

ENG 2300: Film Analysis

Class: MTWRF, period 2 (9:30-10:45am)
 Screening: MW, periods 6-7 (3:30-6:15pm)
 Rolfs 115

Section: 02E2
 Instructor: Todd Jurgess
 Email: todd1726@ufl.edu
 Office: Turlington 4315
 Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, period 3 (11am-12:15pm)

Texts

Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* (6th edition). New York: Pearson, 2005.

Course Pack (available at Xerographic Copy Center, 927 NW 13th St.)

Course Description/Objectives

ENG 2300: Film Analysis introduces students to the vocabulary and techniques necessary for serious viewing and writing on film. Movies often seem like something effortless and passive, something to put on while you check your Facebook, eat dinner, or whatever else. This course requires that you take film more seriously and actively engage with it, being not a passive but an *active* viewer and reader of cinema.

Through this active viewing, you will examine and analyze a series of films stretching across multiple genres, countries, and historical periods. It should be noted that ENG 2300 is neither a Film Appreciation nor a Film Theory or History course (these topics are covered extensively in ENG 3115 (Introduction to Film Theory and Criticism) and ENG 3121 and 3122 (History of Film Parts 1 and 2)).

We will begin the semester by learning the basic vocabulary we use to describe films (*mise-en-scène*, *montage*, *cinematography*, *high-angle*, *long take*, etc.). From there, we will use these analytical terms to examine a sequence of films exemplifying the development of film style, moving from the single shot actualities of the Lumière's to the invisible style of Classic Hollywood up through a wide array of world cinema. We will primarily focus on learning how to analyze filmic *form* and to actively *read* films through these formal features.

In the end, when you leave this course, you will be able to: 1) Describe and analyze film using the specialized vocabulary of film studies 2) Put your analysis into clear argumentative writing and 3) have a tentative grasp of both film theory and film history.

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see

<http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx#learning>.

An important note: a common misconception about film classes is that they make for an easy Gordon Rule credit. Please have no misconceptions: this course is rigorous, both in its demands on you as a student and a writer but also in terms of the films we will watch. We will branching out quite far from the Hollywood cinema we all know and love, so please do not expect 6 weeks of *Star Wars* and *Mean Girls*. That is not to say that there is anything wrong with those films or the genres they represent, but film is a much wider and diverse field, and we'll be exploring that field thoroughly.

Assignments

Daily Quizzes

150 pts

As keeping up with reading and the course's content is so vital to this course's purpose, you will be issued short quizzes on the readings we do and the films we see. These quizzes are not meant to trick or snag students. If one reads with detail and care and pays attention during course periods, these quizzes will be easy points. The lowest 10% will be dropped.

Filmic Effects (1,000 words)

150 pts

Before we can speak about the way a film makes meaning, we must first understand how films normally work on us as viewers. In this paper, you will select one of a number of scenes I've posted online and analyze how its form builds to a distinctive effect on your as a viewer.

Sequence Analysis (1,200 words)

200 pts

To begin practicing our analytical skills, you will compose a short paper analyzing a single sequence from one of our course films. Paying close attention to matters of mise-en-scène as well as duration, you will argue for the point or intention you see in the way the filmmaker has arranged the details within and across individual shots. While you might speak to how the film means to work on you as a spectator, your focus here is on interpreting what the formal elements of a particular scene say, how they make a point or express a point-of-view of the world.

Short Analysis (1,800 words)

200 pts

Now that you can analyze shots on their own and in relation to each other, we will apply your analytical skills to an entire film. Here, you will focus on how a running formal conceit gives us something in excess of the plot. That isn't to say that the formal pattern is unrelated to the plot, but you shouldn't spend an excessive amount of time here focusing on *what* happens. Instead, you must build your analysis out of *how* it happens. How do editing patterns and specific shot types indicate what a film has to say about our shared world, its politics, and its social situations?

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| Analysis + Research (2,000 words) | 300 pts |
| Focusing on a detail, incident, shot, scene, character, directorial signature, or historical moment, develop an argument relating a film or films' formal qualities to larger questions concerning genre, history, or ideology. Your goal here is to place a film within a larger context, arguing for that film's significance but always doing so through close analyses of film form. | |
| Total | 1000 points |

Grading Criteria

While grading criteria change depending on the specific assignments (see assignment sheets on Sakai for more detail), your grade will generally depend on the quality of your analysis, the clarity of your argumentation, and how you revise the issues we identify in writing conferences.

An "A paper" will have a clear, concise, and original thesis supported by clearly articulated evidence (which kind of evidence depends on the assignment). The writing will be polished, taking into account the topics and issues raised during individual writing conferences as well as comments made in general about your style on returned papers.

A "B paper" may have any one of these elements in place, but suffers from sections of prose whose relation to the main argument is unclear. Maybe the thesis simply reiterates obvious arguments, or perhaps the writing just hasn't been finessed.

A "C paper" may have any one of these elements in place, but suffers more gravely from infelicities in any one area. For example, you may have great insights, but those insights may be hedged in poorly-revised prose with an unclear argument.

Papers receiving D's or E's will reflect a complete absence of the above elements.

Each assignment will be returned to you with comments within 10 days of its due date. My feedback will always be forward-looking and will attempt to help you as you identify and fix issues in your writing.

