

**Introduction to Film Studies**  
**M/W/F 11:00-11:50 p.m.**  
**Screenings Mondays 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. (Media room)**

Janet S. Robinson  
FALL 2009  
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**Course Description:** This course is designed to give you the skills needed to analyze films. You will come away familiar with the component features of the medium (mise-en-scène, cinematography, sound, editing), and an understanding of how these features contribute to the style and meaning of an individual film. The course also provides an introduction to the basic film types, including narrative film, documentary, independent film, and popular genres.

**Texts:** *Film: An Introduction 4<sup>th</sup> edition* William H. Phillips

**Attendance, Participation and Late Work:** Class attendance is required (including screenings). You must be present for the entire class to be counted present. Every class is important. If you are consistently absent, you jeopardize your success in the course. If you miss more than three (3) classes (including screenings), *for any reason*, your final grade will drop by one grade point (A to A-; A- to B+, B+ to B, etc.). Being on time to class is expected and consistent lateness is considered disruptive to the class. Late work will be docked one grade (A to A-; A- to B+ etc.) for each day it is late.

**Electronic Devices:** The classroom is a learning environment and should be free from phone, email, and texting interruption.

**Course Grading:** Your final grade will be determined based on the accumulated points for the following factors: (See course schedule for descriptions of assignments.)

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Four Quizzes        | 25 pts. each (multiple-choice, true-false, fill in the blank) |
| Midterm Exam        | 100 pts. (short answer)                                       |
| Group Presentations | 50 pts. (presentations begin after midterm)                   |
| Final Exam          | 100 pts. (short answer)                                       |
| <u>Final Essay</u>  | <u>100 pts. (5-6 pages)</u>                                   |
| TOTAL               | 450 pts.  |

**Assignments**

**Group Presentations:** Each group will choose a 3-5 minute clip from a feature-length film to present to the class. (You may choose a film being screened in class or a film of the group's choice. All films must be approved.) Your group will need to view it at least twice and discuss it, do research about the film, and create a handout for the class. The handout will include a brief summary of the film's plot; information about the time, place and production of the film; the major cast and crew; and any other relevant sources and contexts. Presentations should not last longer than 15 minutes.

First you will show the whole clip, and then discuss it. In your discussion of the film, please be sure to include discussion of the film's

- a. techniques, including mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound (both the techniques and what they contribute to the viewing experience);
- b. the film's genre
- c. style(s)
- d. some of its major possible meanings to the film as a whole (explicit and implicit)

Finally, you will answer questions about the film, the group handout, and your group's presentation.

Presentations will be graded on their adherence to the assignment and on thoroughness, accuracy, clarity, and usefulness to viewers. The more fully your group applies the book's concepts to the film clip, the more useful your presentation (and the higher your grade).

**Final Essay:** (5-6 pages)

Write a close analysis of ONE film that we have screened and discussed in class. You should discuss the cinematic aspects of the film you choose (i.e., mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing and sound) in addition to discussing the thematic elements (explicit and implicit meaning) of the film as a whole by using specific examples from the film to illustrate your points.

Your essay should have a thesis that you prove with supporting evidence. You should quote from the films, but not extensively; you should not retell the plot. Please number your pages and use MLA documentation style. It is not necessary to use secondary sources, but if you do you must cite them correctly. Do not take ideas from secondary sources (including the Internet) without proper citation. This constitutes plagiarism and can result in your failing the course and the possibility of expulsion from the university. Do not turn in a paper that you have previously received credit for in another class.

**Course Schedule** (subject to change):

**Week 1**

*Mon., Aug. 24*

Introduction

In-class Screening: *Duck Amuck*, Chuck Jones (1953) 7m.

Screening 6:00 p.m.—*Citizen Kane*, Orson Welles (1941) 119m.

*Wed., Aug. 26*

Discussion: *Citizen Kane*

*Fri., Aug. 28*

Discussion: *Citizen Kane*

**Week 2**

*Mon., Aug. 31*

**Reading: Chapter 1—Mise en Scène**

Screening 6:00 p.m.—*No Country For Old Men*, Coen Brothers (2008) 98m.

*Wed., Sept. 2*

Discussion: *No Country For Old Men*

*Fri., Sept. 4*

In-class Screening: *Cinematographer Style*, Jon Fauer (2006) 86m.

**Week 3**

*Mon., Sept. 7*

Labor Day—No Class

*Wed., Sept. 9*

**Reading: Chapter 2—Cinematography**

Discussion: *No Country For Old Men*

*Fri., Sept. 11*

Discussion: *No Country For Old Men*

**Week 4**

*Mon., Sept. 14*

Screening 6:00 p.m.—*Pan's Labyrinth*, Guillermo del Toro (2006) 119m.

*Wed., Sept. 16*

Discussion: *Pan's Labyrinth*

*Fri., Sept. 18*

Discussion: *Pan's Labyrinth*

**Week 5**

*Mon., Sept. 21*

**Reading: Chapter 3—Editing**

clips from *The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing* (2004)

Screening 6:00 p.m.—*Persona*, Ingmar Bergman (1966) 85m.

*Wed., Sept. 23*  
Discussion: *Persona*

*Fri., Sept. 25*  
Discussion: *Persona*

**Week 6**

*Mon., Sept. 28*

**Quiz #1 (chapters 1-3)**

**Reading: Chapter 4—Sound**

Screening: *The Graduate*, Mike Nichols (1967) 105m.

*Wed., Sept. 30*  
Discussion: *The Graduate*

*Fri., Oct. 2*  
Discussion: *The Graduate*

**Week 7**

*Mon., Oct. 5*

**Reading: Chapter 5—Sources for Fictional Films**

Screening: *The Departed*, Martin Scorsese (2006) 151m.

*Wed., Oct. 7*  
Discussion: *The Departed*

*Fri., Oct. 9*  
Discussion: *The Departed*

**Week 8**

*Mon., Oct. 12*

**Reading: Chapter 6—Components of Fictional Films**

Screening: *Let the Right One In*, Tomas Alfredson (2008), 115m.

*Wed., Oct. 14*  
Discussion: *Let the Right One In*

*Fri., Oct. 16*

**Quiz #2 (chapters 4-6)**

Discussion: *Let the Right One In*

**Review Midterm**

**Week 9**

*Mon., Oct. 19*

**MIDTERM EXAM** (Chapters 1-6, short answer)

**Reading: Chapter 7: Types of Fictional Films, pages 307-333**

Screening: *Breathless*, Jean-Luc Godard (1959) 90m.

*Wed., Oct. 21*  
Reading: Chapter 7: Types of Fictional Films, pages 333-358

Discussion: *Breathless*

*Fri., Oct. 23*

Discussion: *Breathless*

**Week 10**

*Mon., Oct. 26*

Discussion: *Breathless*, clips from *The Bicycle Thief*

Screening: *4 months, 3 weeks, 2 days*, Christian Mungiu (2007) 113m.

*Wed., Oct. 28*

Discussion: *4 months, 3 weeks, 2 days*

*Fri., Oct. 30*

Discussion: *4 months, 3 weeks, 2 days*

**Week 11**

*Mon., Nov. 2*

**Reading: Chapter 8: Documentary Films**

Screening: *This Film is Not Yet Rated*, Kirby Dick (2006) 97m.

*Wed., Nov. 4*

Discussion: *This Film is Not Yet Rated*

*Fri., Nov. 6*

Discussion: *This Film is Not Yet Rated*

**Week 12**

*Mon., Nov. 9*

**Quiz #3 (chapters 7-8)**

**Reading: Chapter 9: Experimental, Hybrid, and Animated Films**

Screening: *Un Chien Andalou*, Luis Bunuel (1929) 16m.

*Meshes of the Afternoon*, May Deren (1943) 14m.

*Wallace and Gromit: The Wrong Trousers*, Nick Park (1993) 30m.

*Wed., Nov. 11*

Screening: *Un Chien Andalou*, *Meshes of the Afternoon*

*Fri., Nov. 13*

Discussion: *Wallace and Gromit*

**Week 13**

*Mon., Nov. 16*

**Reading: Chapter 10: Understanding Films Through Contexts**

Screening: *A Clockwork Orange*, Stanley Kubrick (1971) 136m.

*Wed., Nov. 18*

Discussion: *A Clockwork Orange*

*Fri., Nov. 19*

Discussion: *A Clockwork Orange*

***Week 14—Fall Break and Thanksgiving Holiday—No class Nov. 23-27***

**Week 15**

*Mon., Nov 30*

**Reading: Chapter 11: Thinking About Films**

Screening: *The Player*, Robert Altman (1992) 124m.

*Wed., Dec. 2*

Discussion: *The Player*

*Fri., Dec. 4*

Discussion: *The Player*

**Week 16**

*Mon., Dec. 7*

**Reading: Chapter 12: Writing About Films**

Discuss Final Essay

No Screening

*Wed. Dec. 9*

Workshop Final Essay

**Final Review**

*Fri. Dec. 11*

**FINAL EXAM** (chapters 7-11, short answer),

*Saturday, Dec. 12*

**FINAL ESSAY DUE**

**4:30 p.m. in the classroom**

No late work will be accepted after the scheduled final exam period.