

# English 260: Media Aesthetic

Section 34662 Monday and Wednesday, 8-10:50 McKenzie 214

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 11-12:30, and by appointment.

**Course Description and Learning 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 and television. 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. By the end of the class, you will be able to use this knowledge to complete an analytical shot-list that details technical terms, and an argument-based assignment that ties those technical qualities to meaning.

## Grade Evaluations:

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

**Attendance:** Please be in your seat at the beginning of class, as we will start our films and discussions promptly at 8:00.

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:** Wednesday 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 the 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.

**Required Texts:** *The Film Experience, An Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, (2009).

*Television: Critical Methods and Applications*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Jeremy Butler, (2006).

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 or may be a trauma trigger. 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**

March 31: Introductions, syllabus, first thoughts about watching film.

April 2: Read C/W Introduction and Chapter 1. (Recommended extra reading: Chapters 10-12).  
Robert Kolker. 'The Film Text and Film Form.'  
Watch *Easy Rider* (Hopper 1969).

**Week Two: Cinematography**

April 7: C/W Chapter 3.

April 9: Watch *In the Cut* (Campion 2003). (journal due Friday)

**Week Three: Mise-en-Scène**

April 14: Read C/W Chapter 2

April 16: Watch *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (Fassbinder 1974). (journal due Friday)

**Week Four: Editing**

April 21: Read C/W Chapter 4.

April 23: Watch *The Graduate* (Nichols 1967). (journal due Friday)

**Week Five: Sound**

April 28: Read C/W Chapter 5.

April 30: Watch *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (Minghella 1999). (journal due Friday)  
**list.**

**Assign shot**

**Week Six: Midterm, then Documentary**

May 5: Midterm.

May 7: C/W Chapters 6 and 9. Watch *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (Banksy 2010)

**Week Seven: Experimental Film and Animation**

May 12: Watch *Daisies* (1966)

May 14: Watch *Everything Will Be OK/I Am So Proud of You/It's Such a Beautiful Day* (Hertzfeldt 2006/2008/2011)

**Week Eight: Narrative, Genre, and Mode**

May 19: Read C/W Chapters 7 and 8, and 'Notes on Film Noir' by Paul Schrader (on Blackboard).

May 21: *Mulholland Dr.* (Lynch 2001) or *Blue Velvet* (Lynch 1986)

**Week Nine: TV Systems and Structure/Narrative, and Beyond + Constructing TV**

May 26: NO CLASS

May 28: Read Butler Chapters 1, 11, and 5. TV Introductions.

**Shot List Due.**

**Week Ten: TV con't.**

June 2: Read Butler Chapters 6 and 9. TV Styles.

June 4: Read Butler Chapters 2 and 4. TV Narrative.

**Final Exam: 70:15am Tuesday, June 10.** There will be no exceptions or re-scheduling.