

Film Analysis

ENG 2300 - Section 1809

Instructor: Cristina Ruiz-Poveda

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Meetings: Class MWF 6 at ROL115. Screenings M 9-11 at TUR 2334

Office Hours: Mondays 2-3 pm, Wednesdays 12-12:50 pm, and by appointment at TUR 4412

Course Description:

ENG 2300 will introduce you to film vocabulary and film analysis. Films take many forms and are shaped by a wide range of cultural conditions. In this course, you will learn how to analyze films and their forms by examining how moving images create meanings and communicate to audiences in a variety of cinematic contexts. You will develop your analytic skills in the context of film history and film theory and you will learn to appreciate film as a cultural expression rather than a form of entertainment.

In addition, this course will challenge you as a writer and a creator. Throughout the semester, you will develop techniques of persuasive writing as you work to compose compelling, evocative analyses of the films you view. You will also make small creative exercises to understand how films are articulated and to address theoretical issues studied in class.

Course Goals and Outcomes: By the end of the semester you should be able to...

- Analyze films critically using film vocabulary
- Be aware of the power of cinematic language
- Appreciate film as a cultural product and form of knowledge rather than only entertainment
- Understand the creative production process of films
- Confront, accept, and enjoy “different” films, those that depart from conventions that you may now take for granted
- Understand your own experience as an spectator
- Articulate how films create meanings through formal elements
- Adapt your writing style to varied genres and audiences

Materials:

Required:

- Timothy Corrigan & Patricia White, *The Film Experience* (3rd Ed)
- The instructor will provide other required materials.

Recommended:

- Corrigan, Timothy. *Short Guide to Writing About Film*, 8th Edition. Boston: Pearson, 2012.
- Yale Film Analysis site. <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/>

Assignments and Grading

Participation and preparedness - 15%

Students should be prepared to discuss the materials and actively participate in class activities. Absences, tardies, and lack of preparedness will lower your participation grade. Always bring the book to class. There might be unannounced reading quizzes to ensure you complete and understand the readings.

Film Vocabulary Quizz - 5 %

During the first two weeks you will learn a lot of technical words about film. To ensure you get familiar with these terms, there will be an announced quiz.

Viewing Responses (3 x 500 words, 1500 words total) - 20%

Brief responses about the film of the week or close readings of individual scenes with a focus on the topic covered in that unit (editing, sound...). Try to relate the film to the readings of the week. These assignments are short, but they should demonstrate professionalism and analytical thinking.

Moon-watching Exercise (500-700 words) -10%

Using the technique described in the Duckworth reading, pick one scene from any of the films watched to date and record your observations of the scene for five days (do not focus on significance and interpretation at this point). After you have recorded your observations, write a short paragraph explaining the significance of the scene.

Midterm Film Review (750-1000 words) - 20%

Writing about film also involves creating critiques for the general audience to give them a sense of a particular movie even before they have watched it. This is type of review that you find in the newspaper or that Roger Ebert would write. You will pick a film of your choice (it does not have to be from class) and write a review for an informed reader.

Final Film Analysis Essay (2000-2500 words) - 30%

You will write a critical essay analyzing one of the films we have screened in class this semester. You can relate it to other films (from the same filmmaker, from the same period...) or you can just focus on one. You will need to do research (1-3 sources, you can use the readings for class too) to create innovative arguments and to back up your claims. You will consider the different elements studied during the semester as a whole. You will create an argument about the film, interpreting it or analyzing it from a particular theoretical framework. Make sure you share the topic with me before getting started.

Grade Scale and Rubric:

A: You fulfilled the guidelines of the assignments properly, and your work shows originality and creativity. Your papers demonstrate that you took extra steps to compose your writing by integrating ideas studied in class. A range papers must be free of typos and grammatical errors. You read the assigned materials, write interesting and well-thought responses, and engage in productive class discussion.

B: You fulfilled the guidelines of the assignments. Your work has a few minor grammar or spelling errors, but is complete and well organized. Your papers incorporate critical concepts studied in class, but it is slightly ineffective due to formal errors or to weak arguments. You read the materials, write correct responses, and participate in class.

C: You fulfilled the guidelines of the assignments but your work needs significant revision. Your papers are logical in content, but your writing is wrong. You sometimes fail to read the materials, write basic responses, and you participate in class with superficial contributions.

D: You neglected basic requirements of the assignments and completed them at a poor quality level. Your papers need significant revision. The content is incomplete and the organization unclear. You do not address concepts studied in class in depth. You barely do the readings, your responses are very poor or in-existent, and you do not participate in class.