With this in mind, each student will be allowed to rewrite one assignment should he/she receive a grade lower than a B-. In order to do so though, you must meet with me during office hours to discuss your revision strategy. Please note that while rewriting a paper will not result in a lower grade, it does not necessarily guarantee an improvement on your score.

Final grades for the class will be graded on a 1,000 point scale. Basically, take your total number of points, put a decimal point before the first number, and that's your percentage for the class (for example, 930 points is a .930 percentage, which is an A; 872 points is a .872 percentage, which is a B+; 723 points is a .723 percentage, which is a C-).

- T Conferences
- W Photography
Read: Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" (CP)
 Eisenstein, "Beyond the Shot: The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram" (CP)
- Screening 5: *Battleship Potemkin* (USSR, 1925, Sergei Eisenstein, 72 mins)
Germany Year Zero (Italy/Germany, 1947, Roberto Rossellini, 78 mins)
- R Reality, Transparency, Neorealism
Due: Rough thesis for the sequence analysis
Read: Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Film" (CP)
- F Action and Setting
Due: Sequence Analysis via Sakai
- Week 4 (6/2 - 6/6)
- M Photography and/or Montage (Vertov, Welles, Gottheim)
Read: Vertov, "The Birth of Kino Eye" & "The Essence of Kino Eye" (CP)
- Screening 6: *Man with a Movie Camera* (USSR, 1929, Dziga Vertov, 68 mins)
Breathless (France, 1960, Jean-Luc Godard, 90 mins)
- T The New Wave and the *la politique des auteurs*
- W Anti-Realism and the Effect of Photography
- Screening 7: *Shoah, pt. 1* (France, 1980, Claude Lanzmann, 153 mins)
- R Documentary and History
 Scheduled Conferences after class
Read: Nichols, "Why Are Ethical Issues Central to Documentary Filmmaking?" (CP)
- F Documentary Types
 Scheduled Conferences after class
- Week 5 (6/9 - 6/13)
- M Gender, Power, and Objectification
Read: Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (CP)
- Screening 8: *Commando* (USA, 1985, Mark L. Lester, 90 mins)
- T Reading Popular Cinema
- W Performing Gender for Cinema
Read: Michasiw, "Camp, Masculinity, Masquerade" (CP)
- Screening 9: *A Better Tomorrow* (Hong Kong, 1986, John Woo, 96 mins)
- R Genre and Cultural Specificity

Due: Short Analysis via Sakai

F Generic Forms

Week 6 (6/16 - 6/20)

M Conferences

Screening 10: "Trees of Syntax" Leaves of Axis" (Canada, 2009, Daichi Saito, 10 mins)

"Breakaway" (USA, 1966, Bruce Conner, 5 mins)

"Pièce touchée" (Austria, 1989, Martin Arnold, 15 mins)

"Nostalgia" (USA, 1971, Hollis Frampton, 38 mins)

"Letters from Home" (Canada, 1996, Mike Hoolboom, 15 mins)

"Sink or Swim" (USA, 1990, Su Friedrich, 47 mins)

T Experimental Reality

W more on Experiments

Screening 11: *Where Is My Friend's Home?* (Iran, 1987, Abbas Kiarostami, 87 mins)

R Cinema's Obligations

F Final Wrap-Up

Due: Analysis + Research via SakaiCourse Policies**Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory. Missing class will not only put you behind in terms of course material, but will also deprive the class of your contributions to discussion. **If you miss more than five class sessions (comprised of all class meetings and screenings), you fail the course automatically.** Use these absences wisely in case of extenuating circumstances. Illness or family difficulties do not excuse you from this policy. The only exemptions are for university-sponsored events, religious holidays, and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena).

Students who participate in athletic or extracurricular activities are permitted to be absent 12 scholastic days per semester without penalty (A scholastic day is any day on which regular class work is scheduled). The 12-day rule applies to individual students participating on athletic or scholastic teams. Consequently, a group's schedule that requires absence of more than 12 days should be adjusted so that no student is absent from campus more than 12 scholastic days. If you previously have been warned about absences or unsatisfactory work you should not incur additional absences, even if you have not been absent 12 scholastic days. It is your responsibility to maintain satisfactory academic performance and attendance.

So, please, if you are absent, do not send me an email asking what we did in class. Instead, I encourage you all to make arrangements with each other for

the sharing of notes in case an unexpected encumbrance keeps you from attending class.

Please note that if you show up to class after the daily quiz, you will not only miss those available points but will also be marked absent for the day. Also, please note that I reserve the right to mark you absent should you fail to bring your required course materials to class.

Finally, the use of electronic devices, such as cell phones, tablets, or laptops, is limited and contingent. You may use a laptop in order to take notes or to bring up relevant web pages. You may not, however, use the period as a time to surf Facebook or whatever else. If discussion's flagging or someone is found to be abusing this privilege, it will be revoked instantly. Also, note that it is never appropriate to use a cell phone during class. Students caught texting will be marked absent for the day (it's not that hard to see from the front of the room, even if you've taken the precaution of holding your phone under your desk.

Final Grade Appeals:

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Clara Blount, Program Assistant.

Graded Materials:

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a re-submission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material.

Classroom Behavior:

Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diverse student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own.

University Policy/Information:

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

This course can prove 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing--and--math--requirement.aspx>

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points may be found at: <http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

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 about UF policies regarding harassment, see:
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

Students requiring counseling should contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class

Finally, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>