

Instructor: Caroline Claiborn

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Office Hours: T 12-2pm & Th 1-2pm

Location: MCK 214

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Media Aesthetics ENG/CINE 260, Spring 2014

Class Blog: <http://mediaaestheticsspring2014.wordpress.com/>

Course Description: 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 and television (and to a lesser extent, video games and the web) 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 media texts make meaning.

English: Undergraduate Major

The Department's assessment procedure is built around six desired **learning outcomes**:

1. read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
2. draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts;
3. perform critical, formal analyses of literary, cinematic, and other cultural texts;
4. write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose;
5. employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments;
6. employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay's thesis.

Goals for ENG/CINE 260: In this course you will ...

- Gain a basic understanding of film & television aesthetics.
- Learn Film & TV Studies vocabulary.
- Develop skills to rigorously think, write and discuss aspects of film & television.

Required Materials:

- The Film Experience, An Introduction*, 3rd ed. Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, (2009). (TFE)
- Television: Critical Methods and Applications*, 4th ed. Jeremy Butler, (2006). (TCMA)
- Subscription to the course blog (<https://signup.wordpress.com/signup/?user=1>)
- Access to Blackboard

Attendance: Attendance is REQUIRED. You may miss 2 classes without a grade penalty (I take attendance every class, but please keep track of your own absence record). A third absence will lower your final course grade by 1/3 of a letter grade (from a B+ to a B, for instance). If you miss a 4th class you automatically FAIL the course without notice. Frequent tardiness will also be counted as an absence. Please see me IN ADVANCE about any absences you expect to incur. You are responsible for what you miss from class due to absences. Everything we watch will be on reserve in Knight Library or available online after we screen it.

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.*

- Active participation is required. To facilitate discussion, carefully read the assigned material before class and take notes while watching the films and television programs. Although you may use laptops to take notes, there should be no cell phones, no texting, no Internet use. It is vital that students respect the classroom and each other. *Consistently disrupting the class (falling asleep, talking while others are trying to talk, checking Facebook or e-mail during class, arriving late or leaving early, etc.) will result in an absence.* You may bring quiet and non-messy food and/or drinks to class so long as you take care of all trash and leave the classroom clean.

Emails: 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 refrain from emailing with questions already explained in the syllabus or available on Blackboard. Use proper spelling and punctuation, and include a greeting and salutation. *Emails that fail to do so will not receive a response.*

Access for Students with Disabilities: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Grade Evaluation:

Participation:	15%
Quizzes, Activities & Minor Assign.	
Weekly Wordpress Blog Posts	15%
Film Pitch	25%
TV Show Pitch	25%
Final Exam (take home)	20%

Grading Scale:

A	94-100%	B-	80-83.99%	D+	67-69.99%
A-	90-93.99%	C+	77-79.99%	D	64-66.99%
B+	87-89.99%	C	74-76.99%	D-	60-63.99%
B	84-86.99%	C-	70-73.99%	F	0-59.99%

Extra Credit: Throughout the term I will present opportunities for extra credit in various forms. Some will be on-campus events, which you may attend and then turn in a 1-page, 2X spaced write-up that briefly summarizes the event and describes your thoughts about the experience. I will also announce if extra points for additional effort are available for specific assignments. Each student is eligible for a maximum 3 extra credit points per term.

Participation: Your participation grade in this course will be determined by your grades on *unannounced quizzes over the readings* (10%) and effort on class activities and assignments (5%). Activities and assignments include your flip card, practice shot list, and contributions during class discussions.

Weekly Wordpress Blog Posts & Comments: This weekly assignment will require you to subscribe to our class blog. You can do by setting up a wordpress account at the following link: <https://signup.wordpress.com/signup/?user=1>. This blog is **public**, so if you wish to protect your privacy, you may create an account using some other version of your name/initials (but I must be able to recognize you from your username). *Each week (including Week 1) students will post a 350-500 word blog entry, sharing their thoughts on the week's screening(s) and readings. These posts are a chance for each of you to share your opinions, practice critical analysis of the media we screen, and to discuss relevant ideas with one another. Each week, after you post your entry, you should comment on three your classmates' posts. Comments should be at least 100 words, and engage in a respectful and relevant discussion of the week's material. All blog entries are due by the end of Saturday (12:00 am) each week.*

Writing & Formatting: This is an English Department course and as such your writing on all assignments will meet the highest standards. I will pay attention not only to your ideas but how those ideas are presented. This means that I will grade your written work on its content, organization, and presentation, as well as its use of grammar, punctuation and sentence structure. Please type all written work, using Times New Roman 12pt. font and 1" margins.

Late Work & Extensions: Except in the case of documented emergencies, late work will receive a 10% penalty for each day past due. However, if you need an extension please come talk to me at least 24 hours before the assignment is due. I will require you to document your need for an extension and set a new due date (usually via e-mail).

WARNING: 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 for you, please come talk to me about whether we can find a solution, or if this is the best class for you.

