

ENG 2400, Section 6015 - Film Analysis

Class: MWF 5, Turlington 2334
Screening: T 9-11, Turlington 2334

Instructor: Lauren Pilcher
Email: lpilcher@ufl.edu
Office: Turlington 4325
Office Hours: MTW 6 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

ENG 2300 will teach you how to view, think about, discuss, and write about films in a scholarly context. Films take many forms and are shaped by a wide range of cultural conditions and perspectives. In this course, you will learn how to analyze films and their forms by examining how moving images communicate to audiences in a variety of cinematic contexts.

Early in the course, you will learn the vocabulary needed to dissect the parts at work and techniques utilized in individual films. You will then practice applying these terms as you use them to describe and interpret films in both class discussion and written assignments. Later in the semester, you will begin to think, research, and write about how the form of a particular film reflects larger cultural conditions and perspectives.

TEXTS

(required) Corrigan, Timothy, and Patricia White. *The Film Experience*, 3rd Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012.

(optional) Corrigan, Timothy. *Short Guide to Writing About Film*, 8th Edition. Boston: Pearson, 2012.

COURSE GOALS

This course will teach you ...

- the vocabulary needed to understand how a film looks, moves, and sounds.
- to reflect on the techniques used in a particular film and what they might mean.
- to analyze how a particular film, and its form, reflects specific cultural situations, including but not limited to: production value and/or style; genre; representations of race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.; representations of particular spaces (for ex: cities, homes/domestic spaces, natural landscapes, etc.); nationality; and historical period.
- to write analytically and argumentatively about film using the appropriate terms.

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

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

ASSIGNMENTS

Quizzes & Participation (100 pts)

Pop quizzes on readings will occur throughout the course. Each quiz will be worth 5-10 points. As far as participation goes, I expect you to be attentive and to contribute to class discussion throughout the course.

Formal Aspects Responses (400 words, 75 pts)

During weeks 2-5, you will write two 250-word responses to the two of the four films we screen in class. Your response MUST focus on the particular formal aspect discussed in relation to the film in class (editing, mise-en-scène, cinematography, or sound). Describe and interpret the meaning of the formal aspect by focusing on a single scene. These short responses MUST be written before class. For full credit, they should reflect ample time spent considering the film and developing your ideas.

Drafts for Projects 2 and 4

Drafts are considered part of your final grade for Projects 2 and 4. If you fail to submit a draft, I will deduct one-fourth of the total, possible points for the project from your final grade.

Project 1: Sequence Journal (400 words, 100 pts)

For this assignment, you will select a sequence from a course film or an outside film that I approve (email me or speak with me in class). Next, watch the sequence once per day for FIVE days. After each viewing reflect on the significance of the visual and aural aspects of the sequence in 1-2 paragraphs. As you journal your ideas, be sure to closely investigate not only the narrative events that occur in the sequence but which objects and characters be seen, how shots are framed, and which editing techniques are used. You should also consider how your experience of the sequence changes with each viewing.

Project 2: Sequence Analysis (1000 words, 175 pts)

To begin practicing your analytical skills, you will formally interpret the sequence you watched and wrote about for Project 1. To successfully complete this assignment, you will make a claim about what your chosen sequence means and provide close analysis of the sequence's editing, framing, mise-en-scène, sound, pace, and/or placement within the film to support that claim. (Note: It would be wise to select a sequence from the film that you hope to use for the final two projects, but you will not be penalized if you use differing films in later work).

Project 3: Source Review (1250 words, 250 pts)

For this assignment, you will research the film that you plan to analyze for Project 4. You must find and review 5-8 SCHOLARLY sources that provide information on your film that will help you to make an argument that interests you. Some sources may be primarily about the film while others might not mention the film but instead provide information that will aid your particular analysis.

As you read sources, you should develop a research question about your film. [For example: Is the film's representation of race stereotypical?] You will then write a review of your research.

GRADING CRITERIA

- If any assignment illustrates complete disregard for spelling, grammar, citations, or **does not meet the word count requirement**, it will be failed.
- Grading criteria change depending on the specific assignment. Please consult assignment sheets, the syllabus, and class instructions for this information.
- Each assignment is designed to build on previous assignments as a way to move you toward a well-developed Film Analysis + Research at the conclusion of the semester. Investing in each assignment is crucial to both your grade and your progress throughout the course.
- Revision is a must. Ideas do not develop over night, and this is why each of the assignments builds upon one another. In order to make the most of each assignment, it is important to continually rework your writing as I advise you and as you see fit. This includes both your larger ideas (argument/analytical claim or point) and your sentence-level constructions.
- This course is not about following a checklist or a formula for what I, the instructor, want. Students who show personal investment in the material and a dedication to their own growth will succeed.

