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Office Hours: Thursdays 3-4  
and by appointment

## **ENG 202: Introduction to Film Studies**

“It's not what a movie is about, it's how it is about it.” Roger Ebert

Ok, so Roger Ebert was a film critic, not a college professor, but he's absolutely right. And in this course, we will spend some of our time discussing what films are about, but we will spend more time thinking, discussing, and analyzing how the film is “about it”; in other words, how does the film create its effects. During the course, we will watch, discuss, and analyze films—from animated shorts to documentaries to Hollywood blockbusters. We will pay particular attention to how film has created, shaped, represented, or challenged our view of reality. Most importantly, we will spend our time figuring out how film has done this. Because film is an institution and a cultural practice as well as an art form, we will occasionally meet with a sociology class and compare notes to see what sociologists do with film.

### Required Texts

Corrigan and White, *The Film Experience*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

### Goals for this course:

- Introduction to film study: its history, its methods, and its current interests and engagements
- Close reading of diverse films, both canonical and contemporary
- Contemplate, communicate, and challenge past readings and our own readings of these films through discussion, formal and informal writing, and presentations.

This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, communication, intercultural literacy, and inquiry.

### Responsibility:

As students at a liberal arts college, you are responsible not merely for showing up but also for actively engaging in this course. At the minimum, engagement means reading the syllabus carefully and often, reading all the assigned material for the course, and turning in assignments on time. It means looking at the course materials before you ask me when something's due, what happens if you miss class, etc.

More importantly, responsible engagement means asking questions, coming to class having already formulated your own thoughts about the material. It means relying on your own reading for your opinions. Finally, it means asking for clarification or help if you do not understand an assignment, expectations, the readings, a grade, what it means to come to class prepared, and so on. For some of these questions, you can ask me or the course mentor or a librarian or someone who works in the Center for Teaching and Learning. I am always willing to talk with you about the course and about your work here at Cornell College.

## Class Format: Reading, Discussing, Writing

Viewing & Reading. In this class, we will view films together and discuss those films and various readings.

During film viewings: take notes. Because the glare from screens can be distracting, I ask that you take notes on paper rather than on computer. Also during viewings, I ask that you give the film your full attention. And respect your peers' attention to the movie as well. When you read: Pay attention to the argument as well as the information. What does the author focus on? Can you anticipate the direction of the written text? What questions would you ask the writer, if you could? And what kinds of details or information does the writer leave out or minimize?

Discussion. I have structured this course so that we spend most of our in-class time discussing the reading assignments.

To encourage productive class discussions, I ask that you:

- \* Read the assignment. Reading and thinking about the entire assignment before class is essential for productive class discussions. In this class reading means going over the material more than once, taking notes, writing down questions and observations you want to share during class discussion. Bear in mind: the class cannot have a fully productive discussion if even a few people haven't completed the reading.

- \* Listen carefully. Listening is as important to discussion as speaking. Listen to all of what members of the class are saying; reflect on their words and then formulate a response. You might consider what other members of the class are *not* saying as well as what they are saying. And listen carefully; resist the temptation to craft your response while someone else is still speaking.

- \* Speak constructively. A discussion is a time for sharing insights rather than for speech-making. Craft your remarks so that they help the entire class move forward in its search for meaning. If you tend to be quite comfortable speaking in groups, you may need at times to restrain yourself and give others a chance to speak. Conversely, if you are quite shy, you will need to find ways of speaking up. Most importantly, you need to be willing to share what you think and be open to opposing viewpoints. This means both critically evaluating what your classmates say, and voicing your questions and responses clearly but respectfully. Showing support of the class by listening carefully, asking questions of class members, responding to what people have said and expressing appreciation of others' views all demonstrate respect and will help form an environment where all members feel comfortable speaking up.

Writing. The papers and presentations in this class invite you to collect your thoughts about the films and readings and give them your sustained attention.

## Required Work:

Participation & Notes (10%) Participation means giving the film viewings your full attention and taking notes. It means being willing to discuss, examine, and rethink your responses to the films and the readings. I base your participation grade on how well your presence in class helps discussion. Please keep in mind that side conversations are distracting for everyone and hinder class discussion. Things to think about: do you come to class prepared, having read and taken notes on the assignment? Do you listen to others? Do you offer your own insights and questions. "Notes" means taking notes using the guidelines and formats from class. I ask that you submit your notes 10 times during the block. You can re-type your notes and submit them as a .doc, or you can scan them using one of the copies on campus. It's easy. Just swipe your card and select email.

