

ENG 2300 (1808): Film Analysis

Fall 2013, TUR 2322

MWF 6 (12:50 PM-F40 PM)

Screening: TE1-E3 (7:20 PM-10:10 PM)

Timothy M. Robinson

Department of English

Turlington 4301 (mailbox), 4339 (office)

Office hours: M 7 (1:55 PM-2:45 PM)

tmrobi@ufl.edu

(352) 392-6650

Course Description:

This course teaches students to view, reflect on, discuss, and write about films in a scholarly context. This course assumes that films (and our understanding of them) come in many forms contingent upon a range of conditions and critical perspectives: as formal constructs, aesthetic works of art, cultural productions, economic goods, traces of history, and technological output, to name a few. Film analysis asks students to consider the formal principles governing how individual films work. Students will examine the structural and stylistic aspects of films in order to understand how various technicians manipulate images and sounds to register desired effects for audiences. The most pertinent formal elements covered in the course include narrative, mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, sound, and genre. Students will be expected to identify and analyze these various aspects of a film in order to understand how the individual parts contribute to the complex work as a whole. This course introduces students to a working knowledge of film vocabulary and develops these analytic tools in the contexts of film history and film theory. Students will encounter a range of written and visual texts covering topics such as: silent cinema, national cinema, propagandist cinema, classic Hollywood, art cinema, documentary, avant-garde, studio filmmaking, independent financing and distribution, auteurism, realism, sound, female authorship, genre (*film noir*, musical, horror), post-WWII cinema, diasporic cinema, queer cinema, Dogme 95, and digital technology. Finally, this course traces critical scholarship on the cinema through the 19th-, 20th-, and 21st-centuries.

Course Goals:

The main goal of this course is to develop critical viewing, thinking, and writing skills by using film as the object of study. Students will develop these skills by writing various forms of film analyses, including a plot segmentation, a shot-by-shot annotation and analysis of short scene, blog responses online, and a final critical essay. Moreover, students will take an in-class mid-term exam—designed to assess the comprehension and utilization of terminology, major concepts, and historical context—as well as work on a group presentation on a single film not screened in class. Upon completion students should gain a sense of both film history's general outline and some of film theory's most important issues.

*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>*

Required Texts:

The primary texts for this class are the films, which you do not need to purchase. For close analysis—e.g., when you are writing about a film—you can find the films available on course reserve at Library West. You may use either the facilities at Library West (preferred) or alternative means for repeat viewings. The list of films can be found on the online course reserve website ARES; provide the catalogue call number for each item, the course number, and the instructor's name in order for the circulation staff to retrieve your request behind the desk.

Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. 10th ed. NY : McGraw-Hill, 2012. ISBN: 978-0077689063.

Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*. 8th ed. NY: Longman, 2011. ISBN: 978-1844574971

Coursepack with additional articles and reading selections.

Mulvey, Laura. *Citizen Kane: BFIFilm Classics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. ISBN: 978-1844573776.

Composition 1C) or Humanities (H) Credit:

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html>

Writing Requirement (WR) Credit:

This course can satisfy the UF requirement for Writing. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggordon.html>

Composition 1C) and Writing Requirement (WR) Credit:

You must pass this course with a grade of “C” or better and **complete all assignments in full** to receive the composition and writing requirement credits. *PLEASE NOTE: a grade of “C-” will not satisfy either credit. Therefore, if you are taking this course to satisfy either of these requirements, be mindful of this expectation.*

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/grad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see : <https://catalog.ufl.edu/grad/current/advising/info/gordon.aspx>

Grading Scale and Rubric:

This course is worth 4 credits, and grading is rigorous. If an assignment illustrates disregard for spelling, grammar, citations, or does not meet the word count, it will not receive a grade above “C.”

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade. Grades will be evaluated on a 1000-point scale:

A	930-1000	4.0	C	730-769	2.0
A-	900-929	3.67	c-	700-729	1.67
B+	870-899	3.33	D+	670-699	1.33
B	830-869	3.0	D	630-669	1.0
B-	800-829	2.67	D-	600-629	0.67
c+	770-799	2.33	E	0-599	0.00