ATTENDANCE

- If you miss more than 6 class periods, you will fail the course. This includes the screening periods.
- Each absence beyond 4 will lower your final grade by half a letter (this includes screenings).
- 3 times late to class equals 1 absence.
- Only absences involving religious holidays or university-sponsored events, such as athletics or band, are exempt. Absences for family emergencies or short-term illnesses will count toward your 5 allowed absences. Illnesses severe enough to require absences over 3 days will be excused with proper documentation.
- Absence does not excuse late material.
- When absent from class, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates and to hand assignments in on time. In-class activities and quizzes may not be made-up unless the absence is exempt.

SCREENING POLICY

Insightful film analysis requires active viewing. You should be actively engaged during our screening periods. Talking is discouraged, and use of cell-phones is NOT PERMITTED. **Cell phone use will result in being marked absent for the period.**

You are expected to take notes during each screening. Your notes will be your launching point and guide for class discussion, response essays, and analyses.

CLASSROOM DECORUM

NO LAPTOPS will be allowed in class unless required for group or individual activities. All cell phones and other hand-held devices must be set to silent ring during class. Cell phone use will result in dismissal from class and an absence for the class period.

Because the class is discussion-based whenever possible, conflicting viewpoints may often arise. Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the films and texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions, sometimes representing powerful images or sounds of violence, hetero- and homosexuality, explicit language, and other adult themes like depression. If you anticipate that you maybe uncomfortable watching, discussing, or writing about this material critically in a professional scholarly context, then you may reconsider taking this course. Diverse student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you be respectful toward others.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR

The best way to contact me is via email. Please allow at least 48 hours for me to respond to all requests/questions/inquiries by email. If you would like to meet face-to-face, you can visit me during office hours or contact me to schedule an appointment time that works for best for both of us.

ASTGNMENT FORMAT AND SUBMISSION

ALL assignments should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Other file types, including PDF, will not be accepted. Electronic copies of written assignments must be submitted via the "Assignments" page on the e-learning Canvas site by the assigned due date. Hard copies are not required, with the exception of drafts that we peer review in class.

Unless otherwise stated, every written assignment should MLA formatting as follows: Times New Roman 12-point font; double-spacing; 1" margins on all sides; a heading with your name, the instructor's name, course title, and date in upper left corner of first page, and a header with your last name and the page number on the top right of every page.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is a violation of the Student Honor Code. All acts of plagiarism will result in a score of **zero** for the assignment, a formal report to the Dean of Students, and likely failure of the course. In order to avoid the potential for plagiarism, cite all sources that you use for an assignment; paraphrasing without proper citation constitutes plagiarism. You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without also giving a proper citation for that material. Ultimately, the consequences do not outweigh the benefits.

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

DTSARTT .TTY SERVICES

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities.

For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/dre/>

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

ENG 2300-6015 COURSE SCHEDULE

*The schedule is subject to change at my discretion.

WEEK 1. January 5-8

T - [NO SCREENING] Course Overview

W — Film Production, Culture, and Cinematic Form

Due:

- 1) Corrigan & White, Introduction p. 5-17, and Ch.i

F — Parts of Film & Key Terms

Due:

- 1) Read Key Terms handout linked on the Canvas home page & use online resources to familiarize yourself with the terms you do not know

UNIT 1 - FORMAL COMPONENTS

WEEK 2. January 11—15

M - Film History and Studies

Due:

- 1) Corrigan & White, Ch. 10 p. 355-397

T — [SCREENING] Scenes from select silent films

Citizen Kane (1941, dir. Orson Welles)

W - History, Conventions, and Significance of Cinematography

Due:

- 1) If you choose to do so, write a Formal Response to *Gtizen Kane* (250 words).
- 2) Corrigan & White, Ch. 3 p. 95-131

F — Cinematography in *Gtizen Kane*

(^Project #1 will be assigned)

Due:

- 1) Laura Mulvey (1992), except from BFI Film Guide for *Gtizen Kane* (available on e-learning)

WEEK 3. January 18-22

M - NO CLASS - University Holiday for MLK, Jr. Day

T - [SCREENING] *M* (1931, dir. Fritz Lang)

W — History, Conventions, and Significance of Sound

Due:

- 1) If you choose to do so, write a Formal Response to *M* (250 words).
- 2) Corrigan & White, Ch.5 p. 177-211

F — Early Sound in *M*

Due:

- 1) Michael P. Ryan (2013), “Fritz Lang’s Radio Aesthetic: *M Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder*” (available on e-learning)

WEEK 4.. January 2^—20

M — History, Conventions, and Significance of Mise-en-scène

Due:

- 1) Corrigan & White, Ch. 2 p. 60-94

T — [SCREENING] *Vertigo* (1958, dir. Alfred Hitchcock)

W - Hitchcock the Auteur: Mise-en-scène in *Vertigo*

Due:

- 1) If you choose to do so, write a Formal Response to *Vertigo* (250 words).

