

ENG 110: Intro to Film Studies
Winter 2016, CRN 26948
Monday, Wednesday 10:00-11:50 AM
191 Anstett Hall

Course Description

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.

Dr. Allison McGuffie 465 PLC Thursday 9 AM – 12 PM mcguffie@uoregon.edu (541) 346-3965
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Course Objective

At the end of this course, students will

- Understand various lenses through which to study film, including historical, formal, sociocultural, and ideological paradigms;
- Competently use disciplinary specific terms for discussing and writing about film;
- Be inspired to critically analyze media texts in the world around them.

Required Text

Course readings posted on Canvas. You are required to bring **hardcopies** of all course readings to class on the assigned days.

Films screened in class are also required texts. If you miss class, you are responsible for obtaining and viewing the film or films on your own and be prepared for discussion. Several films screened in this course are from my personal collection and unavailable elsewhere. These can only be viewed in my office during regular office hours.

Note on film content: Course films may contain content that is objectionable to some viewers. Exposure to all types of film content is an important part of the course and diverse material will be used to generate educational discussions. If you foresee problems with viewing required course materials, reconsider taking this course.

Instructor-Student Communication

I encourage students to visit my office hours. I look forward to conversations with students and students regularly find that such one-on-one conversations not only enhance learning, but improve course performance, as well.

Email Policy: I am available via email to answer *occasional, brief* questions. Larger questions or concerns, however, should be brought to office hours when we can discuss them more thoroughly. Email communications must be polite and professional. Unprofessionally addressed emails will not be answered. Whenever possible I will respond to student emails in two working days, not including weekends or evenings. Common explanations of absences will be noted, but will not receive individual replies. Questions that are answered in the syllabus will not receive an individual reply. I will not send grades via email. I will not accept assignments via email.

Technology Policy: All electronic devices must be silenced and stored out of sight before the start of class. This includes phones, computers, and tablets. You are welcome to use pen and paper for taking notes.

English Department Assessment Procedure, 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.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is illegal, unethical, and will result in disciplinary action. Never present another person's work as your own. Do not turn in work prepared for other courses. Students are responsible for correctly documenting and citing all sources – including books, internet sources, films, and interviews – referenced for any assignment, accurately following an accepted writing style, such as MLA or Chicago. Academic fraud of any type is reported to the Dean of Students who enforces appropriate consequences through the process detailed by Student Conduct and Community Standards. Any student who plagiarizes or cheats on any course assignment faces penalties, including an F on the assignment and in the course. If I suspect plagiarism or cheating I am required to and will report the incident in writing to the student, the department, and the dean, who may assign additional penalties. Details: <http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards.aspx>

Accommodations for students with disabilities:

If you have a registered disability that may impact your work in this course, please contact me in the first week of the term. We will work together with the Accessible Education Center to make necessary arrangements to ensure your full access to course material and assignments. Details: <http://aec.uoregon.edu/>. Or contact AEC directly in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu.

Assignments and Grading

Primary Research Assignment (10%)

Exam 1 (12%)

Exam 2 (12%)

Exam 3 (12%)

Original Film Analysis Assignment (14%)

Class Participation (20%)

Final Exam (20%)

All assignments and exams will be graded on the 4.0 grading scale as follows: A (4.0), B (3.0), C (2.0), D (1.0), F (0). A “C” grade is given to average work that meets the basic requirements of the assignment. A “B” grade is given to work that meets basic requirements and demonstrates comprehensive understanding of course material. An “A” grade is given to work that meets basic requirements, demonstrates exceptional understanding of course material, and demonstrates original insight on course concepts.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date listed in the syllabus. Each day late results in a 1 point deduction from the assignment grade. In-class assignments and exams will only be administered on the day listed in the syllabus. Make-up exams will only be arranged in exceptional circumstances with sufficient advanced notice. Not attending class on an exam day, with no prior communication and arrangement of alternatives, results in an automatic 0 for the exam.

How to Read and Prepare Assigned Readings for Class

You are expected to complete every reading assignment on the syllabus. While some sessions will include a lecture format, many others will function as discussions among the class and instructor. Therefore it is crucial that you read each assignment carefully. To do this, read with a pen and take marginal notes, especially marking crucial arguments and confusing passages. Before you come into class each day, be sure you can explain each reading’s main argument, and have one or two supporting points prepared from both the reading and the screening. This will also make preparing written assignments and studying for exams much easier, as you will have a body of notes and summaries to help you study.

The university’s expected workload outside of class is two hours for every course credit hour. For this four credit hour course, the expectation is eight hours of outside work per week, including reading, preparing readings, completing assignments, and preparing for exams.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Historical Lens

Mon, Jan 4 **Introductions; Course Overview**

Wed, Jan 6 **Presentation by Librarian Elizabeth Peterson**, regarding research assignment

Early Film History

Bordwell and Thompson, "Early Cinema," etc., 2013; 462-468.

Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions," 1986; 229-235.

In class:

Selection of films from Thomas Edison, the Lumière brothers, and Georges Méliès.

Mon, Jan 11 **History in and of Film, Transition to Sound**

Bordwell and Thompson, "The Classical Hollywood Cinema," pages 480-483.

Altman, "Crisis Historiography," 2004; 15-23.

Altman, "Films that Talk," 1980, pages 67-76.

Cass, "The Illusion of Sound and Picture," 1930; 323-326.

In class, selections:

Get Out and Get Under (Hal Roach, USA, 1920; 26 min.)

