

ENG 2300: Film Analysis; Spring 2018 (section 1793)

Class: MWF 8 (3-3:50pm) Turlington 2334

Film Screening: W E1-E3 (7:30-10:10pm) Rolfs Hall 115

Instructor: Peter Gitto

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Office: Turlington 4343

Office Hours: Monday period 9 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of ENG 2300 is to provide students with a working knowledge of film vocabulary within the context of film form, history, and theory. This course will allow you to begin your exploration of the field by watching, discussing, and writing about films, and by engaging in critical reading of texts in film theory and criticism. By the end of this course, students will not only have a greater knowledge of how to talk about films, but also how to read, analyze, and think about films. The course has an intensive writing component and we will devote time to research and writing strategies.

General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) or Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.

- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

TEXTS

Required:

Barsam, Richard and Dave Monahan. *Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film*. 4th Ed. New York: Norton, 2012.

(Pack will include DVD tutorials (2 DVDs) and “Writing about Movies” guide) If you buy a used book, you can also see the tutorials online.

Additional readings will be provided as PDF files and links, via Canvas.

*A Netflix DVD account is *recommended* for the course (one DVD out at a time, circulating); this makes writing about films a lot easier—you can schedule when you want to work on your papers and know you will have the DVD available. But most films will also be available at Library West and some may be available for streaming via UF *Kanopy* (through the Library West website).

*We will be watching a significant number of foreign films, which require subtitle reading.

*The films under discussion feature some controversial and intense issues, including suicide. If you will be unable to watch or engage any of the films due to their content, you might consider taking another class.

WRITING REQUIREMENTS and OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

For this course, the University requires 6,000 words written.

A hard copy of the paper is due at the beginning of class. You need to also upload your paper to Canvas BEFORE the beginning of class the day it is due.

Papers are to be typed; 12 pt. font; 1 inch margins; double spaced, pages numbered in upper right hand corner. STAPLED. Papers should have a title that indicates the film(s) to be discussed with an indication of your thesis. Papers should *not* be generically titled such as, “Formal Analysis Paper.” Works Cited lists should be in MLA form, properly cited on a separate page. You should not take up excessive space on the first page; your name and the date in the heading is sufficient.

Two 2-page papers (1200 words) to accompany class presentations. You will present a main point with supporting evidence. I will provide more directions on these.

Scene/Sequence Analysis Journal (1200 words): This is an exercise in close analysis of a selected film scene or sequence (lasting 5-8 mins). Working with the selection, record your observations in journal form for five consecutive nights (one paragraph per night). After five nights, underline your most outstanding observations. Then, in one paragraph, reflect on how your

perspective of the scene changed from initial viewing and throughout the exercise. Finally, write a paragraph summarizing the significance of the scene.

Film Analysis (1200 words): You will write an analysis of a movie from the course, creating an argument that incorporates elements of film form. More guidelines will be provided on the canvas assignment.

A final paper will be completed in stages.

1. Prospectus (300 words): You will write 1 page telling me the films (1 or 2) you will be working on for the final paper. They may be ones viewed or discussed in class or may be of your own choosing, or a combination of the two. They should be available on DVD, not currently in the theaters. You will write about possible arguments you could make about the film(s) you have chosen, or the particular argument that you foresee you will make in your final paper.
2. Annotated Bibliography (900 words): You will write an annotated bibliography consisting of 5 well-chosen scholarly sources that you can include as reference in your final paper. These should be essays about, or complement, the films you have chosen (in some instances, you will not find anything written on your selected films, and you must refer to criticism about the genre or relevant film theory). I encourage you to use film theory! (see the book available at Lib West, *Film theory and Criticism: introductory readings*, edited by Leo Braudy, and Marshall Cohen, 7th ed.) Each annotation should be ½ page, and should include a summary of the work, which would be an outline of the argument and main points. You should also indicate how it could fit into your argument.
3. Final Paper (1200 words): The final paper should be well written, organized, and edited. I will be looking for a clear, interesting, specific, and well-thought-out *argument* which incorporates the film(s) you have selected. You should incorporate some 2-3 sources you researched in the annotated bibliography within your writing. Also think about formal analysis and cultural criticism in planning and writing the final paper. Will be due the last day of class. You may illustrate your paper with specific film stills. The final paper should include a works cited.

Presentations: The course will be highly participatory. Students will give in-depth group presentations on the weeks' films that involve analysis. Short papers by each student will accompany the presentations. Students should expect to do two presentations during the course. One will be a brief presentation with accompanying PowerPoint (2-4 students). The second will be a brief presentation of your ideas in a panel-like format (4 students).

Exam: There will be one exam covering film terms and course content. This will be during class; there will be no "final exam" period for this course.

Quizzes: There may be reading pop-quizzes. You must do the required reading thoroughly by the date it is due.

Other writing: Occasionally, I may ask you to write a half page to a page to respond to a film, to come to class with a good discussion question, or to do in class writing.

Graded Materials: Please keep all graded materials if you would like to estimate your grade during the semester.

GRADING

Grade breakdown (total 100%)

Verbal Participation, attentiveness, attendance and quizzes: 15%

2-page paper and PowerPoint presentation: 10%

2-page paper: 10%

Scene/Sequence Journal: 15%

Film Analysis: 15%

Exam: 15%

Bibliography: 5%

Final Paper: 15%

*Participation includes attendance, doing the assigned readings thoroughly and on time, watching the films attentively and critically, and contributing participation that enhances the quality of the class in discussions or otherwise. Verbal participation is graded on quality as well as quantity. Students should come to class prepared with valuable comments about the films, readings, and concepts.

COURSE POLICIES

Completion: You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course. For information on UF Grading policies, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

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. You may miss up to *three class meetings and one film screening* (all together, a week of class) before your grade is affected. Illnesses and emergencies count as part of the excused 4 meetings. If you miss a fifth class, your final grade will be lowered one-third of a letter grade (from A- to B+, for example) for each additional absence. If you miss six class sessions regardless of circumstances, you fail the course automatically.

Attendance at screenings is mandatory for the duration of the film. If you anticipate you will be unable to attend screenings, you should choose another course section or take another class. Scheduled exams during a screening period count towards your 4 excused absences.

Tardiness: Two tardies (arriving after class has started) =one absence. If you are more than 10 mins late to class, that is an absence. During a double or single period, if you leave early you will be marked absent.

Attendance sign in sheet will circulate the first minute of class. If you miss this circulation, it is your responsibility to sign in as tardy after class has finished.

If you are absent, please ask a fellow student for info on what was missed. Make arrangements with a fellow student and get their contact info.

Use these absences wisely in case of extenuating circumstances. Please consult with me concerning circumstances such as major illness or family difficulties. The only exemptions are for university-sponsored activities such as musical performances and athletic competition, court-imposed obligations such as jury duty of subpoena, and religious holidays. Absences of students who participate in athletic or extracurricular activities fall under the University's "Twelve-Day Rule," and may be permitted in those conditions to make up missed work without penalty. Please note, however, that you must, whenever this is reasonably possible, discuss these absences with me in advance in order to avoid being marked absent.

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.

Students who text during class will face attendance-related penalties.

Phone/ technology policy: Phones should remain in your bag or pocket during class. It's ok to use your phone during breaks, but they should be promptly stowed away when class resumes. If I see you using your phone during class I will mark you absent. Laptops and Tablets should be used for classroom related purposes only (note-taking, viewing class readings). If you distract the instructor or a fellow student due to inappropriate use of laptop or tablet, you will be marked absent.

****During film screenings, all devices should be stowed away.** A lit monitor is highly distracting in a theater environment.

Statement on plagiarism and academic honesty:

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>

Statement of student disability 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/drc/>

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.

Statement on 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/>

Final Grade Appeals:

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

Online Evaluations: Students have the opportunity to provide feedback on this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online 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.

SCHEDULE: Dates are due dates for papers, assignments, and readings. Also view the DVD tutorial along with the textbook chapters. Schedule and assignments may change at instructor's discretion. Attendance at screenings is mandatory. You may be assigned some additional films to view on your own.

Week One (Week of Jan. 8)

M: Course introduction

W: Read Ch. 1: section "Formal Analysis"

S: *Elena*, dir. Andrei Zvyagintsev, 2011

F: discuss film—capturing economic disparity

Read Ch. 5: section "What is mise-en-scène?"

Week Two (Jan. 15)

M: **Holiday, no class**

W: Read Chapter 2: Film Form

S: *Bringing Up Baby*, dir. Howard Hawks, 1938

F: Read: Cavell, "Leopards in Connecticut"

Week Three (Jan. 22)

M: Read Ch. 5: mise-en-scène

W: Read Ch. 10 section "German Expressionism"; con't. mise-en-scène

S: *Vertigo*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1958

F: Read Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

discuss film—scene analysis practice

Week Four (Jan 29)

M: Writing about film: the paragraph (clip from Godard, *Nouvelle Vague*)

W: contexts for *Caché* (see canvas notes)

S: *Caché*, dir. Michael Haneke, 2005

F: Read Foucault, "Panopticism"

Week Five (Feb. 5)

M: Read Ch. 6 Cinematography

W: presentations on Hitchcock's films

S: *Psycho*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock 1960

F: Read Mulvey on *Psycho*

Week Six (Feb. 12)

M: cont. Ch. 6 Cinematography

W: presentations on Antonioni's films

S: *L'Eclisse*, dir. Michelangelo Antonioni 1962

F: Read: Gilberto Perez, "The Point of View of a Stranger" **Scene journal due**

Week Seven (Feb. 19)

M: Read Ch. 3: Types of Movies (genre)

W: presentations on Jia's films

S: *Still Life*, dir. Jia Zhangke 2006

F: Read: Zhang, "Market Socialism and Its Discontent: Jia Zhangke's Cinematic Narrative of China's Transition in the Age of Global Capital"

Week Eight (Feb. 26)

M: Read Ch. 11: Film Technologies

W: presentations on Jia's films

S: *A Touch of Sin*, dir. Jia Zhangke 2013

F: Read: Wang, "Violence, wuxia, migrants: Jia Zhangke's cinematic discontent in *A Touch of Sin*"

Week Nine (Mar. 5)—Spring Break

Week Ten (Mar. 12)

M: Read Ch. 8 Editing

W: Read Ch. 10 section "Soviet Montage Movement"

S: *October*, dir. Sergei Eisenstein, 1928

F: Read: Nesbet, "Picture Thinking: *October*"

Week Eleven (Mar. 19)

M: cont. Ch. 8 Editing

W: presentations on American Independent cinema

S: *Tangerine*, dir. Sean Baker 2015

F: Read: *Tangerine* screenplay (online)

Week Twelve (Mar. 26)

M: Read Ch. 10 sections: "Precinema" and "The first movies"; **Film analysis paper due**

W: presentations on American Independent cinema

S: *Mistress America* dir. Noah Baumbach 2015

F: Read Brody, "*Mistress America* and the Art of Making a Living as an Artist"

Week Thirteen (Apr. 2)

M: **Exam** in class

W: presentations on biopics

S: *Amadeus* dir. Milos Forman 1984

F: Read Marshall, Keefe on *Amadeus*.

Week Fourteen (Apr. 9)

M: cont. discussion *Amadeus*

W: Read "Melancholy as an Aesthetic Emotion"

S: *Out of Africa*, dir. Sydney Pollack 1985

F: Read Donelson, "Introduction to *Out of Africa*"

Week Fifteen (Apr. 16)

M: Read "Why does film music work?"; **annotated bibliographies due**

W: presentations on Spielberg's works

S: *Jurassic Park*, dir. Steven Spielberg 1993

F: Read Imre, "From the Mole to the Dinosaur: Global Nostalgia..."

Week Sixteen (Apr. 23)

M: Writing Workshop

W: **Final papers due**; share a key insight.

S: No Screening

Grade Meanings for Papers and shorter essays (such as on exams):

Your grade will depend on the quality of your analysis and the clarity and organization of your argumentation. Your grade will take into consideration the quality of the content of your paper, its organization and coherence, its argument and support, and its style and proper use of writing grammar and mechanics. Here is the meaning behind the grades I assign to your papers; you can use these statements to determine how you might work toward a higher grade:

A-- A-range papers are illuminating and intriguing. You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Please note that “originality and creativity” do not mean the bizarre, or the use of shortcuts or gimmicks that might suggest, but do not replace, hard work. Originality and creativity come through hard work, close analysis of films, rigor of thought, and augmentation and refinement of ideas. Since careful editing and proofreading are essential in writing, papers in the A range must be free of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors. An A paper will have a clear, concise, and original thesis supported by clearly articulated evidence from the film(s) and/or secondary sources.

B--You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs revision; however, it is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style.

C--You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.

D--You did what the assignment asked of you at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and/or the organization is hard to discern. Attention to style is often nonexistent or uneven.

E--An E is usually reserved for people who don't do the work or don't come to class. However, if your work shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment or demonstrates that you put little effort in completing it, you will receive a failing grade.

Checklist for Papers

Quality of Content (What you're writing and why you're writing it)

Unique and Interesting Ideas (but not bizarre or gimmicky)

Strength of Overall Argument

Ideas show the ***product*** of your effort and rigor of your thinking

Organization of Argument (How you're writing it at the meta-level)

Elements of selected formal qualities in film(s) support argument

Selected formal qualities in films are linked to a larger meaning or reasoning

Good selection of and use of supporting evidence from film(s) and/or secondary sources

Clarity of thesis (or main argument)

Writing (How you're writing it at the micro-level)

Fluidity of Style (Is it relatively easy to read and understand your ideas?)

Grammar (Is it correct? Is writing free of typos/ spelling errors?)

Clarity of thought (at sentence level and at paragraph level)