

ENG 2300: FILM ANALYSIS

ENG 2300 [Section 1807]: Film Analysis

Instructor: Megan Fowler

Email: mjfowler@ufl.edu

University of Florida

Turlington 2322 MWF Period 4; M Period

4-9

Office: TBA

Office hours: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The primary goal of ENG 2300 is to teach you as students to view, analyze, discuss, and write about films in a scholarly context. In order to expand your understanding of the context, meaning, and concerns of various films, you will engage in critical reading of texts in film theory and criticism. Throughout the class, you will examine the relationship between spectator and creator by considering how moving images create meanings and communicate to audiences in a variety of cinematic forms. In the beginning of the course, you will learn the terminology necessary to dissect and analyze the technical elements utilized in individual films. You will then practice applying these terms as you describe and interpret individual shots and sequences in both class discussions and written assignments. Towards the end of the semester, you will bring together the skills you have acquired throughout the course in the form of a film analysis in which to think, research, and write about a particular film in order to make a claim about the relationship between film form and meaning. Upon completion of the course, you will be able to engage with film as a cultural product rather than simply a form of entertainment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Respond critically to film using appropriate technical film vocabulary
- Analyze and evaluate how film creates meaning through formal elements
- Understand the importance of basic elements of filmmaking, especially editing, mise-en-scène, cinematography, narrative, and performance
- Utilize various theoretical approaches to analyze cinema
- Recognize the creative production process of films
- Identify the relationship between contextual cultural issues and film production
- Adapt your writing style to varied genres and audiences

READINGS

Required Texts

Corrigan, Timothy, and Patricia White. *The Film Experience*, 3rd Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-0312681708

*All additional readings will be available through Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS

Response Papers (3 x 500 words each = 1500 words total) - 15%

Brief responses to the film during a given week of class. Response should include close reading of individual moments or scenes and engage with reading material related to the topic of that week. Though short, these assignments should show the same detail of thought and professional tone demonstrated throughout the course.

Moon Watching Exercise (500 words) - 10%

Using the technique described in the Duckworth reading, pick one scene from *Citizen Kane* or *The Shining* and record your observations of the scene for five consecutive days. In these initial recordings, do not focus on significance and interpretation. Instead, reflect closely on your responses to the scene, engage with vocabulary from the course to describe the sequence (including framing of shots, editing, etc.), and consider how your perspective changes through these repeated viewings. Once you have recorded your observations, write a short paragraph explaining the significance of the scene.

Sequence Analysis (750 word) - 15%

To begin practicing your analytical skills, you will formally interpret a film sequence from any of the films we have viewed in class up until this point. For this assignment, you will make a claim about the meaning of the sequence and provide close analysis of the sequence's editing, framing, cinematography, mise-en-scène, sound, and pacing to support your claim. Well-developed assignments will thoroughly engage with the film terminology of the course and consider the sequence within the larger technical and cultural context of the film. (Note: It would be wise to select a sequence from the film that you hope to use for your final paper, but you will not be penalized if you use different films in later work for the course.)

Film Review (1000 words) - 20%

For this assignment, you will pick a film of your choice (it does not have to be from the class) and write a film review for an informed reader. This particular genre of film writing can be found in newspapers or online (by reviewers such as Roger Ebert) and targets general readers who may or may not have seen the film. Thus, your film review will create a critique for a general

audience. Your review should include a brief but sparsely detailed summary of the film and critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the film. Although close analysis of sequences is uncommon in film review, you are welcome to engage with stylistic and technical elements of the film, particularly by discussing it within the context of the director's other works as per auteur theory.

Film Analysis Essay (2000 words) - 30%

For this final assignment, you will write a critical essay analyzing one of the films we have screened in class this semester. You can discuss the film in the context of other films (from the same filmmaker, from the same period...) or you can just focus on a singular film. Your paper should make a claim supported by innovative arguments throughout the paper. This essay must include sound research [at least 5 sources] to justify your claim. Then, in the body of your paper, explain and support your argument by providing close analysis of several key scenes or sequences. Be sure to emphasize the different elements and theoretical frameworks studied throughout the semester and focus on the technical components of film including editing, mise-en scene, cinematography, and/or sound.

Participation - 10%

This will include class discussion, in class activities, etc.

