapters 11 & 12; **Group 3 Presentation,**

Week Six: Race and Class

- 7/29 Screen: *Slumdog Millionaire* (Danny Boyle, 2008)
- 7/31 Discuss: Chapters 13 and 14; **Group 4 Presentation**

Week Seven: Television, Radio, and New Media

- 8/5 **No class meeting** – Screen on your own the pilot (first) episode of *Twin Peaks*
Available for free on Hulu: <http://www.hulu.com/watch/278238>
- 8/7 Discuss: *Thinking About Movies* Chapters 9 and 10, **Group 5 Presentation**

Week Eight: Digital Cinema, New Media and the Future

- 8/12 Discuss: *Thinking About Movies* Chapter 16, Screen: *Side by Side: Celluloid to Digital*
- 8/14 **In-Class Final Exam**