- 2) Charles Barr (2002), excerpt from *Vertigo* BFI Film Guide (available on e-learning)

F — The Male Gaze & Narrative in *Vertigo*

Due:

- 1) Andrew Sarris (1962), “Notes on Auteur Theory in 1962” (available on e-learning)
- 2) Laura Mulvey (1975), “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (available on e-learning)

WEEK 5. February 1—4

M - History, Conventions, and Significance of Editing

(^Project 2 will be assigned)

Due:

- 1) **Project 1 — Sequence Journal** (submit to e-learning by the beginning of class)
- 2) Corrigan & White, Ch. 4 p. 133-175

T — [SCREENING] *Cleo from 5 to 7* (1962, dir. Agnes Varda)

W — Editing in *Cleo from 5 to 7* and Guidelines for Project 2

Due:

- 1) If you choose to do so, write a Formal Response to *Cleo from 5 to 7* (250 words).
- 2) Read Corrigan & White, Ch. 12 p. 435-467

F — Finish *Cleo from 5 to 7*

- 1) Read Sandy Flitterman-Lewis (1990), “From Deesse to Idee: Cleo from 5 to 7” excerpted from *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema* (available on e-learning).
- 2) **Bring 2 potential thesis statements for Project 2 to class for peer review.**

UNIT II - FORMAL ORGANIZATION

WEEK 6. February 8—12

M - Narrative Films

Due:

- 1) Corrigan & White, Ch. 6 p. 212-253

T — [SCREENING] *Do the Right Thing* (1989, dir. Spike Lee)

W — Narrative in *Do the Right Thing*

Due:

- 1) Ed Guerrero (2008), excerpt from *Do the Right Thing* BFI Film Guide (available on e-learning).

F — INDEPENDENT WORK DAY - Quiz on Canvas due by end of class time

Due:

- 1) P2 Student sample paper on *Do the Right Thing*
- 2) Quiz on student sample paper (see Canvas)

WEEK 7. February 15-iO

M - [CLASS] Genre Films

Due:

- 1) Corrigan & White, Ch. 9 p. 315-351

T - [SCREENING] *Bound* (1996, dir. Andy and Lana Wachowski)

W — Genre Conventions in *Bound* & **Peer Review Session for Project 2**

Due:

- 1) Bring a hard copy of draft to class, AND submit an electronic copy on Canvas.

F — Finish *Bound Analysis* Analysis

Due:

- 1) Read Ellis Hanson (1999), “Introduction,” excerpt from *Out Takes: Essays on Queer Theory and Film* (available on e-learning)

WEEK 8. February 22—26

M - Documentary Filmmaking

Due:

- 1) Corrigan and White, Ch. 7 p. 255-283

T - [SCREENING] *Vernon, Florida* (1981, dir. Errol Morris)

W - The Documentary Mode of Errol Morris

Due:

- i) Roy Grundmann (2000), "Truth is Not Subjective: An Interview With Errol Morris"
(available on e-learning).

F — Finish Documentary and Assign Project 3

(^Project 3 will be assigned)

Due:

- 1) **Project 2 — Sequence Analysis** (submit to e-learning by the beginning of class)

WEEK 9. February 20 — March 1

NO CLASS - Spring Break

WEEK 10. March 7-11

M - Research Tutorial for Project 3 (**Meet in Library West, Room 211**)

T — [SCREENING] Meshes of the Afternoon (1943, dir. Maya Deren)

Scorpio Rising (1964, dir. Kenneth Anger)

W — Experimental Films

Due:

- 1) Corrigan & White, Ch. 8 p. 285-313

F — Experimental Techniques and Approaches in Selected Films

Due:

- 1) Ed Lowry (1983), "The Appropriation of Signs in *Scorpio Rising*," *The Velvet Light Trap - A Critical Journal of Film and Television* (available on e-learning)
2) Sarah Keller (2013), "Frustrated Climaxes: On Maya Deren's Meshes of the Afternoon and Witch's Cradle," *Cinema Journal* 53, no. 3 (2013): 75-98 (available on e-learning)