TOTAL: 1000 words

GRADING AND COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	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

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found here:

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

Rubric

An "A" assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet at a high quality level and demonstrates creativity and innovation. Work is complete and well organized, and

moves beyond the expectations of the assignment. Work displays a thorough understanding of the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment critically engages with the concepts of the course and demonstrates a clear and logical rationality. Work is relatively free of error.

A “B” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet at a proficient level. Work is complete and reasonably organized. Work displays an adequate understanding of the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment engages with the concepts of the course and demonstrates some logical rationale. Work may contain a few errors or require minor revisions.

A “C” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet. Work is complete, but somewhat disorganized. Work attempts to engage with the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment attempts to engage with the concepts of the course but fails to demonstrate a clear rationale. Work contains errors and requires significant revisions.

A “D” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet a poor quality level. Work is disorganized to the point of feeling incomplete. Work fails to engage with the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment fails to engage with concepts of the course and lacks a clear rationale. Work contains errors and requires significant and even complete revision.

An “E” is primarily reserved for work that is incomplete or has not been turned in on time. Assignments at this level fail to meet the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet. However, work that is incoherent, shoddy, or shows a lack of understanding of the assignment may also receive a failing grade.

Dates of Submission

Dates of submission for each assignment are listed on this syllabus. In addition, dates of submission will be included in each assignment sheet posted in the assignment section of Canvas. Each assignment will be due in class on the due date. *** NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED. I will consider requests for due date extensions, but they must be made at least 48 hours PRIOR to the original deadline of submission.

Final Grade Appeals

In 1000- and 2000- level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant in the English Department. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

Statement of Composition (C) and 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>.

Statement of Writing Requirement:

This course can satisfy the UF requirement for Writing. For more information see: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggordon.html>.

Note: To receive writing credit, you must receive a grade of C (2.0) or higher AND satisfactory completion of the writing component of 6000 words; this means that you must complete every assignment.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Attendance and Tardiness

ENG 1131 is a discussion-based and activity class. Students will develop skills throughout the course that will be key in fulfilling course goals and final assignment. Students will lose a full letter-grade for every absence beyond the first three. Missing more than six classes will result in automatic failure of the course.

Film screenings account for three hours of class weekly. As such, all film screenings are MANDATORY. Failure to attend screening time will result in the same penalization as missed class time.

Exemptions from this policy include:

- University-sponsored events, such as athletics and band
- Religious holidays
- Medical or family emergencies

In each of these instances, students must provide appropriate documentation. Students are also expected to contact the professor prior to the absence. In the case of emergency circumstances, students must contact the professor as soon as possible.

In-class activities and assignments cannot be made up. However, students are responsible for the content of any missed class periods as well as submitting any assignments on time. Students are expected to contact the instructor or a peer about any missed content.

Tardiness: Students are expected to come class in a timely fashion. Arriving late disrupts class. Three tardies (of five or more minutes late) will result in one absence.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism: A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of

the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

- a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.
(University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007)

All students are required to 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>.

Important Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without providing the exact location from which it came.

All acts of plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment and may result in failure of the entire course. Plagiarism can occur even without any intention to deceive if you fail to understand and employ proper documentation techniques. When in doubt, ask for help!

Classroom Behavior

Students are expected to come to class prepared. Students will be responsible for the readings listed on this syllabus PRIOR to the date of discussion. Students will be expected to participate in class discussion. Failure to do so will lower the student's final participation grade.

Students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethical backgrounds. All class participants will be required to treat differing ideas with respect. Disrespectful behavior toward the instructor or peers may result in dismissal from class and an absence for the day. In addition, many of the texts in this class will engage with sensitive topics. Students will engage with course content in a respectful manner.

*Recreational use of cell phones, computers, and technological (including texting, posting to social media, or web surfing) will not be permitted. Use of technology will be permitted for classroom activities only. Failure to comply may result in dismissal from class and a subsequent absence for the day.

Sexual Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>.

Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>.

The office will provide you with appropriate documentation, and you must then provide this documentation to me when requesting accommodation. Please schedule a meeting with me to discuss any accommodations within the first week of class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

*This schedule is subject to significant change throughout the semester. Please be sure to regularly consult the syllabus posted on Sakai for changes.

Week 1-Introduction to Film History

M 8/24 - Course Introduction: Review Syllabus

Screening- *Citizen Kane*

W 8/26- Film History Overview

Discuss *Citizen Kane* and Key Silents

Reading: FE Chapter 10; excerpts of BFI Film Guide for *Citizen Kane*

F 8/28- Key Film Terminology/How to Analyze Films

In-class Activity: Analyze a scene from *Citizen Kane*

Reading: FE Introduction and Chapter 1; Yale Film Website: Basic Terms; How to “Read” Film Handout

Unit 1-Formal Elements of Film

Week 2-Mise-en-scène

M 8/31- Introduction to Mise-en-scène

Reading: FE Chapter 2; Yale Film Website: Mise-en-scène

Screening- *The Shining*

W 9/2- Auteur Theory

Discuss *The Shining*, Stanley Kubrick as auteur

Clips: *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *A Clockwork Orange*

Reading: Andrew Sarris's "Notes on Auteur Theory"; FE p. 406; excerpts of BFI Film Guide for *The Shining*

F 9/4- Pre-Production Elements of Film

Writing Lesson: Moon-Watching Exercise

Reading: Script and Storyboards of *The Shining*; Eleanor Duckworth "Moon-Watching Exercise"

Week 3-Cinematography

M 9/7- NO CLASS: LABOR DAY! Watch film on your own!

Screening- *Laura*

W 9/9- Introduction to Cinematography

Discuss Cinematography in *Laura*

Reading: FE Chapter 3; Yale Film Website: Cinematography

F 9/11- Principles of Film Noir

Discuss technical elements of film noir, influence of German Expressionism

Clips: *The Maltese Falcon*, *Double Indemnity*, *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*

Reading: Place and Powell "Some Visual Motifs of Film Noir"

Due: Moon-Watching Exercise for *Citizen Kane* OR *The Shining*

Week 4-Editing

M 9/14- Introduction to Editing

Discuss Editing Techniques; Classic Hollywood Editing

Clips: *Some Like It Hot* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*

Reading: FE Chapter 4

Screening- *Rope*

W 9/16- The Long Take

Discuss Editing in *Rope*

Clips: *Touch of Evil*, *The Birdcage*, and *Dog Day Afternoon*

F 9/18- Discuss Montage

Clips: *Battleship Potemkin* and *Casablanca*

Reading: Sergei Eisenstein "Methods of Montage"

Week 5-Sound

M 9/21-Introduction to Sound

Discuss history of sound in film, transition from silent to sound

Reading: FE Chapter 5; Yale Film Website: Sound

Screening- *Mad Max: Fury Road*

W 9/23- Diegetic vs. Non-diegetic Sound

Discuss Sound, Silence, and Dialogue in *Mad Max: Fury Road*

Clips: silent version of *Mad Max*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *Psycho*

F 9/25- Music in Film

Discuss music and tone, anachronistic music in historical film

Recap of Film Terminology Unit

Clips: *Marie Antoinette*, *A Knight's Tale*, *The Great Gatsby*

Due: Sequence Analysis

Unit 2-Formal Organization of Film

Week 6-Narrative I

M 9/28- Overview of French New Wave Cinema

Clips: Key French New Wave Films, Breaking the Rules “French New Wave”

Reading: FE p. 364-5

Screening- *Jules et Jim*

W 9/30- Introduction to Film Review

Discuss *Jules et Jim*

Reading: Roger Ebert's review of *Jules et Jim*; Chuck Rudolph's *Slant* review

F 10/2- Library Day! (Date subject to change according to librarian's schedule.)

Week 7-Narrative II

M 10/5- Narrative Structure

Reading: FE Chapter 6

Screening- *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

****Homework:** Write a mini-review (200 words) of *Eternal Sunshine* to bring to class

W 10/7- Process and Parts of a Film Review

Discuss *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, film review writing process

F 10/9-Construction of Time and Memory in Film

Clips: *Inception* and *500 Days of Summer*

Reading: Lily Alexander “Storytelling in Time and Space: Studies in the Chronotope and Narrative Logic on Screen”

Week 8-Genre

M 10/12- Genre Theory

Clips: “The Shining Recut as a romantic comedy” YouTube

Reading: FE Chapter 9; FE p. 407

Screening- *Blade Runner*

W 10/14- *Blade Runner* as Neo-Noir

Clips: *Memento*, *Brick*, *Sin City*

Reading: Excerpts from Richard Martin’s *Mean Streets and Raging Bulls: The Legacy of Film Noir in Contemporary American Cinema*

F 10/16- *Blade Runner* as Science Fiction

Discussion of Hybrid Genres

Clips: *Alien*, *Terminator*, *The Matrix*

Reading: Susan Doll and Greg Faller “Blade Runner and Genre: Film Noir and Science Fiction”

Week 9-Documentary

M 10/19- Introduction to Documentary

Clips: *Vernon, Florida*

Reading: FE Chapter 7

Screening- *Paris is Burning*

W 10/21- Who Controls the Story? Objectivity and Subjectivity in Documentary

Discuss *Paris is Burning*

Reading: PB Harper’s “‘The Subversive Edge’: Paris Is Burning, Social Critique, and the Limits of Subjective Agency”; Ann Cvetkovich’s “The Powers of Seeing and Being Seen: *Truth or Dare* and *Paris is Burning*”

Recap of Formal Elements of Film Unit

F 10/23-Peer Review: Film Review

Bring Rough Draft to Class!!!

Unit 3: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Film

Week 10-The Male Gaze

M 10/26- Introduction to the Male Gaze

Clips: *Transformers*, *Wolf of Wall Street*, *Star Trek: Into Darkness*

Reading: Anneke Smelik “Feminist Film Theory”; look at “Hawkeye Initiative” tumblr

Screening- *Rear Window*

Due: Film Review

W 10/28- Discuss *Rear Window*, Mulvey’s analysis

Reading: Laura Mulvey’s “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”

F 10/30- Meet with Instructor at Scheduled Time to Discuss Film Analysis Essay Topics

Week 11-Gender and World Cinema

M 11/2- Female Gaze in Film

Reading: Carol Clover “The Eye of Horror”

Clips: *Magic Mike*, *Pacific Rim*, and “*If Women in Horror Films Were Played by Men*”

Screening- *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*

W 11/4- Gender in the Context of World Cinema

Discuss *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*

Reading: Tim Bergfelder “National, Transnational, or Supranational Cinema: Rethinking European Film Studies”

F 11/6- NO CLASS: HOMECOMING

Week 12-Black Lives on Film

M 11/9- Overview of Representations of Race in American Film

Clips: *Belle*, *Pariah*, and *A Century of Black Cinema*

Reading: Excerpts from *Black American Cinema*

Screening- *Fruitvale Station*

W 11/11- NO CLASS: VETERAN’S DAY

F 11/13- Discuss *Fruitvale Station*

Reading: Jessica Kiang’s *Indiewire* Review; A.O. Scott’s *New York Times* Review and clip

Week 13-Queer Cinema and Indie Aesthetics

M 11/16- Overview of the History of Queer Representation in Hollywood
Clips: *The Celluloid Closet*, *Brokeback Mountain*, and *Carol*
Screening- *My Beautiful Laundrette*

W 11/18- Independent Queer Cinema
Discuss *My Beautiful Laundrette*
Reading: Excerpts from *Out Takes: Essays on Queer Theory and Film*

F 11/20- Intersections of Identity
Recap of Race, Gender, and Sexuality Unit
Reading: MC Pascual “My Beautiful Laundrette: Hybrid Identity, or the Paradox of Conflicting Identifications in Third Space Asian-British Cinema of the 1980s”

Week 14-Drafting

M 11/23- Consultations with Instructor
Screening- NO FILM SCREENING-HAVE A GOOD BREAK!

W 11/25- NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

F 11/27- NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15-Black Lives on Film

M 11/30- Context for Class Selected Film
Screening- Class Selected Film

W 12/2- Discuss Class Selected Film

F 12/4- Peer Review: Film Analysis Essay
Bring Rough Draft to Class!!!

Week 16-Wrap-Up

M 12/7- Presentations
Screening-Continue Presentations

W 12/9-Finish Presentations
Class Wrap-Up

M 12/14-Film Analysis Essay Due on Sakai by 5 pm!!!!