Academic Honesty: 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. Please consult *The Little Seagull Handbook* for a definition of plagiarism and information on documentation, and refer to the *Student Conduct Code* on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website: <http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx> Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Registration Statement:

The only way to add this class is through DuckWeb. The last day to add this or any writing class is the Friday of week one.

Incompletes:

Approval for incompletes will be granted only in cases when some minor but essential aspect of the course cannot be completed by students in good academic standing due to unforeseen circumstances beyond their control.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Studying Film & Narrative

Screening: *Annie Hall* (Allen 1977)

T 4/1: Introductions

Th 4/3: Readings Due: *TFE* Introduction: Studying Film: Culture, Practice, Experience (p. 5), *TFE* Ch. 6 Telling Stories: Narrative Films (p. 215)

(S 4/5): Week 1 Blog Entries and Comments on DQs Due

Week 2: Mise-en-Scene, Cinematography

Screening: *Rear Window* (Hitchcock 1954)

T 4/8: **Flip Card Assignment Due, Readings Due:** *TFE* Ch. 2 Exploring A Material World: Mise-en-Scene (p. 63), *TFE* Ch. 3 Framing What We See: Cinematography (p. 95)

Th 4/10: Readings Due: *TFE* Ch. 1 Encountering Film: From Preproduction to Exhibition (p. 19)

(S 4/12): Week 2 Blog Entries and Comments on DQs Due

Week 3: Editing & Sound

Screening: *Memories of Underdevelopment* (Gutierrez Alea 1968), Clips: *Breathless* (Godard 1960)

T 4/15: Readings Due: *TFE* “Third Cinema” (p. 368-9), *TFE* Ch. 4 Relating Images: Editing (p. 133)

Th 4/17: Practice Shot List Due, Readings Due: *TFE* Ch. 5 Listening to the Cinema: Film Sound (p. 177), *TFE* section on writing about film (p. 439-447)
(S 4/19): Week 3 Blog Entries and Comments on DQs Due

Week 4: Documentary & Experimental Film

Screening: *Un Chien Andalou* (Bunuel 1929), *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Deren 1943), *La Jetee* (Marker 1962), and *Man With A Movie Camera* (Vertov 1929)

T 4/22: Readings Due: *TFE* Ch. 8: Challenging Form: Experimental Film & New Media (p. 285)

Th 4/24: Readings Due: *TFE* Ch. 7 Representing the Real: Documentary Film (p. 255)

(S 4/26): Week 4 Blog Entries and Comments on DQs Due

Week 5: Genres

Screening: *Shaun of the Dead* (Wright 2004)

T 4/29: Readings Due: *TFE* Ch. 9: Rituals, Conventions, Archetypes & Formulas: Movie Genres (p. 315)

Th 5/1: Readings Due: *TFE* Ch. 11: Reading About Film: Critical Theories and Methods p. 399)

(S 5/3): Week 5 Blog Entries and Comments on DQs Due

Week 6: TV Studies & Narrative

Screening: *General Hospital* (1963-), *E.R.* (1994-2009)

T 5/6: Film Pitch Due

Th 5/8: Readings Due: *TCMA* Ch.1 An Introduction to Television Structures and Systems: The Ebb and Flow of the Postnetwork Era (p. 3)

(S 5/10): Week 6 Blog Entries and Comments on DQs Due

Week 7: TV Fiction & Nonfiction

Screening: *The Sopranos*, *Jersey Shore*, *The Bachelor*

T 5/13: Readings Due: *TCMA* Ch. 2 Narrative Structure: Television Stories (p. 21), *TCMA* Ch. 12 Textual Analysis (p. 367)

Th 5/15: Readings Due: Bratich Reading (PDF on Blackboard), *TCMA* Ch. 4 Beyond and Beside Narrative Structure (p. 97)

(S 5/17): Week 7 Blog Entries and Comments on DQs Due

Week 8: Media Identities

Screening: Roseanne, Dave Chappelle (various screenings)

T 5/20: Readings Due: *TCMA* Ch. 3 Building Narrative: Character, Actor, Star (p. 55)

Th 5/22: Reading Due: Introduction to *White* by Richard Dyer (PDF on Blackboard), *TCMA* Ch. 13 Discourse and Identity (p. 395)

(S 5/24): Week 8 Blog Entries and Comments on DQs Due

Week 9: Commercials & Modes of Production

Screening: Various Commercials

T 5/27: Readings Due: *TCMA* Ch. 5 The Television Commercial (p. 149), *TCMA* Ch. 6 An Introduction to Television Style: Modes of Production (p. 211)

Th 5/29: TV Show Pitch Due

(S 5/31): Week 9 Blog Entries and Comments on DQs Due

Week 10: Style & Sound; Style & Editing

Screening: *Mad Men* Ep. 1:1 (2007), *The Real World* Ep. 1:1 (1992)

T 6/3: Readings Due: *TCMA* Ch. 9 Style and Editing: Mise-en-Scene (p. 293)

Th 6/5: Readings Due: *TCMA* Ch. 10 Style and Sound (p. 325)

(S 6/7): Week 10 Blog Entries and Comments on DQs Due

Week 11: Final Exam (TBA)