UNIT III - FORMAL ANALYSIS: REPRESENTING FEMALE DESTRE TN _____
CONTEMPORARY CINEMA

WEEK 11. March 14.-18

M - Introduce Unit: Representing Women in Contemporary Indie Cinema

Due:

- 1) Michael Z. Newman (2011), excerpt from *Indie: An American Film Culture* (available on e-learning)

T — [SCREENING] *Mosquita y Mari* (2012, dir. Aurora Guerrero)

W — Initial Thoughts on *Mosquito y Mari*

Due:

- 1) Read Stephen Holden's review of in the NY Times here:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/03/movies/mosquita-y-mari-by-aurora-guerrero.html>
- 2) Read Calvin Heneley's review in Slant magazine here:
<http://www.slantmagazine.com/film/review/mosquita-y-mari>

F - Analyzing Indie Style, Race, Class, and Sexuality in *Mosquito y Mari*

Due:

- 1) Lucy Bolton (2011), "Frozen in Showcases": Feminist Film Theory and the Abstraction of Woman"

WEEK 12. March 21-25

M — Neo-Neo Realism

Due:

- 1) Read *The New York Times* piece "Neo-Neo Realism" by A.O. Scott, available here:
http://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/22/magazine/22neorealism-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- 2) Read *The New Yorker* piece "About Neo-Neo Realism" by Richard Brody, available here: <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/about-neo-neo-realism>

T — [SCREENING] *Wendy and Lucy* (2008, dir. Kelly Reichardt)

W — Neorealism and a Female Lead in *Wendy and Lucy*

Due:

- 1) Read A.O. Scott's review of *Wendy and Lucy*, available here:
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/10/movies/10wend.html?_r=0
- 2) Read Richard Brody's review of *Wendy and Lucy*, available here:
<http://www.newyorker.com/culture/goings-on/against-wendy-and-lucy>

F — Finish *Wendy and Lucy*

Due:

i) TBA

WEEK 1a, March 28 — April 1

M - Indie Realism and Representations of Women, Race, and Class

Due:

1) TBA

T - [SCREENING] *Pariah* (2011, dir. Dee Rees)

W — Indie Realism and Black Female Sexuality in *Pariah*

Due:

1) Read Stephen Holden's review of *Pariah* in *The New York Times* (2011) and watch the brief interview with Dee Rees, available here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/28/movies/pariah-with-adepero-oduve-as-a-young-lesbian-review.html>

2) Read Ina Diane Archer's review of *Pariah* in *Film Comment* (2011), available here: <http://www.filmcomment.com/article/pariah-review/>

F — *Pariah* Discussion Continued (Guest lecturer)

Due:

1) **Project 3 - Source Analysis** (submit to e-learning by the beginning of class.)

WEEK 1b, April 11—18

M - Project 4 Prep: Approaches to Writing About Film

(^Project 4 will be assigned)

Due:

1) Corrigan and White, Ch. 11

T - [SCREENING] *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (2014, dir. Ana Lily Amirpour)

W — Transnationality, Art Cinema, and Indie Representations of Women in *A Girl*

Due:

1) Tim Bergfelder (2005), "National, Transnational, or Supranational Cinema: Rethinking European Film Studies" (available on e-learning).

F - Finish *A Girl* Discussion and Assess Key Questions from Unit

Due:

- i) Project 4 brainstorm based on Project 3

UNIT IV - FORMAL APPLICATION: WRITING YOUR FILM ANALYSTS

WEEK 15, April 11 - is

M - Project 4 Prep: Thesis Statements and Body Paragraph

- 1) Bring with you to class 2 potential arguments for Project 4

T - [SCREENING] Class-selected film

W — Discuss Class-selected Film

Due:

- 1) Post-viewing brainstorm activity on Canvas

F - Assessing a Sample Student Paper

(*We will begin the film in class then finish and discuss it along with the reading during Tuesday's screening period).

Due:

- 1) Sample Student Film Analysis (available on e-learning).

Week 16, April 18—20

M - NO CLASS - Individual conferences with me (check schedule for your appointed time)

T - NO SCREENING - Individual Conferences

W — Peer Review Session for Project 4 (via Canvas messenger)

Due:

- 1) Before class time, send a Word doc of your draft to your partner via Canvas message. Read and comment on your partner's draft using track changes and comments in Word. By 5 pm, send both me and your partner a Canvas message with your partner's draft with your feedback.
- 2) Also submit your draft to the appropriate Canvas assignment.

F - READING DAYS

**** WEDNESDAY April 27**

DUE by 5 pm: Project 4 - Film Analysis