English 110: Introduction to Film Studies

Summer 2018
MTWR 10-11:50am 185 Lillis
CRN 42422, 4 Credits

Dr. Stephen Rust
Office Hours 12-12:30 MTWR, PLC 239
srust@uoregon.edu

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. 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 this course is to introduce you to the basic skills necessary for a critical knowledge of the movies as art, culture, and industry. We will also consider the relationship between movies and other forms of media such as tv, radio, and the internet.

Required Text: *Film Studies: An Introduction* by Ed Sikov. Available at the Duckstore.

*Access to UO Webmail and Canvas Learning Platform required for course documents and assignments.

Learning Outcomes:
By the end of this course, students who complete all required readings and assignments will be able to:

- Understand how film works as an artistic, industrial, and cultural form
- Deploy the basic language of film aesthetics - including cinematography, mise en scène, editing, and sound – to closely analyze film texts
- Demonstrate knowledge of ideological forces at work in films based on their cultural and historical contexts
- Explain why film studies is a serious area of academic study and research
- Communicate ideas about film culture through spoken and written analysis

What I Expect From You: I expect you to succeed in this class. To do that you will need to complete all reading, homework, and assignments and exams on time and to the very best of your ability. I expect you to come to class prepared, awake, sober, and fully-engaged. Do your homework, study for exams, and bring your books to class. Turn off your phone before class or sit by the door if you are waiting for an emergency call/text and need to step outside to answer. Ask questions, engage in discussion, and be prepared to work in groups with any and all class members, embracing diversity.

What You Can Expect From Me: I will respond to your questions and concerns as clearly and sincerely as possible and am always happy to talk about any aspect of the class. I will be on-time to class and office hours and respond to emails and phone calls within 48 hours. I will provide you with the same level of instruction as students I have taught at Oregon State University and the University of Oregon. I will listen to you and treat you with the utmost respect. I will grade fairly and provide detailed feedback.

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 the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Personal Technology Use: Any personal communication or non-class work on personal electronics, particularly cell phones, is not permitted during class time and will result in a significant penalty to your final participation grade. If you are expecting an emergency text or phone call please step outside of the classroom to deal with it.
**Academic Honesty:** All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please consult The Student Conduct Code on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. In cases where academic misconduct has been clearly established, the award of up to an F for the final course grade will be a decision made by the Dean’s Office based up on instructor referral. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

**Incompletes:** Approval will be granted only in cases when some minor but essential aspect of the course cannot be completed by students through unforeseen circumstances beyond their control.

**Observance of Religious Holidays:** Students who observe their religious holidays at times when academic requirements conflict with those observances must inform instructors in advance of the holiday. Students are responsible for making up missed work according to a schedule determined with the teacher.

**Class Meetings & Attendance Procedures:** You are expected to attend all class meetings and participate in all discussions. We only have 15 class meetings, so attendance is required and checked daily. Screening and discussing films in a group setting is vital to critical learning. If you plan to be absent on a given day, you must contact me in advance to arrange make-up work/exams. The following attendance policy is straightforward and non-negotiable: Three absences excused, no questions asked. However, you are still responsible for any missed screenings, notes, or assignments due that day. Each additional absence, except in cases of emergency, will result in the automatic deduction of 3% from your final grade (e.g., from a 91%-88%).

**Screenings:** The screening of complete film texts is a vital component of this class. You are required to attend the screenings each week and take notes on the films. If you are absent during a screening day, you will need to make arrangements to see the movie at home. Watching films in a classroom requires different ways of seeing (and note-taking), as you will need to pay close attention to how the events unfold on screen and why each film takes its own specific form. A few films are R rated as this course was developed with a mature viewing audience in mind. Please see me in advance if this will be an issue.

**Evaluation:** A+ = 97%, A = 92%, A- = 90%, B+ = 87%, B = 92%, etc.)
Course grades will be based on:

- Weekly Homework: 25%
- Vocabulary Project: 25%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Final Exam: 30%

**Weekly Homework:** Compose a single-spaced, one-page response to the readings when assigned. The first and second paragraphs of your response should briefly summarize the entire reading. The third and fourth paragraphs should highlight specific passages and key concepts covered in the reading. The fifth paragraph should identify visual examples from films viewed in class that highlight the importance of the concepts covered in the reading. Your response must include at least two direct quotes from the assigned reading – including page number – and one close reading of a specific scene from one of the films screened in class. Late responses accepted for up to one week at a 50% penalty. **Keys to success:** The goal here is not only to produce insightful comments, but also to provoke discussion and generate interest. Uninspired or irrelevant responses will be graded accordingly.
**Vocabulary Project:** You will define the terms using your course text and online sources, provide visual examples from film texts of your choice, and annotate your examples with brief description and analysis. Examples will be available.

**Exams:** The midterm exam will be held in class and consist of multiple choice, true/false, and matching, questions and the final exam will consist of comprehensive take-home essays.

**Extra Credit:** Attend a movie screening or event on campus or at the Bijou or Bijou Metro. Write a 1-page single-spaced analysis + your ticket or event flyer for a 3% boost to your course grade. **AND/OR** Create flashcards of all the key terms from the course textbook to use as a study guide for the midterm exam. Bring your flashcards to class the day of the midterm for a 2% boost to your course grade.

### Class Schedule

#### Week One: Introduction to Film Studies and Principles of Mise-en-scene
- **23 July**
  - Course Welcome and overview
  - **Film Screening:** *Some Like it Hot* (Billy Wilder, 1959)
- **24 July**
  - **Reading:** *Film Studies*, Introduction and Chapter 1. **HW #1 Due on Canvas before class**
- **25 July**
  - **Film Screening:** *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1940)
- **26 July**
  - **Reading:** *Film Studies*, Chapter 2. **HW #2 Due on Canvas before class**

#### Week Two: Cinematography, Sound, and Editing
- **30 July**
  - **Film Screening:** *Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2017)
- **31 July**
  - **Reading:** *Film Studies*, Chapters 3-4. **HW #3 Due on Canvas before class**
- **1 August**
  - **Film Screening:** *Wall-e* (Andrew Stanton, 2008)
- **2 August**
  - **Reading:** *Film Studies*, Chapter 5. **HW #4 Due on Canvas before class**

#### Week Three: Narrative and Filmmakers
- **6 August**
  - No Class Meeting, study for the midterm exam
- **7 August**
  - Midterm Exam in class, bring your flashcards for extra credit.
- **8 August**
  - **Film Screening:** *400 Blows* (Francois Truffaut, 1959)
- **9 July**
  - **Reading:** *Film Studies* Chapters 6 and 7. **HW #5 Due on Canvas before class**

#### Week Four: Performers, Genres, and Special Effects
- **13 August**
  - **Film Screening:** *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* (Chris Columbus, 2001)
- **14 August**
  - **Reading:** *Film Studies* Chapters 8 and 9. **Vocabulary Project due by midnight**
- **15 August**
  - **Reading:** *Film Studies* Chapters 10 and 11. **Screening:** *Yellow Submarine* (1968)
- **16 August**
  - No Class Meeting. **Take home final exam due by midnight**