

LIBB 2013-280R: FILM AND THE QUEST FOR TRUTH

T/R 2:00-3:15 | Libby 103

LIBB 2013-250R: FILM AND THE QUEST FOR TRUTH

T/R 3:30-4:45 | FARR CRAVEN

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Office: Libby Rm 176 (West side Faculty Office). Phone 303.492.1804

Hours: W 2:00-3:00 and TH 11:30-12:30 & by Appointment

Welcome to your RAP!

A first-year experience combining Small Classes, Free Events & Community in your Residential Hall.

Libby RAP's theme is Creativity. Our motto: Where Creative Minds Come Alive.

<https://libbyrap.colorado.edu/content/about-libby-rap>

Farrand RAP's theme is Humanities.

<http://farrandrap.colorado.edu/>

How to Get in Touch:

- EMAIL: Best way to get in touch fast! I try to respond as quickly as possible M-F, but it's helpful if you give me 24 hours. I don't return emails on weekends.
- OFFICE HOURS: Feel free to drop in during office hours (or make an appt). I can help with papers, talk about movies, answer questions, whatever you need. These hours are for you. Please get to know me and your other CU professors!
- MSGS. FROM ME: Please check your Colorado.edu account and D2L regularly for emails from me as you are responsible for these communications.

Course Description and Aspirations:

The theme of Truth is as big as it is difficult to define. LIBB 2013 concerns the subjectivity and relativity of Truth and focuses on how and why we pursue (or fail to pursue) the truths about ourselves and about the people and events around us, and how and why such truths are often elusive, fragmentary, and impermanent. Film and the Quest for Truth satisfies the "Ideas and Values" core curriculum requirement.

Our class examines film as both a reflector and arbiter of ideas and values found in **American culture and society**. Students will engage in the study of film and learn the vocabulary for discussing cinema by engaging in critical thinking not only about the production of films, but about their historical and social context and messages. I expect discussions to be wide-ranging and personal as we'll not only look at how film both structures and circulates ideas of Truth, but we'll also examine the function and value of film art by affording ourselves the chance to consider, cogitate, and have spirited conversations about some of the "big idea" films in cinema.

My hope is that you will develop curiosity not only about film, but about the cultures with which you interact daily in order to begin to examine how your own ideas and values have formed. My goal is to help you to learn to develop your own critical thinking skills so that you are able to encounter new material with your own informed observational skills and begin generating questions.

To make the most of this class, I ask that you:

1. **Come to class prepared.** Do the readings and viewing assignments and allow yourself to be actively engaged with them. Your learning experience will be all the richer for it.
2. **Share your thoughts** on the subjects we are discussing. It will make the class that much more interesting.
3. **Ask questions.** Don't hesitate to question my ideas or those of your peers, or to ask for clarifications, whether we are discussing an administrative matter or class material.

Note about Violent and/or Sexual Content: Many of the films we will be studying are for mature audiences and include violent and/or sexual content. Students who suspect they will have trouble screening such films and participating in academically appropriate class discussions may wish to find a different course.

Course Expectations + Hopes:

I encourage you to think about what you expect from me and this class. Here are my expectations/hopes and aspirations for this class and you.

- Each of you will: Be Honest. Be Real. Be Present. I will do the same.
- Each student will show up and actively contribute to making the class interesting and lively.

- Please trust me when I say struggle means learning is happening! Come see me for help at any time.
- We will all be honest and respectful of each other. We agree to disagree. Discussing different opinions can be productive & interesting.
- In the event you have a problem with another student, the class, or me, please make an appointment to discuss the issue with me first. We should be able to work out most issues ourselves. I will do the same.
- Each of you will play an active role in your education---“Education is not about filling the cup, but lighting the fire”---and I will meet you somewhere in the middle.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS:

- Do the assigned readings + viewings and take notes on them ahead of class discussions
- Take strong notes in class
- Participate in class: ask questions, share knowledge, offer comments
- Form a study group in advance of exams
- Come see me with questions, concerns, and ideas
- Get help with your writing if you struggle with essays
- Read the syllabus!

Required Texts:

1. *Film, Form & Culture*, Robert Kolker, 3rd ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006. ISBN0-07-312261-7

NOTE: You are required to bring a hard copy of a book to class (no eReaders). Please purchase books with these ISBNs and years of publication.

While the textbook occasionally will directly comment on the film at hand, it will primarily be used to help student begin to understand film composition, analysis and theory. Doing the reading helps you to be informed and better prepared for class discussions of the film.

2. Supplemental Readings available on D2L – **Please print a copy.** Our class discussion are much more interesting when you have done the reading and take the time to bring these materials to class for close examination.

