

ENG 2300: Film Analysis

Class: MTWRF, period 3 (11:00a - 12:15p)
Screening: MW, periods E1-E2 (7:00p - 9:45p)
Location: Rolfs 0115

Section : 4F09 (B)
Instructor : Todd Jurgess
Email : toddl72 [6@ufl.edu](mailto:toddl72@ufl.edu) (Please allow 24 hours for responses)
Office : Turlington 4413
Office Hours: Mondays, period 2 (9 : 30-10 : 45a)
or by appointment

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)

Dyer, Geoff. *Zona: A Book about a Film about a Journey to a Room*. New York: Vintage, 2012.

Course Description

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 while appreciation and an understanding of film theory and history will be an integral part of this course, 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 the changes wrought by digital effects. We will primarily focus on learning how to analyze filmic *form* and to actively read films via these formal features. In addition though, you will also do readings in film history, style, and theory. 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 be branching out quite far from the Hollywood cinema we all know and love, so please do not expect 16 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.

Furthermore, because this is a Summer course, the demands put on you as a student will be rather large, as you will be writing, reading, and viewing 16 weeks worth of material in a short 6 week semester.

Assignments

Daily Quizzes

100 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 analyze how a film works formally to provoke a response in you as a spectator.

Short Shot Analysis (1,200 words)

200 pts

To begin practicing our analytical skills, you will compose a short paper analyzing a single shot 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 the shot. 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.

Sequence Analysis 1 (1,800 words)

250 pts

Now that we have our analytical skills intact, you will apply those skills to the reading of a film as a whole, by way of closely reading a single sequence. Pick a scene or sequence from one of the

course films and compose a paper explaining how the sequence's formal features make a statement or point. From there, explain the scene's importance to the film as a whole, analyzing how patterns in the sequence and throughout the film amount to a worldview, philosophy, or political point.

Formal Analysis + Research (2,000 words)
pts

300

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

1000points

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 the returned response papers.

A "B paper" may have any one of these elements in place, but suffers perhaps 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.

Grading Scale

A	4 . 0	93-100	2300 \J 1000	C	2 . 0	73-76	730-769
A-	3. 67	90-92	900-929	C-	1. 67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2 . 67	80-82	800-829	D-	0. 67	60-62	600-629
c+	2 . 33	77-79	770-799	E	0. 00	0-59	0-599

Course Schedule

Course Schedule Subject to Change

Note: All Screenings to be held at 7:00pm on Mondays and Wednesdays

Readings are to be done for the class under which they are listed. So, for Tuesday, July 2nd, you should have read the Yale Film Studies Website.

Week 1 (7-1 - 7/5)

M Introductions/Some Tips on Film Viewing

Screening 1: *The Wizard of Oz* (1939, Victor Fleming)

T Formal Vocabulary and Practice

Read : Yale Film Analysis Website, <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/>

Corrigan, "Film Terms and Topics"

W How Form Works/Early Cinema

Drop/Add Ends at 11:59pm

Read : Perkins, "Must We Say What They Mean?" (CP)

Screening 2 : *Caught* (1949, Max Ophüls)

R No Class - Independence Day

F Detail-oriented analysis

Week 2 (7/8 - 7/12)

M The Classical Style

Due : Filmic Effects Paper Via Sakai by 5pm

Screening 3: *The Naked Spur* (1953, Anthony Mann)

T Reading Classic Hollywood

W Reality, Transparency, Neorealism

Read : Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" (CP)

Italian , "An Aesthetic of Reality: Cinematic Realism and the School of the Liberation" (CP)

Screening 4 : *Killer of Sheep* (1977, Charles Burnett)

R How to Write a Shot Analysis
Read : Corrigan, "Preparing to Watch and Preparing to Write"

F Neorealism's Legacy

Week 3 (7/15 - 7/19)

M Conferences

Screening 5: *Stalker* (1979, Andrei Tarkovsky)

T Modes of Analysis

Read : Three Interviews (CP)
Dyer, 1-25; 56-72

W Macro and Micro Readings

Read : Dyer, 135-157; 190-217

Screening 6: *The Headless Woman* (2008, Lucrecia Martel)

R Long Takes and Shallow Focus

F Politics and Reality

Due : Shot Analysis 1 Via Sakai by 5pm

Week 4 (7/22 - 7/26)

M The Tradition of Documentary from Flaherty to Direct Cinema

Due : Rough Topic and Thesis Statement for Sequence Analysis 1

Read : Corrigan, "Style and Structure in Writing"

Screening 7 : *Standard Operating Procedure* (2008, Errol Morris)

T Documentary Form

Read : Nichols, "Why Are Ethical Issues Central to Documentary?" (CP)

W Conferences

Screening 8 : *Gimme Shelter* (1970, Albert Maysles, David Maysles, and Charlotte Zwerin)

R Postmodern Documentary

Read : Williams, "Mirrors without Memories: Truth, History, and the New Documentary" (CP)

F Representing Reality

Week 5 (7/29 - 8/2)

M Experimental Film Movements from Pure Cinema to Structural Film

Due : Sequence Analysis 1 by 5pm Via Sakai

Screening 9: *Chief!* (1999, Jean-Marie Téno) &
Disorder (2009, Huang Weiwei)

T Document v. Experiment

Read : Teno, "Freedom: The Power to Say No" (CP)

- W Research Practices
Read : Corrigan, "Researching the Movies"
- Screening 10: *The Great Sadness of Zohara* (1983, Nina Menkes) &
 Sink or Swim (1990, Su Friedrich)
- R Autobiography, Family, and Documentation
Read : Sitney, "Su Friedrich: 'Giving Birth to Myself'" (CP)
- F Constructing (Our) Reality

Week 6 (8/5 - 8/9)

- M Conferences
Screening 11: *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One* (1968, William Greaves)
- T Constructing a Film, Community, and Self
- W A Digital Divide?
Read : Rodowick, excerpts from *The Virtual Life of Film* (CP)
- Screening 12 : *Opening Night* (1977, John Cassavetes)
- R Is Every Film a Documentary?
- F Course Wrap-up
Due : Formal Analysis + Research Due by 5pm Via Sakai

Course 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. **You may miss up to two class meetings and one film screening before your grade is affected.** If you miss more classes, 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 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 and religious holidays. Please note, however, that you must discuss these absences with me in advance in order to avoid being marked absent.

Also, if you are absent, it is still your responsibility to stay in the loop regarding course material, due dates, etc. 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. Those arriving late to screenings will be registered absent automatically (so it's in your best interest to be punctual).

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 not allowed during course time unless approved beforehand with the course instructor. Students using phones or devices during class will be marked absent for the day (even if said-student is texting with the phone under her or his desk -- it's not that hard to see from the front of the room).

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 Requirements :

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 provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/Gordon.aspx>

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>

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/>

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>