A	Demonstrates excellent and insightful analysis that offers a productive reading of a film; mastery of film terminology; may contain few to zero errors regarding film history or theory; shows a clear understanding of the film, its complexities (e.g. does not reduce the film to one “about” statement), and debates or tensions involving film structure, stylistic, and narrative elements; makes a strong and effective argument that takes a clear position, constructs a series of reasons supporting the thesis, and provides something new to better understand the film; very minor (if at all) stylistic and mechanical errors.
B	Demonstrates above average critical analysis of a film that takes into account aesthetics, history, theory, or criticism; impressive use of terminology with some misnomers; discusses the film in an intelligent manner but ultimately lacks significance in answering the “so what?” question of a thesis; presents a clear argument but shows no evidence of a tension or complication that ultimately glosses over complexities in the film; could use minor re-structuring of ideas and either more support, more meaningful support, or stronger analysis to back up claims; limited amount of stylistic and mechanical errors.
C	Demonstrates average level of film analysis that mostly neglects disciplinary film terminology; shows little effort to contextualize film history, theory, or criticism; only takes into account narrative or plot elements without mention of filmic style and sound; certain moments make sense but assignment lacks overall point for a critical analysis; needs both more support and more meaningful support to back up claims; presents unclear argument with ideas needing to be re-structured; frequent stylistic and mechanical errors.
D	Demonstrates below average ability to analyze a film critically; ignores disciplinary terminology to write an effective film analysis as well as relevant information regarding history, theory, and criticism; plot details are wrong, cursory scene analysis that summarizes the plot; offers little to no textual support or significance, and often makes unfound or contradictory pronouncements; difficult to read due to constant stylistic, mechanical, and organizational errors; fails to make word count.
E	Assignment fails to demonstrate an example of film analysis for many reasons: does not use correct terminology at all; lacks basic understanding of film history, theory, or criticism to contextualize the film; conveys idea that the writer has not seen the film or has only a general understanding of it from other sources; does not attempt to point out significance of formal elements in showing how the critical analysis is productive for understanding the film; illustrates extreme lack of critical viewing, thinking, and/or writing skills; stylistic, mechanical, and organizational features seriously inhibit a basic understanding of the assignment; does not meet word count and does not feature a title.

Your final grade will consist of the following:

Plot segmentation	600 words	10%	100 points
Shot-by-shot analysis	1500 words	20%	150 points
Blog Responses (3)	1500 words	7.5%	75 points
Critical Essay	2500 words	30%	300 points
Group Presentation	1000 words	10%	100 points
Mid-term exam		15%	200 points
Attendance and Participation		7.5%	75 points
TOTAL	7100 words	100%	1000 points

Assignments:

We will cover the essential elements of writing film analyses clearly and persuasively. First, students will focus on writing short pieces of film criticism and then build incrementally toward longer compositions.

Assignment 1, Plot segmentation (100 points): This assignment asks students to construct a narrative outline of a film. In order to help them understand a film's overall shape, they can divide a film's narrative into individual scenes based on changes in time, space, or action, and each scene can be described briefly in a separate line. Breaking the film into major scenes and sequences gives them a convenient overview of the film's structure, and their segmentation can often help them see patterns or transitions in the film that could be useful for future assignments. Constructing a plot segmentation is not only the best method for understanding a film's narrative system, but also a fundamental preliminary skill for any film analysis.

Assignment 2, Shot-by-shot analysis (150 points): This assignment seeks to train students' eyes to see everything in the cinematic frame and to understand the interaction of various cinematic elements. The shot-by-shot analysis of a short scene from a film will take the form of a chart in which students can record a lot of information economically. The chart should consist of some or all of the following headings: location (significant aspects of mise-en-scène), framing (long, medium, close-up, etc.), action, composition, lighting, camera (static, moving, etc.), sound, and editing. After filling out the shot-by-shot chart, students will compose a close reading of the scene that analyzes how the individual cinematic elements function in relation to one another in order to produce an effect, intentional or unintentional. For example, rapid-paced manipulations of editing and sound in a scene from a modern musical may be used together to create a feeling of euphoria in the audience (as in *Moulin Rouge!*). While paying close attention to stylistic elements, your close reading should also contextualize the scene within the overall narrative structure. Success on this assignment will be determined by the effective use of disciplinary vocabulary and concepts acquired in the development of the course.

Assignment 3, Blog responses (75 points): Students will write **3 blog responses** throughout the semester. Blogs will be written as short critical response papers to individual films screened in class, but you may certainly include related discussion from the reading materials. Prompts for blog entries will be posted on the blog prior to the screening. Your responses should each be organized around one main topic that you find particularly interesting or engaging and can effectively develop within the amount of space. You should also take the time to proofread

carefully; carelessness to proofreading errors severely discredits your ethos as a writer and will result in a lower grade. Moreover, be prepared to discuss your responses during class if prompted. Blog responses must contain **500 words each**.