GRADING (explained below with rubrics):

1. Class Participation - 100 points
2. Quizzes - 100 points
3. Discussion Lead - 50 points
4. Exam #1- 100 points
5. Exam #2 - 150 points
6. 3 of 5 Short Essays (750-900 words) 150 points total or 50 points each

1. Class Participation (100 points). You receive points for preparation and participation. To be successful, bring your book, a hard copy of the assigned reading, a notebook and pen; and contribute to the class discussions in a meaningful way. Please also communicate in a responsible and timely manner if any problems arise. This category is graded on the half grade: i.e. 95, 90, 85, 80 etc.

Grading scale for presence (effort, attendance, and participation in class):

A: always prepared for class, participates often without being called on, makes original and insightful comments and connections; demonstrates full mastery of course goals

B: generally prepared for class; participates without being called on; demonstrates understanding of course goals and often meets them

C: adequately prepared for class; only participates when called on; understanding of course goals is not always consistent

D: preparation less than adequate; never participates unless called on; comments demonstrate a failure to master the course goals,

F: disruptive to class (e.g., talking, continual tardiness, etc.); unprepared when called on; unable or unwilling to participate in class discussions

Please Note: Texting, checking messages or having to be asked repeatedly to stow your phone can also lower your class participation grade.

2. Quizzes (100 points) - Quizzes are announced and also unannounced. Material will cover movies and if needed, supplemental readings. Usually, the lowest 2 quiz grades will be dropped.

3. Discussion Leads (50 points) - As part of our ongoing discussion of ideas and values and how film communicates and shapes these ideas, each of you will be responsible for presenting one of the supplemental readings in the 2nd half of class. With a group of peers, you will present a summary of the essay and then engage the class in discussion of two questions (see assignment).

4. **Exam 1 (100 pts) + Exam 2 (150 pts)** – Exams consist of definitions and short answers. The exams ask you to think deeply about the material covered in our class meetings, about readings and films. In order to ensure you are prepared, I release all potential questions a week in advance so you have adequate time to prepare your answers. If you attend class regularly, take strong notes, participate in class and do the written and reading assignments as they come up, you will do well on the exams.

4. **Short essays (150 points total)** – You will write 3 of 5 short (600-900 word) essays over the course of the semester (50 points each) that will help you make new connections and develop your thinking further on the films at hand. Students writing more than 3 essays will have their lowest grade dropped.

Please note: *All students must do the first essay*, but then can complete the other 2 as they choose; this allows me to identify any students who need help with their writing early on.

- **Turn-it-in:** All essays will be submitted dropbox on D2L. Please note the each assignment box will lock after the paper is due. If you have urgent circumstances regarding a late essay, please see me ahead of time. Otherwise, no late work! You will receive annotated and oral feedback on your essay on D2L.
- **Content + Format** - As a college student at a major university, I expect you to be familiar with writing conventions (MLA style, proper formatting of quotes, use of an argumentative thesis statement and topic sentences). You will be graded on your writing in this class, in addition to how well you analyze film and articulate theoretical concepts, so get help if you need it. Your dorm offers a drop in writing lab—Please use it! I am also happy to help with essays.
- **Use this Header in the upper left corner:**

Name
LIBB 2013-Quest
Assignment Name (Essay # () Film title)/ Word count
Due date

Grading scale for writing projects:

A: excellent and original form and content ; clean, clear style, no mechanical errors. Superior thinking and writing.

B: a good, interesting paper with no major flaws; good ideas but perhaps not great writing

C: adequate, reasonably competent; a mixture of strengths and weaknesses

D: poor in content, form, and mechanics or **fails to meet the word minimum**

F: incoherent, disastrously flawed, or not turned in on time, not college-level work

How Final Grades Are Determined:

You will receive points each portion of the class. At the end of class, the points are added up and a final grade is awarded based on the following:

A	651+ (93%)	B-	560-680 (80-82%)	D+	469-489
A-	630-650 (90-92%)	C+	539-559 (77-79%)	D	441-468
B+	609-629 (87-89%)	C	511-538 (73-76%)	D-	420-440
B	581-608 (83-86%)	C-	490-510 (70-72%)	F-	0-419

PLEASE NOTE: You should be able to track your grade average (percentage) in class on D2L after the 3rd or 4th week of class.

COURSE POLICIES:

1. **ATTENDANCE:** You get 3 FREE absences to use as you like. After that, *for any reason* (cataclysms, catastrophes and world stopping events will probably be excepted) your final grade will be docked 25 points (half a grade) for each additional absence. **Missing more than two weeks of class will automatically result in failure of the class.**

As a courtesy, please notify me of your absence as soon as you can. Also, remember that you are still responsible for the material covered in class on the date(s) of your absence. There will be no make-up quizzes.

