English 260: Media Aesthetics
Section 32887
Tuesday and Thursday, 5-6:50
Condon 360

Instructor: Anthony Hayt
Office Phone: 346-0059
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 3:30-5, and by appointment.

Office: PLC 254
Email: hayt@uoregon.edu

Course Description and Objectives: English 260 is one of four required courses that make up the Fundamentals of the Cinema Studies major. The course will focus on helping you build the critical skills to understand, analyze, and interpret visual media texts. It will do so by highlighting the fundamental formal elements of film, television, and video games and, using this vocabulary, we will explore the complex interplay of technical design, social influence, and cultural conventions that shape our media production and consumption experiences. We will also take time to consider how the construction of a media text makes meaning for the viewer.

Grade Evaluations:
- Participation: 10%
- Viewing Journals: 20%
- Shot List and Thesis: 25%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Final Exam: 25%

Attendance: Please be in your seat at the beginning of class, as we will start our films and discussions promptly at 5:00.
Interruptions of either can be very distracting, so please be respectful of others if you need to enter or exit the room during the class period. If you do miss a class, you will be responsible for catching up on lecture notes and finding the viewing material on your own. All cell phones must be off and away. You may use laptops to take notes during discussion, but not during screenings. If you are not paying attention because of your laptop, I will ask you to close it. Please do not bring food to class.

Viewing Journal: On weeks 2, 3, 4, and 5 you will be required to turn in a short journal entry on Blackboard that reflects on the topic for each week and will respond to the prompt I have posted. These assignments will be due by 12:00 noon on the Friday of each week. They should be between 300-350 words, and have a strong thesis to help direct them. More details for each assignment will be given with each week's prompts.

Shot List: Thursday of Week 9, you will have a shot list and thesis/outline due. We will cover the shot list specifics in class during week 5, but in summary, a shot list is a breakdown of all the technical aspects of a film sequence, presented shot by shot, in a spreadsheet type of format. To accompany your shot list, you will write an introduction and thesis to an essay that you would write about your selected clip and how it relates to the film overall, accompanied by an outline of the essay you would write to support your thesis.

Classroom Standards: Our class will be a space of productive thought and inquiry. Please feel free to express any thoughts or comments about our subject matter in a respectful way. Listen to others when they are talking, do not engage in side conversations, and be courteous even when disagreements arise. Those who choose not to discuss the films in a respectful way will be asked to leave the class, and possibly the course.

All written work should be typed and formatted with 12pt, Times New Roman font, and double-spaced. It should have proper grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. Failure to present your work as such will be grounds for a reduced grade. All assignments must adhere to standards of academic honesty outlined in the Student Handbook. Do not turn in work prepared for other classes. Document all sources consulted in preparing your work, including movies, websites and other material obtained on the Internet. If in doubt, document. Plagiarism will result in failure for the course and additional sanctions determined by the director of Student Judicial Affairs. No late work will be accepted unless arrangements are made with me ahead of time. Emailed work will not be accepted.

While I strive to maintain a relaxed attitude in class to help facilitate discussion, I request that your email correspondence with me maintain a professional etiquette. Please use proper spelling and punctuation, and include a greeting and salutation. Emails that fail to do so will not receive a response, no matter important they are.

Selected readings from Blackboard

This class will screen media that contains explicit depictions of sex, violence, adult themes, coarse language, and material that some might find offensive. If you think that this might be a problem, please come talk to me about whether we can find a solution, or if this is the best section of 260 for you.
Week One: Introductions
April 2: Introductions, syllabus, first thoughts about watching film.

April 4: Read C/W Introduction and Chapter 1. (Recommended extra reading: Chapters 10-12).
   Robert Kolker. 'The Film Text and Film Form.'
   Watch Citizen Kane (1941).

Week Two: Cinematography
April 9: C/W Chapter 3.

April 11: Watch In the Cut (2003). (journal due Friday)

Week Three: Mise en Scene
April 16: Read C/W Chapter 2
   Ruth McCormick. 'Passbinder's Reality: An Imitation of Life.' Imitations of Life: A Reader on Film & Television Drama.


Week Four: Editing
April 23: Read C/W Chapter 4.

April 25: Watch The Graduate (1967). (journal due Friday)

Week Five: Sound
April 30: Read C/W Chapter 5.

May 2: Watch The Talented Mr. Ripley (1999). (journal due Friday) Assign shot list.

Week Six: Midterm, then Documentary and Experimental Film
May 7: Midterm.

May 9: C/W Chapters 6 and 9.

Week Seven:
May 14: Watch Exit Through the Gift Shop (2010)

May 16: Watch Daisies (1966)

Week Eight: Narrative, Genre, and Mode
May 21: Read C/W Chapters 7 and 8.

May 23: Mulholland Dr. (2001)

Week Nine: TV Systems and Structure/Narrative, and Beyond + Constructing TV
May 28: Read Butler Chapters 1, 11, and 5.

May 30: Read Butler Chapters 2 and 4. Shot List Due.

Week Ten: (TV con’t.) Video Games and Animation.
June 4: Read Butler Chapters 6 and 9.

June 6: Animation, and Video games with guest lecture from David Baker.

Final Exam: 7:00pm Tuesday, June 11. There will be no exceptions or re-scheduling.