The Jazz Singer (Alan Crosland, USA, 1927; 89 min.)

Singin' In the Rain (Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, USA, 1952; 103 min.)

Wed, Jan 13 **Camera-Pen: French New Wave and New Hollywood**

Bordwell and Thompson, "The French New Wave" and "New Hollywood," pages 485-494.

Buscombe, "Ideas of Authorship," 1973; 75-85.

Bordwell and Thompson, "Narrative Alternatives: *Breathless*," 2013; 415-420.

Ray, "*Taxi Driver*," 1985; 349-360.

In class, selections:

Breathless (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1960; 87 min.)

Taxi Driver (Martin Scorsese, USA, 1976; 113 min.)

Mon, Jan 18 **Holiday, No Class**

Wed, Jan 20 **Primary Research Assignment Due** at start of class

Case Study, History in and of Film: *In the Land of the War Canoes*

Rony, "The Archive of Salvage Ethnography: Edward Sherriff Curtis," 1996, pages 90-98.

Evans, "Return to the Land of the Head Hunters," 2014.

In class:

In the Land of the War Canoes (Curtis, Pacific Northwest, 1914; 44 min.)

Mon, Jan 25 **Exam 1** administered in class

Unit 2: Formal Lens

Wed, Jan 27 **Film Analysis: Basics, Mise-en-scène, Cinematography**
<https://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/index.htm>

Mon, Feb 1 **Film Analysis: Editing, Sound**
<https://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/index.htm>

Wed, Feb 3 **The Cinematic Apparatus**
Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," 1970; 286-298.
Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 1975; 198-209.

In class, selections:

Rear Window (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1954; 112 min)

Ma vie en rose (Alain Berliner, Belgium/France, 1997; 89 min.)

Mon, Feb 8 **Experimenting with Film Form**
Eisenstein, "Dramaturgy of Film Form," 1929; 95-106.
Léger, "*Ballet Mécanique*," 1924; 48-51.
Romney, "*La Jetée: Unchained Melody*," 2007.

In class, selections:

Battleship Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, USSR, 1925; 75 min.)

Ballet Mécanique (Léger, France, 1924; 19 min.)

La Jetée (Chris Marker, France, 1963; 29 min.)

Wed, Feb 10 **Exam 2** administered in class

Unit 3: Sociocultural Lens

Mon, Feb 15 **Race Inscribed in Film**
Stam and Spence, "Colonialism, Racism and Representation," 1983; 2-20.
Rony, "The Writing of Race in Film," 1996; 45-58 and 71-73.
hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze," 1992; 510-523.

In class, selections:

Projections of Félix-Louis Regnault's chronophotography at the 1895 Paris Exposition

Illusions (Julie Dash, USA, 1982; 34 min.)

Battle of Algiers (Gillo Pontecorvo, Italy/Algeria, 1966; 120 min.)

Wed, Feb 17 **Film and War**
Library of Congress, "The Motion Picture Camera Goes to War;" 1-17.
Hodgkins, "Hearts and Minds and Bodies," 2008; 9-19.
Sennet, "Film Propoganda: *Triumph of the Will* Case Study," 2014; 45-65.
Kellner, "The Persian Gulf TV War Revisited;" 14-20 and 30-36.

In class, selections:

Burial of the "Maine" Victims (William Paley, Edison Manufacturing Co., USA, 1898; 2 min.)

The Battle of the Sommes (Malins and McDowell, Britain, 1916; 73 min.)

Triumph of the Will (Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, 1935; 110 min.)

Why We Fight: Prelude to War (Frank Capra, USA, 1942; 53 min.)
Excerpts from CNN coverage of Gulf War

Mon, Feb 22 **Camera-Gun: Italian Neorealism, Brazilian Cinema Novo, African Cinema**
Bordwell and Thompson, "Italian Neorealism," 2013; 483-485.
Bazin, "Umberto D," 1971; 79-82.
Rocha, "An Aesthetic of Hunger," 1965.
Thackaway, "Development and evolutions: a brief history of sub-Saharan Francophone African film," 2003; 7-15.

In class, selections:

Umberto D (De Sica, Italy, 1951)

Vidas Sêcas (Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Brazil, 1963; 103 min.)

Faat Kiné (Ousmane Sembène, Senegal, 2000; 117 min.)

Wed, Feb 24 **Exam 3** administered in class

Unit 4: Ideological Lens

Mon, Feb 29 **Ideology in and of Film**

Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 1969; 85-90 and 109-120.

Bordwell and Thompson, "Form, Style, and Ideology: *Meet Me in St. Louis*," 2013; 438-444.

In class, selections:

Meet Me in St. Louis (Vincente Minnelli, USA, 1944; 112 min.)

Wed, Mar 2 **Genre and Politics: The Western**

Schatz, "The Western," 1981; 45-76.

Courtney, "Looking for Race and Gender Trouble in Monument Valley," 1993; 97-130.

Potgieter, "From Freud to Funny Music in Film," 2013; 344-361.

In class, selections:

Stagecoach (John Ford, USA, 1939; 96 min.)

The Searchers (John Ford, USA, 1956; 119 min.)

Blazing Saddles (Mel Brooks, USA, 1974; 95 min.)

Mon, Mar 7 **Case Study of Ideology in and of Film:**

Film TBA

Wed, Mar 9 **Original Analysis Paper Due** at start of class

Course Recap; Review for Final Exam; Course Evals

Thur, Mar 17 **10:15 AM – 12:15 PM, Final Exam**