In the event of an emergency, please have someone contact me ASAP. If you've missed two weeks of class because of coma or other crisis, I am better equipped to help you figure out what to do **BEFORE** you return. In these cases, you will be required to provide appropriate documentation.

2. TARDINESS: Being on time to class is expected and consistent lateness negatively impacts class discussions. I take attendance each class and those not in their seat when class begins are marked absent. It's your responsibility if you are late to see me after class to make sure you're marked tardy instead. Two tardies = 1 absence.

3. MISSING CLASS/LATE WORK/MAKE-UPS: No late work will be accepted, and I do not give make up exams. Extra credit is rare and usually tied to a co-curricular event that will enhance your class experience. So, please plan ahead. Invoke the gods. Make sure your relatives take their Vitamin C. And do not be sick.

YOU are responsible for homework and assignments regardless of whether you attend class or not. What to do:

- For papers: Simply submit the work to dropbox by the deadline or skip that paper (okay for essays 2-5)
- For Group Reports: You should only miss this report only in the event of dire illness. Make arrangements with your group and email me.
- Exams: No make ups without a doctor's note detailing the reason you must miss class.
- Quizzes: No make ups allowed. Usually lowest 2 quiz grades are dropped.

4. ELECTRONIC DEVICES: (Phones) The classroom is a learning environment and should be free from phone, email, and texting interruption. **Please turn off and stow phones etc. prior to entering the classroom.** You may not leave class to answer your phone unless it is an emergency and you have notified me at the beginning of class. Students who have to be repeatedly reminded to put away their phone will be counted as absent for the day.

You may not use computers in the classroom, but feel free to transfer notes to your computer after class.

Please Note: Texting, checking messages or having to be asked repeatedly to stow your phone can also lower your class participation grade.

5. LEAVING CLASS: Leaving class is disruptive. Please make plans to use the bathroom and your phone *prior* to class. **Please do not leave class while it is underway, unless it is an emergency.**

6. ACCOMMODATIONS: If you qualify for accommodations for either note taking or extra time on exams, please bring your paperwork to my attention at the beginning of the semester. We need at least two weeks to set up special exam requests and to find note takers!

7. FILM SCREENINGS: You are required to screen films on D2L each week. I encourage students to watch films together as much as possible, as group viewings are generally more insightful and enjoyable.

8. PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is defined as the use of another's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgment. Examples of plagiarism include: failing to use quotation marks when directly quoting from a source; failing to document distinctive ideas from a source; fabricating or inventing sources; and copying information from computer-based sources, i.e., the Internet. The intentional or unintentional representation of another's work as your own is a serious academic offense. **My class policy is that students who either intentionally or unintentionally represent another's work as their own will be reported to the honor board and will fail the assignment and possibly the class.** See also the fine print.

9. CLASSROOM BEHAVIOIR: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

THE FINE PRINT - CU Policies:

Disabilities and accommodations – If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu <<mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu>>.

If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions: Injuries, Surgeries, and Illnesses guidelines under Quick Links at Disability Services website and discuss your needs with your professor.

Religious Observances - Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please submit these dates to me in writing the third week of class, along with exam conflicts. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Discrimination and Harassment - The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

CU Honor Code - All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

CU Policy on Plagiarism - Breaches of academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, and the unauthorized possession of examinations, papers, computer programs, as well as other class materials specifically released by the faculty. A student accused of academic dishonesty will either accept the accusation made by a faculty member or request a hearing before a student panel, which will make a decision on the accusation of academic dishonesty. In addition to academic sanctions imposed by the faculty, students found guilty of academic dishonesty also face consequences from the honor code council ranging from attending a mandatory class in ethics to expulsion from the campus. More information about CU-Boulder's Honor Code may be found at www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/

Course Schedule:

Here is the schedule, subject to change. Please plan to do all the readings and Screenings **by the beginning of class on the day they appear** and be prepared to contribute your insight and opinion to the class in a significant way.

Week 1

The Hollywood Film & The Myth of Photographic Truth

Tu 8-25 Intro/Syllabus/Truth Talk

Th 8-27 Classic Hollywood Style

Movie Discussion: *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, 1996, D: Milos Foreman, 129m.