3 Film Response (10%) During the first week of class, I will ask you to post 3 film responses. These are informal writing assignments, approximately 1 ½ pages long, that ask you to start applying the concepts from the textbook to the films we watch. As the homework assignments are designed for skill building, I will not comment on every homework assignment.

Group presentation (10%). In groups of 3, you will research background information on one film and present your findings to the class in a 10-minute presentation. Group meeting and presentation times are listed on the syllabus. I'll assign you to groups and provide more information during the first week of class.

5 Short Film Analysis papers (20%) During the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> weeks of class, you will write short (approximately 2 pages) film analysis papers. These are more formal assignments that ask you to analyze the films based on the terminology and methods we're learning in class.

\*\*\*Special Note: The syllabus lists 7 due dates for Film Analysis papers—one per film in weeks 2 and 3 (excepting *Bade Runner*). This means you can skip this assignment twice. You might want to skip when you're working on your group presentation or your final film project, for example.

Film Analysis Revision (20%) This assignment asks you to take one short film analysis and expand it into a full-length formal film analysis paper (3-5 pages)

Short Film + Paper (20%) Your final assignment in class is to create a one to two-minute film and write a paper analyzing your film, using the methods and terminology we have studied in class.

#### Class Policies:

**Check your Cornell email account at least once per day in this course.**  
**Set your cell phone so that it does not make any noise during class. "Off" is always a good option.**

### Attendance:

In this class, attendance is not optional. I realize that sometimes exigent circumstances or illness may require you to miss a class session. In those cases, 1. let me know and 2. contact a fellow student to get notes and assignment information. Because absences and tardiness affect the entire class, excessive tardiness or missing **more than two class sessions** may lower your final grade. More than four absences may be grounds for failure in the course.

\*Note: In accordance with college policy, I will consider signing 15<sup>th</sup> day drop forms only for students who have attended the majority of class sessions and who have turned in all assignments.

\*\*\*Special Note: Attendance at Film Viewings is not optional. I understand you can get the movie in other ways and watch it outside of class. However, watching a movie on a screen, with other people, differs markedly from watching a movie on a device, alone. Just come to class.

Laptops: Students stay more engaged with class discussion when they take notes by hand. Check with me before bringing a laptop to class. If you get permission to use a laptop, and you check Facebook, email, or any other website during class, you are not actually engaged with the class, so I will count you as absent.

Graded Work. All written assignments are due on time. I accept late papers and assignments only in extreme cases, and I may significantly lower the grade of any late paper. Because the film response and film analysis assignments allow you to skip one, I will not accept late assignments. Type or word-process and double-space all essays. Include one-inch margins on all sides, use an appropriate type font (12 point Times New Roman, for example), and use MLA citation style. For guidelines on formatting formal papers and assignments, check here:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Academic Honesty: Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Compass, our student handbook, under the heading "Academic Policies – Honesty in Academic Work."

([http://www.cornellcollege.edu/student\\_affairs/compass/academicpolicies.shtml](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/student_affairs/compass/academicpolicies.shtml)).

At the College, penalties for academic misconduct range from a reprimand to indefinite suspension from the college. At the very least, academic misconduct in this course will result in a grade of F for the assignment in question and possibly for the course.

The MLA Handbook explains how to use and document sources. The Writing Studio website links to a summary of MLA documentation:

[http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e\\_ch08\\_o.html](http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch08_o.html) Please see me if you have any questions about academic honesty or documentation.

Accommodations: If you have a documented physical or learning disability for which you need accommodations in this class, you must talk to me in the first three days of class to arrange those accommodations.

College policy states: Students who need accommodations for learning disabilities must provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. For more information see [cornellcollege.edu/disabilities/documentation/index.shtml](http://cornellcollege.edu/disabilities/documentation/index.shtml)

Students requesting services may schedule a meeting with the disabilities services coordinator as early as possible to discuss their needs and develop an individualized accommodation plan. Ideally, this meeting would take place well before the start of classes.

At the beginning of each course, the student must notify the instructor within the first three days of the term of any accommodations needed for the duration of the course.

Contacting Me: I am happy to meet you during office hours or by appointment if you want to discuss the readings or films, desire further guidance on the assignments, or if you want to discuss your work or progress in the course. Outside of class, email is the best way to contact me.

### Schedule

This schedule is tentative and may change in response to flu epidemics, class needs, or professor's negotiation between possibility and reality.

Class times are Mondays through Friday 9-11 and 12:30 to 3:00, except where exceptions are noted.

Readings are from *Film Experience (FE)* or are posted on Moodle

### **Week One**

Monday	9:30 am	<u><a href="#">Danger of a Single Story</a></u> -meeting with SOC 101 in Atkinson (Thomas Commons lower level)
	pm	Short clips of early films (watch together in class); <a href="#">FE Chapter 2</a> (skip pages 85, 90-91) + "Taking Notes" 441, 445-446
Tuesday	am	<i>Blade Runner</i> — <a href="#">post notes before pm class</a>
	pm	<a href="#">FE Chapter 3</a> (skip pages 115, 124-125)
	midnight	<a href="#">Post Film Response on <i>Blade Runner</i></a>

Wednesday	9:30 – 3:00	Field Trip to see <i>Boyhood</i> Meet at Thomas Commons Info Desk at 9:30 Class meets continuously from 9:30 – 3:00 with SOC 101 <a href="#">FE Chapter 6 (skip pages 242-243, 250-251)</a> <a href="#">Holmes, <i>Boyhood</i>, Time, and Tree Rings</a> (read and listen to podcast) (Moodle)
	midnight	<a href="#">Post notes and Film Response on <i>Boyhood</i></a>
Thursday		9:30 Group 1 meets with Jen Rouse in Cole 310 10:00 Group 2 meets with Jen Rouse in Cole 310
	pm	<a href="#">FE Chapter 12 (skip 462-466)</a>
Friday	am	<i>Modern Times</i> -- <a href="#">post notes before pm class</a>
	pm	<a href="#">Charles Maland, “The Depression, Technology, and the Tramp” (Moodle);</a> <a href="#">FE Chapter 5 (skip pages 188-189, 197, 208-209)</a>
	midnight	<a href="#">Post Film Response on <i>Modern Times</i></a>
<b>Week Two</b>		
Monday	am	<i>Citizen Kane</i> —Group 1 presentation <a href="#">post notes before pm class</a>
		11:00 Group 3 meets with Jen Rouse in Cole 310
	pm	<a href="#">FE Chapter 10 (skip 372-373, 388-389) + 442-444; Louis Giannetti, “Synthesis: Citizen Kane” (Moodle)</a>
	6:30pm	Jorie Slodki: Abortion in Film
	midnight	<a href="#">Post Film Analysis on <i>Citizen Kane</i></a>
Tuesday	am	<i>Bicycle Thieves</i> — Group 2 presentation <a href="#">post notes before pm class</a>
	pm	<a href="#">FE 90-91</a>
	midnight	<a href="#">Post Film Analysis on <i>Bicycle Thieves</i></a>

Wednesday	am	<i>400 Blows</i> — Group 3 presentation post notes before pm class 11:00 Group 4 meets with Jen Rouse in Cole 310
	pm	Reading TBA
	midnight	Post Film Analysis on <i>400 Blows</i>
Thursday	am	<i>Psycho</i> —Group 4 presentation post notes before pm class 11:00 Group 5 meets with Jen Rouse in Cole 310
	pm	<i>FE Chapter 9</i> (skip 342-343, 346, 348-349)
	midnight	Post Film Analysis on <i>Psycho</i>
Friday	9-11	Class meets with Brooke Bergantzel 11:00 Group 6 meets with Jen Rouse in Cole 310
	noon	<i>This Film is Not Yet Rated</i> —meeting with SOC 101 <a href="#">Mondello, Remembering Hollywood's Hays Code, 40 Years On; The History of Hollywood Censorship and the Ratings System</a>
<b>Week Three</b>		
Monday	am	<i>Killer of Sheep</i> + youtube.com shorts-- post notes before pm class
	pm	<i>FE Chapter 4</i> (skip 154,160-161, 172-173 ) +40-41
	midnight	Post Film Analysis on <i>Killer of Sheep</i>
Tuesday	am	<i>How to Survive a Plague</i> – Group 5 presentation post notes before pm class
	pm	<i>FE Chapter 7</i> (skip 272-273)
	midnight	Post Film Analysis on <i>How to Survive a Plague</i>
Wednesday	am	<i>Milk</i> – Group 6 presentation post notes before pm class
	pm	

midnight **Post Film Analysis on *Milk***

Thursday	am	With SOC 101—Comparing films and disciplines
	pm	<i>Blade Runner</i> -- <b>post notes before pm class</b>
Friday	am	<a href="#">John J. Pierce, “Creative Synergy and Art of World Creation” Moodle</a>
	pm	Discussion, con’t.
Saturday	noon	<b>Film Analysis revision due</b>
<b>Week Four</b>		
Monday	am	<i>Millenium Actress</i>
	pm	
Tuesday	am	Pre-screening of film shorts and presentations
	pm	<b>Film short due. Upload by 3 pm</b>
Wednesday	10 am	Film fest on the OC
		<b>Film short analysis due</b>