E: An E is usually reserved for people who do not do the work or do not come to class. However, students will earn an E if their work clearly shows little effort, if they do not communicate with the instructor about their work or absences, and if they don't read the materials.

A	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	E	0-59

For information about UF grading policies, visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> **HYPERLINK**
"<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>" (Links to an external site.)

Attendance Policy:

This is a participation-driven course. Missing class will affect your grade negatively and it will deprive your classmates of your contribution to discussion.

- Absence does not justify late submissions. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to remain informed and come to the next class prepared.
- **Six** missed periods will result on a failing grade. This policy includes screening periods.

- Justified absences only involve university-sponsored events, religious holidays, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena), or severe weather conditions. These absences must be discussed with the instructor or they will not be justified.
- **Being tardy** or leaving early **twice** will count as an absence.
- **Communication** with the instructor is crucial to avoid grading and accommodation problems related to absences. These policies are consistent with the UF's attendance policies. For more information on these policies, please visit:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx> **HYPERLINK**
["https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx"](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx) (Links to an external site.)

Late Work:

Late submissions will not be accepted, unless one of the justified causes for absence is involved. Late work cannot be made up for a lower grade. I might consider deadline extensions, but you would need to request them at least 48hrs before the original due date.

Screening Policy:

To analyze films successfully you should be actively engaged during the viewing. Take notes during the screening to be prepared for class discussion and response essays. Use of cell-phones is **NOT PERMITTED. Cell phone use will result in being marked absent for the period.**

Communication with the Instructor:

You can contact me via email or during my office hours. Please allow 48 hours to respond. If my office hours do not work for you, we can schedule an appointment.

Integrity and Diversity:

Please keep in mind that UF students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. This class is discussion-based, and conflicting opinions may arise. Some of the texts and films we will discuss engage in controversial topics and opinions, sometimes representing violence or controversial situations graphically. Diverse student backgrounds combined with sometimes provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Active learning requires students to honestly share their thoughts and respectfully engage with each other's opinions. Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.

Class behavior:

- The use of cell phones, computers, or other electronic gadgets is only allowed for note taking. Please silence your phones. Texting in class will count as an absence.
- According to UF policy, it is not allowed to eat in class. It is distracting and will make your classmates hungry!

Assignment Format:

- Assignments should be submitted in MLA format, in Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced, 1" margins on all sides, name/instructor's name/course/date in upper left corner of first page, last name and page number located in top right of every page.
- Electronic copies must be submitted through the e-learning Canvas site by the assigned due date to ensure that your instructor has a back-up of your work.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty:

All students are required to abide by the UF Student Honor Code. Many times, students make mistakes in the way they quote or cite other work. Even those cases constitute a dishonest academic practice. Never copy paste without adding quotation marks and mentioning the name of the original author. In this course, one case of plagiarism on an assignment can involve failing that assignment. Should plagiarism occur again, the student will be reported to the Dean of Students Office and risks failing the course and other, more severe penalties. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Final Grade Appeals: Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Department of English Program Assistant. Appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower grade.

Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) credit: This course can satisfy the General Education Requirement for Composition or Humanities.

Statement of Writing Requirement (WR): This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing.

Statement of Student Disability Services: The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/> [HYPERLINK "http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/"](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) ([Links to an external site.](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/))

Statement of Harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more information, see: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/policies-2/sexual-harassment/>

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. These evaluations are conducted online during the last weeks of the semester. Your instructor will give you time in class to fill the evaluations.

Course Schedule

The Schedule is subject to change. The readings from the book are listed as FE. The rest of the readings can be found on Canvas. Usually we will have 2 readings each week.

Week 1: Introduction

	Class	Homework
M 8/24	Course introduction Screening: In the Mood for Love (Wong Kar Wai, 2000)	
W 8/26	What is film analysis?	Read: FE Introduction
F 8/28	How are films made? Basic historical trends	Read: FE Chapter 1: Encountering film Section "Basic terms" of Yale's film website

Week 2: Editing I

	Class	Homework
M 8/31	Basic editing techniques Film vocabulary quiz Screening: TBA	Read: FE Chapter 4: Relating Images Section "Editing" of Yale's film website
W 9/2	Basic editing techniques II	Read: TBA
F 9/4	Classic configurations of space and time	Viewing Response 1 (group A) DUE

Week 3: Editing II

	Class	Homework
M 9/7	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY	
W 9/9	Alternative editing: clips	Read: Noel Burch, "Spatial and Temporal Articulations"
F 9/11	Alternative temporality	Read: Dudley Andrews, "Eisenstein"

