

ENG 110: Intro to Film Studies
Spring 2016, CRN 37030
Monday, Wednesday 10:00-11:50 AM
307 Deady Hall

Course Description

Movies are often dismissed as mere popular entertainment. But the very pervasiveness of audio-visual media in our lives demands that we look more carefully at these cultural products. In fact, an entire field of study has developed to investigate the history and significance of moving picture technology. 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 in the spirit of intellectual investigation. 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 Wednesday 12:15-3:15 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 Texts

Course readings are posted on Canvas. You are required to bring **hardcopies** of all course readings to class on the assigned days. I have provided a single document on Canvas if you would like to print them all at once at the start of the term. No electronic reading devices are allowed in class.

Films listed in the syllabus to be viewed at home are required texts. Follow links through this syllabus to view listed films online. Note on Kanopy films: When viewing on UO campus, you can access these directly through the link. When viewing off campus, you will need to login with your UO ID. If you have trouble, go back to the UO libraries site, navigate to Kanopy and sign in from here: <https://library.uoregon.edu/node/5325>.

Films screened in class are also required texts. If you miss class, you are responsible for obtaining and viewing these films on your own. 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.

Attendance Policy: Your participation grade depends on your active attention in class. You must be in class to participate. In the case of an occasional absence, you are welcome to email me and I will make a note in my records, but do not expect a personalized reply. There are no make-up opportunities for class participation. You are responsible for obtaining the material covered in class from other students or you may come to my office hours to review missed material. I rarely post lecture slides and do not provide study guides. It is in your best interest to attend class. In the case of an emergency or extended illness, contact me as soon as possible and we may arrange special accommodations.

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%)

Reading Comprehension Quizzes (10%)

Exam 1 (15%)

Exam 2 (15%)

Original Film Analysis Assignment (15%)

Class Participation (15%)

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 and film viewing 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, Mar 28 **Introductions; Course Overview**

Wed, Mar 30 **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.

Browse content and view films of the Spanish-American War:

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/spanish-american-war-in-motion-pictures/articles-and-essays/the-motion-picture-camera-goes-to-war/remember-the-main-the-beginnings-of-war/>

In class:

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

Mon, Apr 4 **Development of Narrative Film and Hollywood Industry**

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

View online:

The Great Train Robbery (Edwin S. Porter, USA, 1903); 73 min.

<https://uoregon.kanopystreaming.com/video/great-train-robbery>

In class:

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

Wed, Apr 6 **History in and of Film, Transition to Sound**

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

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

View:

Charles A. Lindbergh, Hero of the Air (William Fox for Fox Movietone, USA, 1927); 12 min.

<https://uoregon.kanopystreaming.com/video/seeing-world>

In class, selections:

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

Black and Tan (Dudley Murphy, USA, 1929)

Mon, Apr 11 **Primary Research Assignment Due** at start of class

In class:

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

Unit 2: Formal Lens

Wed, Apr 13 **Film Analysis: Narrative, Mise-en-scène, Sound**

<http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>

Mon, Apr 18 **Film Analysis: Cinematography, Editing**

Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," 1970; 286-298.

Wed, Apr 20 Gender and Film Form
Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 1975; 198-209.

Mon, Apr 25 Exam 1 (Film History and Formal Analysis)

Unit 3: Sociocultural Lens

Wed, Apr 27 Race Inscribed in Film
Stam and Spence, "Colonialism, Racism and Representation," 1983; 2-8.
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
In the Land of Giants and Pygmies (Aurelio Rossi, Belgian Congo, 1925); 9 min.
Illusions (Julie Dash, USA, 1982); 34 min.

Mon, May 2 Neorealism and Cinema Novo
Bordwell and Thompson, "Italian Neorealism," 2013; 483-485.
Bazin, "Umberto D.," 1971; 79-82.
Rocha, "An Aesthetic of Hunger," 1965.
View online:
Umberto D (De Sica, Italy, 1951); 90 min.
<https://uoregon.kanopystreaming.com/video/umberto-d>

In class, selections:

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

Wed, May 4 Camera-Pen: French New Wave and New Hollywood
Bordwell and Thompson, "The French New Wave" and "New Hollywood," pages 485-494.
Bordwell and Thompson, "Narrative Alternatives: *Breathless*," 2013; 415-420.
Buscombe, "Ideas of Authorship," 1973; 75-85.
View online:
Breathless (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1960); 87 min.
<https://uoregon.kanopystreaming.com/video/breathless>

In class, selections:

Bonnie and Clyde (Arthur Penn, USA, 1967); 111 min.

Mon, May 9 Experimenting with Film Form
Eisenstein, "Dramaturgy of Film Form," 1929; 95-106 (skim).
Léger, "*Ballet Mécanique*," 1924; 48-51.
Romney, "*La Jetée*: Unchained Melody," 2007.
View online:
La Jetée (Chris Marker, France, 1963); 29 min.
<https://uoregon.kanopystreaming.com/video/la-jetee>

In class, selections:

Battleship Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, USSR, 1925); 75 min.
Ballet Mécanique (Léger, France, 1924); 19 min.

Wed, May 11 African cinema

Thackway, "Screen Griots: Orature and Film," 2003; 49-59, 68-82, 92.

View online:

La petite vendeuse de soliel (Djibril Diop Mambety, Senegal, 1999); 42 min.

<https://uoregon.kanopystreaming.com/video/tales-ordinary-people>

In class, selections:

Borrom Sarret (Ousmane Sembène, Senegal, 1963); 20 min.

Touki Bouki (Djibril Diop Mambety, Senegal, 1973); 90 min.

Sacred Places (Jean-Marie Teno, Burkino Faso, 2009); 71 min.

Mon, May 16 Exam 2 (Comprehending Film Theory)

Unit 4: Ideological Lens

Wed, May 18 Ideology in/of Film

Comolli and Narboni, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism," 1969, 58-67.

Choose one:

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

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

In class, selections:

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

Mon, May 23 Genre and Politics: The Western

Choose one:

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.

View online:

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

<https://uoregon.kanopystreaming.com/video/stagecoach>

In class, selections:

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

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

Wed, May 25 The Hollywood Blockbuster

Heath, "Jaws, Ideology, and Film Theory," 1976.

View:

Jaws (Spielberg, USA, 1975); 130 min.

No classes, Memorial Day Holiday

Wed, Jun 1 Original Analysis Paper Due at start of class

Ideology Practice

View:

The Matrix (The Wachowskis, USA, 1999); 150 min.

Fri, Jun 10 10:15 AM – 12:15 PM, Final Exam Due