Students will be organized into 2 separate groups—Group 1 and Group 2. If your last name begins with A through L, you are in Group 1. If your last name begins with M through Z, you are in Group 2. Roughly each week you are responsible for writing a 500-word blog response OR 2 blog comments, in which you respond to your classmates' conversation/analysis in a productive way. Each individual blog response will be worth **20 points (60 total)**. If it is not your week to write a blog response you will be expected to comment on two of your classmate's posts, and each pair of comments will be worth **5 points (15 total)**. Students who write additional blog posts on course-related topics or complete additional comments will earn extra credit.

Assignment 4, Critical Essay (300 points): This assignment provides an opportunity for students to compose an extended critical analysis of a single film screened in class. This assignment involves a multi-step process for submission: topic proposal, thesis statement, rough draft, and final draft. Students will receive feedback on and earn points for each submission. Because this assignment requires students to enter the critical discussion of a film and to write specifically for an academic audience, independent research is expected—at least 5 sources should be included in the final paper. Furthermore, at least one source should be from a scholarly journal, one from a book, and one from the Internet. This assignment will be submitted on the last day of class.

Assignment 5, Group Presentation (100 points): For this assignment students will work in groups of 3 or 4 to present a “film analysis” to the class. I will provide students with an expansive list of films to choose from. The presentations will cover the last 2 or 3 class periods. I recommend preparing a Powerpoint presentation and handout to present to the class, and each group must submit one written document (e.g., a short critical essay with an argumentative thesis and strong close reading for support) that covers 1000 words.

Assignment 6, Mid-term exam (200 points): Students will fill out an in-class mid-term examination consisting of true/false questions, fill in the blank, short answer, and a 3-4 paragraph critical response. These questions will concern terminology covered in class, as well as relevant topics discussed in class or from the readings concerning film history and film theory. Basically, this is an opportunity to show me how much you have learned so far in the semester. I strongly recommend taking good notes in class, as these will be indispensable when preparing for this assignment.

Submission of Assignments:

All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date (blog responses should be submitted online prior to class). You **MUST** be present in class in order to receive credit for the assignment; in other words, I will not accept assignments submitted via email the morning they are due if you do not come to class. *PLEASE NOTE: I do not accept late work unless you make reasonable arrangements ahead of time.*

Attendance and Participation (75 points):

- Attendance in class and during the screening is mandatory. Be present, on time, and prepared. In general, you are expected to contribute constructively to each class session by watching the film, finishing the reading and bringing it to class (hard copy), and participating actively through class discussions. Although this is a film course dealing primarily with visual texts, reading assignments are NOT optional.
- Students who do not attend at least one of the first two class meetings in which they are registered, and who have not contacted the department to indicate their intent, can be dropped from the course.
- Please do not come late to class. If you are five or more minutes late, you will be counted as tardy; every two tardies you receive will count as one absence. After due warning, further attendance can be prohibited and a subsequent failing grade can be assigned for excessive absences.
- In general, acceptable reasons for absence from class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. I prefer that absences related to university-sponsored events be discussed with me prior to the date that will be missed. When you miss class, you are responsible for getting any assignments and making up any work.
- Participation is a crucial part of your success in this class. Sometimes you will be expected to work in small groups, engage actively in group discussions, or complete other composition-based activities. If you feel you have not participated enough in class, you can post additional comments and threads to the class blog as a means to boost your participation points and to continue the dialogue from the classroom online. Active class participation (e.g., speaking and engaging in discussion) and in-class writing activities contribute collectively **75 points** toward your final grade. *PLEASE NOTE: If you are not willing to participate in a discussion-based classroom then please reconsider taking this course.*

Classroom Decorum:

Because the class is discussion-based whenever possible, conflicting viewpoints may often arise. Despite differences in opinion, be mindful to respect your peers' opinions. As a courtesy, deactivate your cell phones and other potentially distracting paraphernalia while in the classroom (including laptops). If you know of a potential personal emergency, please talk to me before class in case you have to leave while class is in session. Cell phone use during class will not be tolerated and will be considered as an absence for the day. **** If your phone goes off during class, or if I find you using your phone during class (following an initial warning), there will be a quiz for the entire class during our next meeting.***

Important: Some of the films represent strong images of violence, hetero- and homosexuality, explicit language, and other adult themes like depression. If you anticipate that you may be uncomfortable watching, discussing, or writing about this material critically in a professional academic environment then you may reconsider taking this course.

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/>

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/>

Academic Honesty:

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>

Class Schedule:**WEEK 1 AUGUST 21 - 23 Introduction to Film Analysis****Wednesday**

Introduction
Discuss syllabus and course expectations

Friday

FA: Ch. 1 "Film as Art: Creativity, Technology, and Business"
Corrigan: Ch. 1 "Writing about Movies"
FA: Ch. 12 "Film History: Early Cinema"

WEEK 2 AUGUST 26 - 30 Film Form and Narrative System**Monday**

FA: Ch. 2 "Film Form"
Corrigan: Ch. 2 "Beginning to Think, Preparing to Watch, and Starting to Write"

Tuesday:

Screening: *Mildred Pierce (dir. Michael Curtiz, US, 1945, 111 min.)*
**ADD /DROP PERIOD ENDS AT MIDNIGHT*

Wednesday

FA: Ch. 3 "Narrative as a Formal System"

Friday

Coursepack: David Bordwell, "Cognition and Comprehension"
**Blog: Group 1*

WEEK 3 SEPTEMBER 2-6 German Expressionism and Mise-en-Scène

Monday

NABOR DAY HOLIDAY (NO CLASS)

Tuesday

Screening: *Metropolis* (dir. Fritz Lang, Germany, 1927,148 min.)

Wednesday

FA\ Ch. 4 "Mise-en-Scène"

Friday

FA'. Ch. 12 "Film History: German Expressionism"

Coursepack: Julie Wosk, "Update on the Film *Metropolis*"

***Blog: Group 2**

WEEK 4 SEPTEMBER 9-13 Soviet Montage and Ideological Documentary

Monday

Coursepack: Åke Bergvall, "Apocalyptic Imagery in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*"

Tuesday

Screening: *Man with the Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, Soviet Union, 1929, 68 min.)

Wednesday

FA: Ch. 6 "Editing"

Friday

FA'. Ch. 12 "Film History: Soviet Montage"

Coursepack: Annette Michelson, ed., selections, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*

***Plot segmentation due**

WEEK 5 SEPTEMBER 16-20 Cinematography and Experimental Film

Monday

FA'. Ch. 10 "Documentary, Experimental, and Animated Films"

Tuesday

Screening: *Un Chien Andalou* (dirs. Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali, France, 1929,16 min.)

Meshes of the Afternoon (dirs. Alexander Hammid and Maya Deren, US, 1943,18 min.)

Scorpio Rising (dir. Kenneth Anger, 1966, US, 28 min.)

Wednesday

FA: Ch. 5 "Cinematography"

FA'. Ch. 12 "Film History: French Impressionism and Surrealism"

Coursepack: Roger Ebert, "Un Chien Andalou"

Friday

Coursepack: James Agee, "Films"

***Blog: Group 1**

WEEK 6 SEPTEMBER 23 - 27 Sound Cinema and the Classic Hollywood Musical

Monday

Coursepack: Vincent Brook, "Puce Modem Moment: Camp, Postmodernism, and the Films of Kenneth Anger"

Tuesday

Screening: *Singin' in the Rain* (Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly, US, 1952,103 min.)

Wednesday

FA\ Ch. 7 "Sound"

FA: Ch. 12 "The Development of the Classical Hollywood Cinema" and "The Classical Hollywood Cinema After the Coming of Sound"

Friday

Coursepack: Jane Feuer, "Winking at the Audience"

***Blog: Group 2**

WEEK 7 SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 4 Writing a Film Analysis and Cinematic Realism

Monday

FA: Ch. 9 "Film Genre: Musical" (328-337; 342-46)

Tuesday

Screening: *Citizen Kane* (dir. Orson Welles, US, 1941,119 min.)

Wednesday

Corrigan: Ch. 5 "Style and Structure in Writing"

FA: Ch. 8 "Style as a Formal System"

Friday

Mulvey: *Citizen Kane BFI Film Classics* (1-52)

***Shot-by-shot Analysis due**

WEEK 8 OCTOBER 7- 11 Hollywood Escapism and Star Vehicles

Monday

Mulvey: *Citizen Kane BFI Film Classics* (52-104)

André Bazin, "The Myth of Total Cinema" (e-book through uflib.ufl.edu)

Tuesday

Screening: *North by Northwest* (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, US, 136 min.)

Wednesday

FA: Ch. 11 "Criticism: *North by Northwest*"

Friday

Coursepack: Dyer, "Stars and 'Character'"

***Blog: Group 1**

WEEK 9 OCTOBER 14- 18 Auteurism and Genre: Alfred Hitchcock

Monday

Coursepack: Andrew Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962" (*Film Theory & Criticism*)

Tuesday

Screening: *Psycho* (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, US, 1960,109 min.)

Wednesday

Coursepack: Maurice Yacowar, "Hitchcock's Imagery and Art"

FA: Ch. 12 "The French New Wave"

Friday

Coursepack: Laura Mulvey: "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

***Blog: Group 2**WEEK 10 OCTOBER 21 - 25 French New Wave and the Destruction of Pleasure**Monday**

FA: Ch. 11 "Appendix: Writing a Critical Analysis of a Film"

Corrigan: Ch. 6 "Researching the Movies"

Tuesday

Screening: *Week End* (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1967, 105 min.)

Wednesday

***Mid-term exam (in-class)**

Friday

FA: Ch. 12 "The French New Wave"

WEEK 11 OCTOBER 28 - NOVEMBER 1 Female Authorship and Representation**Monday**

Coursepack: Brian Henderson, "Toward a Non-bourgeois Camera Style"

Tuesday

Screening: *The Piano* (dir. Jane Campion, Australia/New Zealand/France, 1993, 121 min.)

Wednesday

***MEET IN LIBRARY WEST FOR LESSON ON ACADEMIC RESEARCH**

Friday

Coursepack: Jaime Bihlmeyer, "The (Un)Speakable Femininity in Mainstream Movies: Jane Campion's *The Piano*"

WEEK 12 NOVEMBER 4-8 Hong Kong Cinema and Queer Cinema**Monday**

Coursepack: Stacy L. Smith, Marc Choueiti, Elizabeth Scofield, & Dr. Katherine Pieper, "Gender Inequality in 500 Popular Films"

Coursepack: Laura Linney, Speech at the Women in Film gala in 2013

Tuesday

Screening: *Happy Together* (dir. Wong Kar-wai, Hong Kong, 1997, 96 min.)

Wednesday

FA: Ch. 12 "Film History: Hong Kong Cinema"

Coursepack: Jeremy Tambling, "*Happy Together*, Hong Kong, and Melancholy"

Friday

^HOMECOMING HOLIDAY (NO CLASS)

WEEK 13 NOVEMBER 11-15 Lynchian Cinema of Dreams**Monday**

WETERANS DAY HOLIDAY (NO CLASS)

Tuesday

Screening: *Mulholland Drive* (David Lynch, US/France, 2001, 147 min.)

Wednesday

Coursepack: Todd McGowan, "*Lost on Mulholland Drive*"

Friday

Coursepack: McGowan (continued)

WEEK 14 NOVEMBER 18-22 Contemporary Art Cinema and the Apocalypse

Monday

Coursepack: Susan Sontag, "The Decay of Cinema"

Coursepack: J. Hoberman, "The Myth of 'The Myth of Total Cinema'"

***Complete rough draft of Critical Essay due**

Tuesday

Screening: *Melancholia* (dir. Lars von Trier, 2011, 136 min.)

Wednesday

Coursepack: Dogme 95 Manifesto: "Vow of Chastity"

Coursepack: David Thomson, "The Numbers and the Numbness"

Friday

Coursepack: Richard Barsam and Dave Monahan, "Film, Video, and Digital Technologies: An Overview"

Coursepack: Steven Soderbergh, "State of Cinema" address at the 2013 San Francisco Film Festival

Coursepack: David S. Cohen, "George Lucas and Steven Spielberg: Studios will implode; VOD is the Future"

WEEK 15 NOVEMBER 25 - 29 The Digital Question for 21st-century Cinema

Monday

***NO CLASS: INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES FOR FINAL PAPERS**

Tuesday

Screening: *Side by Side* (dir. Christopher Kenneally, 2012, 99 min.)

***This is Not a Film* (dirs. Mojtaba Mirtahmasb and Jafar Panahi, 2011, 75 min.)**

***A Boy and his Atom* (dir. Nico Casavecchia, 2013, 2 min.)**

Wednesday

*** THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (NO CLASS)**

Friday

*** THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (NO CLASS)**

WEEK 16 DECEMBER 2-4 Group Presentations and Final Papers

Monday

***Group Presentations**

Tuesday

***NO SCREENING**

Wednesday

***Group Presentations**

Last day of class

Course wrap-up

***Revised Critical Essay due (hard copy in class and e-copy on Sakai)**