Week 4: Mise-en-scène I: Naturalism

	Class	Homework
M 9/14	Introduction to mise-en-scène Screening: Citizen Kane (Wells, 1941)	Read: FE Chapter 2 Exploring a material world Section "Mise-en-scène" of Yale's website
W 9/16	Naturalist mise-en-scène	Read: Dudley, Andrews, "Andre Bazin"
F 9/18	Script Exercise: Story board of a scene	Viewing Response 1 (group B) DUE

Week 5: Mise-en-scène I: Auteur theory

	Class	Homework
M 9/21	Auteur theory Screening: Breathless (Godard, 1960)	Read: Andrew Sarris "Notes on Auteur Theory"
W 9/23	Auteur theory II	Read: R Perkins, "The World and Its Image"
F 9/25	Alternative mise-en-scène	Viewing Response 2 (group A) DUE

Week 6: Cinematography

	Class	Homework
M 9/28	Cinematography Screening: Vertigo (Hitchcock, 1958)	Read: FE Chapter 3: Framing What We See Section "Cinematography" of Yale's website
W 9/30	Cinematography II Analysis of Vertigo	Read: Laura Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"
F 10/2	Cinematography III Clips from Hero	Viewing Response 2 (group B) DUE

Week 7: Writing about film

	Class	Homework
M 10/5	What is film criticism? Screening: The Secret Life of Words (Coixet, 2006)	<i>Read: Short Guide to Writing About Film, Ch. 3</i>
W 10/7	Approaching a film analysis Applying theories and methodologies	Read: TBA
F 10/9	Grammar Workshop	Midterm Film Review DUE

Week 8: Genre conventions

	Class	Homework
M 10/12	Genre conventions Screening: Brokeback Mountain (Lee, 2005)	Read: FE Chapter 9: Rituals, Conventions, Archetypes, and Formulas
W 10/14	Genre intersections and analysis	Read: Jim Kitses, "All That Brokeback Allows"
F 10/16	Genre exercise: deconstructing conventions	

Week 9: Sound

	Class	Homework
M 10/19	Basic sound notions Screening: Blancanieves (Berger, 2012)	Read: FE Chapter 5: Listening to the Cinema Section "Sound" of Yale's Film website
W 10/21	Sound in silent films	No reading, focus on your assignments
F 10/23	Clips from Eraser Head and El Camino	Viewing Response 3 (group A) DUE

Week 10: Music

	Class	Homework

M 10/26	Music in film Screening: Super Fly (Parks, 1972)	Read: Michel Chion's chapter (TBA)
W 10/18	Music in film II	No reading, focus on your assignments
F 10/30	Songs in film and MTV aesthetics	Viewing Response 3 (group B) DUE

Week 11: Characters, performance and acting

	Class	Homework
M 11/2	Character design Method acting Screening: Lost in Translation (Coppola, 2003)	Read: Klevan "Introduction: Interpreting Performance"
W 11/4	Alternative acting techniques Cassavettes' <i>Shadows</i>	Read: Duckworth "Teaching as research"
F 11/6	NO CLASS - HOMECOMING	

Week 12: Documentaries

	Class	Homework
M 11/9	Documentary modes Screening: C.S.A.: The Confederate States of America (Willmott, 2004)	Moon-watching exercise due Read: FE Chapter 7: Representing the real
W 11/11	NO CLASS – VETERANS DAY	
F 11/13	Documentary and mockumentary Clips from Zelig	Read: Bill Nichol's Chapter TBA

Week 13: Animation

	Class	Homework
M 11/16	Animation Theory Screening: Persepolis (Strapi, 2007)	Read: Paul Well's "Notes towards a theory of animation"
W 11/18	Disney and cartoons Japanese animation	Read: Paul Well's "Narrative strategies"
F 11/20	Humor and alternative animation	Watch The Meaning of Life and diary entry

Week 14: Current issues in world cinema

	Class	Homework
M 11/23	Feminism, transnationalism, slow cinema Screening: El Camino (Yasin, 2007)	Read: TBA Final paper topic and tentative thesis DUE
W 11/25	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING	
F 11/27	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING	

Week 15: Reflecting on fiction and non-fiction

	Class	Homework
M 11/30	Reflecting on fiction Screening: The White Ribbon (Haneke, 2009)	Read: Brecht, "The Modern Theater is the Epic Theater"
W 12/2	Experimental and art film	Read: FE Chapter 8: Challenging form
F 12/4	<i>Un Chien Andalou</i> and activity	Final paper thesis and outline DUE

Week 16: Wrap up

	Class	Homework
M 12/7	Conferences and in-class writing session Screening: To be decided by the class	
W 12/9	Final paper pitch	FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS