

ENG 110: Introduction to Film and Media

Winter 2015 CRN: 22046 T/R 4pm-5:50pm 307 Volcanology

Course Overview:

The goal of this course is to develop a critical understanding of film and media's many facets. Through screenings, readings, discussion, and writing, this course will familiarize you with the basic vocabulary of film and television form and develop your skills in critical media analysis. This means learning to (a) analyze *how* as well as *what* a film's sounds and images mean and (b) understand some of the social and political questions raised by dominant modes of representation. The first half of the class is dedicated to understanding the film industry's responses to the rise of television and the conversion to digital formats. This half of

This class may screen media that contains explicit depictions of sex, violence, adult themes, coarse language, and material that many might find offensive. If this might be an issue, reconsider taking this course.

the course will also focus on formal analysis. The second half of the course focuses on television and new media industries, explicating the larger

economic, political, and aesthetic contexts of network, cable, and web series. By the end of this course students will be able to: 1) read media 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 cinematic, televisual 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.

Instructor:

Diana Martinez

Office Hours:

PLC 212
T/R 2pm-3:30pm
& by appointment

Contact:

dem@uoregon.edu
@diana_emmeline
346-3517

Course Blog:

introtofilmmedia.wordpress.com

Required Texts:

PDFs available on the course WordPress site

Note: Please bring all readings to class on the day that they are due.

All films are considered required texts

Course Grading Breakdown (in points):

Scene Analysis 1	10	Week 4
Scene Analysis 2	20	Week 6
Pitch Prep & Meeting	20	Week 10
Series Pitch	40	Finals Week
Participation	10	Week 10
Total Course Points	100	

Your course grade will be determined by the following percentages:

A+ 100 – 97	B+ 89.9 – 87	C+ 79.9 – 77	D+ 69.9 – 67	F below 60
A 96.9 – 93	B 86.9 – 83	C 76.9 – 73	D 66.9 – 63	
A- 92.9 – 90	B- 82.9 – 80	C- 72.9 – 70	D- 62.9 – 60	

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS (ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE REQUIRED TO PASS THE CLASS):

A note on COURSE WORKLOAD:

This class is scheduled for about 4 hours of classroom time each week. In addition to watching films, students must complete significant reading and writing assignments, to be completed outside of class. The amount of writing and its evaluation is comparable to what is assigned in literature courses at similar instructional levels. In other words, we are not just “watching movies” for ten weeks.

Scene Analysis 1 & 2 : In these 3-4 page papers, you will choose a film we have discussed in class and analyze the relationship of technical form and thematic content. *Your writing should make an informed, insightful assertion about a specific moment, image, idea, or character from the film.* This is your opportunity to provide me with a sense of how closely you are watching the films and how well you are able to apply material from lecture, text, and our discussions toward an understanding of the films in a focused context.

Series Pitch: For your final project you will develop a 4-5 page pitch for an original contemporary television and/or web program. Your pitch must take into account the different areas explored in the course: production, representation, narrative, distribution, financing, audience and technology. The goal is to come up with a show that could be successful in the marketplace you choose. You are required to bring in secondary material to make your case.

Pitch Prep & Meeting: In week 9 you will prepare a series of worksheets to be turned into me prior to a group meeting during week 10. In this meeting, I will address questions about the final project and help guide you towards resources to strengthen your pitch. You will be graded on your preparedness for the meeting, as well as the work you have completed on your pitch prior to the project due date.

Participation: I measure participation by both quality and quantity; I expect you to express yourself freely, but always with tolerance, patience, and respect for your colleagues. Your regular, engaged presence in the classroom is a key criterion of good participation, as is evidence that you have pondered the assigned readings and screenings. NOTE: attendance alone does not constitute participation.

GRADES

Grades will not be posted to Blackboard. However, for your convenience I have provided a grade-tracking sheet to allow you to maintain your own up to date grade records. If you become concerned about your progress in the course, it is your responsibility to visit me during office hours to discuss your grade and any other class matters. Please do not wait until week 10 to take interest in your academic progress.

DISCUSSION SECTION POLICIES

About Screenings:

We will watch all required media in class. If you miss a film screening for any reason, you are responsible for watching the film on your own. Most films and television episodes are available through Hulu, Netflix, or Amazon Prime, as well as YouTube. Additionally, most media viewed will be available for checkout from me after the week they are screened.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Please be in your seat at the beginning of class; we will start our films and discussions promptly when class starts. Please notify me ahead of time via e-mail if you must miss class, will be late, or leave class early. You may miss one class meeting for any reason. Two absences from discussion section will lower your final grade by 5 points out of a 100-point scale (so a 91% or an A- would drop to an 86%, or a B). Three absences in discussion section will result in failure for the course. Extremely early departures, late arrivals or repeated disruptions will also count as absences. You are responsible for understanding the material covered in class during your absence.

Late Work:

All assigned work is due at the beginning of class. If you must miss class due to an emergency, turn in your work *before* our class meeting to receive credit. If you know you will be absent ahead of time, you must contact me at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline for other possible arrangements, or else your late work will not be accepted. Additionally, late work will not be accepted if it is an assignment due a day you were present in class.

E-Mail Communication:

I will respond to all student e-mail within 48 hours of receipt (except weekends); please do not expect immediate responses to e-mail. Additionally, 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.

Registration:

You may attend only the discussion section in which you are enrolled. You must be registered for a discussion section in order to receive a grade for the History of Film course. The only way to add this class is through DuckWeb; I cannot add you to the class.

Access:

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 Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu.

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 materials obtained. If in doubt, document. Plagiarism will result in failure for the course and additional sanctions determined by the director of Student Judicial Affairs. Do not risk your grade because you are feeling lazy or overwhelmed. I guarantee it will not be worth it.

Technology Use:

To be respectful of others, cell phones must be either turned off, ringers silenced, or set to “vibrate” mode *before* the start of class. You may use laptops, Kindles, or iPads to take notes. However, if you are not paying attention because of a technological device, I reserve the right to ask you to turn it off.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

(All dates are DUE dates)

Week 1 (1/5): High Concept Hollywood (Part 1)

TUE Introductions & Lecture

THU Lecture

Reading: "Hollywood Blockbusters: Historical Dimensions" by Steve Neale

Week 2 (1/12): High Concept Hollywood (Part 2)

TUE Screening: *Gravity* (dir. Alfonso Cuaron, 2013) 91 min.

THU *Gravity* Discussion

Reading: Excerpt from *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood* by Justin Wyatt

Week 3 (1/19): Indie Cinema (Part 1)

TUE Lecture

Reading: "Introduction" from *Indie: An American Film Culture* by Michael Z. Newman

THU Screening: *Winter's Bone* (dir. Debra Granik, 2010) 100 min.

Week 4 (1/26): Indie Cinema (Part 2) & The Death of Film (Part 1)

TUE *Winter's Bone* Discussion

THU Lecture

Reading: "A Cinema of Recession: Micro-Budgeting, Microdrama, and the 'Mumblecore' Movement" by Maria San Filippo
 "Theorizing 'Bad' Sound: What Puts the "Mumble" into Mumblecore?" by Nessa Johnston

Scene Analysis 1 due Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at the beginning of class

Week 5 (2/2): The Death of Film (Part 2)

TUE Screening: *Hannah Takes the Stairs* (dir. Joe Swanberg, 2007) 83 min.

THU *Hannah Takes the Stairs* Discussion & Lecture

Reading: "Film Preservation 2.0" by Matthew Dessen
 "Pandora's Digital Box: From Films to Files" by David Bordwell

Scene Analysis 2 due Friday February 6, 2015 at 5pm

Week 6 (2/9): The American Post Network Era	
TUE	Lecture
	Reading: "Understanding Television at the Beginning of the Post-Network Era" by Amanda Lotz
THU	Screening: <i>Bob's Burgers</i> (FOX, 2011--) and <i>30 Rock</i> (NBC, 2006-2013) Discussion

Week 7 (2/16): Primetime, Quality TV & Programming	
TUE	Lecture
	Reading: TBA
THU	Screening: <i>Girls</i> (HBO, 2012--) and <i>Jane the Virgin</i> (CW, 2014—) Discussion

Week 8 (2/23): Ratings, Audiences, and Failed Shows	
TUE	Lecture
	Reading: TBA
THU	Screening: <i>Trophy Wife</i> (ABC, 2013-2014) and <i>Selfie</i> (ABC/Hulu, 2014) Discussion

Week 9 (3/2): Web Series & Crossover Success	
TUE	Lecture
	Reading: "Finding Web TV's 'Louie': Why Views Don't Matter for Indies" by Aymar Jean Christian
TUE	Screening: <i>Lonelygirl15</i> (YouTube), <i>High Maintenance</i> (Vimeo), <i>Broad City</i> (YouTube/ Comedy Central) Discussion

Week 10 (3/9): Final Project Meetings	
TUE	Meetings during class time
THU	Meetings during class time
Pitch Prep materials due Monday March 9, 2015 at 5pm	

FINAL PROJECT DUE: Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at 12:30pm

ENG 110 Grade Tracking Sheet

There are 100 points possible in this course. To calculate your grade, divide amount of points earned by amount of points possible (thus far).

Assignment	Points Earned	Points Possible
Scene Analysis 1		10
Scene Analysis 2		20
MIDTERM GRADE		30
Pitch Prep & Meeting		20
Participation		10
Series Pitch		40
COURSE GRADE		100

Participation Grade Rubric

Overall Grade	Participation
10/10 and 9/10	Willingly raises the level of discussion through insightful class comments and focused, active listening. Engages not just the instructor's ideas but also those of other students.
8/10	Willingly contributes thoughtfully to the discussion through productive class comments and active listening.
7/10	Contributes to the discussion through pertinent, respectful class comments and active listening. Comes to class prepared to work. However, participation is sporadic and usually must be prompted by the instructor.
6/10	Rarely contributes or does not contribute respectfully to the discussion. May be frequently unprepared for class.
5/10	Disrupts the discussion. Is almost always unprepared for class.