Quiz #1 (over The People vs. Larry Flynt)

The Name Game

Week 2

Tu 9-1 Reading + Film Discussion of *The People vs. Larry Flynt*

Readings: Introduction + CH 1: The Image and Reality

D2L: Hollywood Cleans Up Hustler – Gloria Steinem

Truth, Spectacle & Storytelling

Th 9-3 Film + Reading Discussion

Reading: CH 2: Formal Structures: How Films Tell Their Stories

Movie Discussion: The Magic of Méliès (parts 1 and 2)

Quiz #2

Handout – Short Paper Topics

Week 3

Tu 9-8 **Movie Discussion:** *The Fall, 2008*, D: Tarsem Singh, 117m

Quiz #3

Th 9-10 Film + Text Reading Discussion

Reading: Review CH 1-2

Essay Tutorial

American Culture & Identity: The Grand Narrative

Week 4

Tu 9-15 **Movie Discussion:** *Shane*, 1953, D: George Stevens, 118m.
DUE: Mandatory Response paper #1 (*Melies/The Fall*)
Quiz #4

Th 9-17 Film + Reading Discussion
Reading: CH 8: The Stories told by Film (Master Narratives and Genre) (211-222)
Reading: CH 9: "The Western" (255-263)
Reading: D2L: "The Westerner" – Robert Warshow (Bring a hard copy to class!)

Week 5

Tu 9-22 **Movie Discussion:** *Citizen Kane*, 1941, D: Orson Welles, 119m.
Quiz #5
Handout: Discussion Lead Assignment

Th 9-24 Film + Reading Discussion
Reading: CH 3 – Building Blocks I: the Shot (pay attention to 70-74)

American Popular Culture: Reflexivity

Week 6

Tu 9-29 **Movie Discussion:** *The Truman Show*, 1998, D: Peter Weir, 103m.
Quiz #6

Th 10-1 Film + Reading Discussion
Reading: CH 4: Building Blocks II: The Cut
Reading: D2L: "The Truman Delusion" by Andrew Marantz
Response paper #2 due (*Citizen Kane/Shane*)

Week 7

Tu 10-6 **Movie Discussion:** *Memento*, 2000, D: Christopher Nolan, 113m.
Quiz #7

Th 10-8 Film + Reading Discussion
Reading: D2L: "Memento by Christopher Nolan and Its Postmodernist Features" by Aleksandra Biernacka
Discussion Lead #1
Handout: Exam #1 Study Guide

Week 8

Tu 10-13 Exam #1 Review
Th 10-15 Exam #1

Culture & Violence

Week 9

Tu 10-20 **Movie Discussion:** *A History of Violence*, 2005, D: David Cronenberg, 96m.
Quiz #8

Th 10-22 Film + Reading Discussion
Movie Discussion: D2L: "David Cronenberg, Dead Serious" by Desson Thomas
Discussion Lead #2
Response paper #3 due (*Truman/Memento*)

Week 10

Tu 10-27 The aestheticization of violence
Movie Discussion: *A Clockwork Orange*, 1971, D: Stanley Kubrick, 136m.

Quiz #9

Th 10-29 Film + Reading Discussion
Reading: CH 6: The Storytellers of Film II: Kubrick (149-151)
Reading: CH 9: on Science Fiction
Reading: (handout!) "The Clockwork Condition" by Anthony Burgess
Discussion Lead #3

Culture, Technology & Truth

Week 11

Tu 11-3 **Movie Discussion:** *The Matrix*, 1999, D: Andy and Lana Wachowski, 136m

Th 11-5 Film + Reading Discussion
Reading: D2L: Plato's Allegory of the Cave + The Forms
Discussion Lead #4 & 5
Response paper #4 due (History/Clockwork)

Week 12

Tu 11-10 **Movie Discussion:** *Minority Report*, 2002, D: Steven Spielberg, 145m.
Quiz #10

Th 11-12 Film + Reading Discussion
Reading: CH 8: Film Noir (243-252)
Reading: D2L: "The Definitives" by Brian Eggert
Discussion Lead #6

The American Hero Revisited

Week 13

Tu 11-17 **Movie Discussion:** *The Hurt Locker*, 2008, D: Kathryn Bigelow, 131m.
Response paper #5 due (Matrix & Minority Report)
Quiz #12

Th 11-19 Film + Reading Discussion
Reading: CH 9: The Stories Told by Film II (256-263)
Reading: Burgoine's "Embodiment in the War Film"
Discussion Lead #7
Response paper #5 due (History/Clockwork)

Week 13 ½ Fall Break (11-24/26) No Class

Week 14

Tu 12-1 **Movie Discussion:** *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, 2012, D: Behn Zeitlin. 93m.

Th 12-3 Film + Reading Discussion
Reading: D2L: Zeitlin Interview + "Hollywood's Year of Heroine Worship" by A.O. Scott

Week 15

Tu 12-8 Final Exam Review
Th 12-10 Final Exam Review

Final Exam (Exam #2) Wednesday December 16th: 730pm -10pm. Location TBA.
The Essay portion of the Exam will be due Monday, December 14th to Dropbox by 10am.