

ENG 202: INTRODUCTION TO FILM STUDIES

Prof. Katy Stavreva

Office: 200 South Hall, x4255

Office Hours: M & W 3-4 and by appointment

Printshop Hours (VEL House): F 3-5

Film Lab: 9:00-11:00 AM/7-9 PM

Class: 1-3 PM (details in schedule)

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REQUIRED TEXTS & SUPPLIES

Corrigan and White, *The Film Experience: An Introduction*, 4th ed. with LaunchPad (<http://www.macmillanhigherred.com/launchpadsolo/filmexperience4e/3395266>).

Film Notebook

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

In this course, you will be introduced to the discipline of Film Studies as part of the larger and rapidly globalizing field of English Studies. Specifically, you will

- screen and discuss a variety of films: narrative, documentary, experimental, as well as to films from a range of historical eras and cultural and national traditions;
- learn the skills of close analysis of cinematic “texts,” canonical or not;
- learn and use basic Film Studies concepts and terminology;
- be introduced to multiple approaches to Film Studies, including genre theory, film history, film as cultural practice, film as art, etc.;
- practice critical writing in the field of Film Studies;
- learn basic video editing skills.

Class activities will include film screenings (labs), discussion, mini-lectures, in-class writing, and group projects.

The course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, inquiry, communication (oral, written, visual), and inter-cultural literacy.

FORMAT, ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION

Film labs. Most films are meant for uninterrupted public screening. To get as close to the full experience as the classroom setting allows, you are required to attend a scheduled screening of all the films on the syllabus. During the screening, take focused notes on paper (the glare from screens can be distracting) and be respectful of your peers’ attention.

You may view the films at an evening or a morning screening, or both (if scheduled). Evening film labs will be held in Cole Library 410, starting at 7 p.m.; morning film labs will be held in South Hall 108, starting at 9:00. Consider when you will be most alert to watch the film, and when your best reading and writing time is. Would it help to do the textbook reading before the film, then reinforce your grasp of Film Studies concepts by

reading the LaunchPad summary of the material, or else, to read the LaunchPad summary before the screening, and study the textbook assignment in depth after, when you're fleshing out your film notebook entry? You may choose to review films later, especially if you have a formal paper on them, but make sure that borrowing the film from the class reserve shelf does not conflict with a scheduled screening.

Once or twice during the block, with a classmate, you will be responsible for facilitating a screening during morning or evening film lab. This involves arriving at least 15 min early and meeting your partner at the reserve desk of Cole Library, checking out the film, checking the technology including sound, darkening the classroom, cuing the film to the beginning (past coming attractions and FBI warnings), circulating a dated attendance sheet as the film begins, viewing the film with the group, returning the film to the reserve desk *immediately* after it ends, and submitting the roll sheet to me in class. Should you encounter technological difficulties, call Matt Zhorne, our Audiovisual Specialist, x4261.

Class discussion is the backbone of this course. Read all assigned material carefully, think about it, take notes, jot down questions and ideas you want to bring to the attention of the class. To earn full credit for participation, you must complete all in-class involvement opportunities:

- providing definitions and illustrations of film concepts;
- sharing in-class writing;
- raising pertinent and well-informed questions;
- engaging thoughtfully and productively with discussion questions and contributions made by the professor, presenters, or other class members;
- unannounced quizzes, should the need arise.

Because the screen-facing seating in our classroom may interfere with sight-lines, please raise a hand before speaking, so I can encourage balance. I will try to summarize discussion trends and emphasize valuable insights, but may not be able to respond to every student comment. In the interest of collaborative discussion, practice attentive listening: this means listening to what each class member is saying, and what they may *not* be saying. Make an effort to engage with and build on the contributions of your peers. Be clear and respectful, and refrain from speech-making.

A film notebook with eight entries on films we will screen, as marked on the schedule. Please follow the following format. In a physical notebook, 1) create a header with the film title, director, year of release, and date and time of your screening. Skip a line and enter your descriptive notes taken during the actual film screening. The notes can focus on any scene(s) that grabbed your attention, but you should make an effort to take notes on the concepts from the textbook reading assignment for the day. Of course, if anything else grabs your attention, jot down a note. 2) After the screening, develop analytical reflections on the film responding to the prompt in LaunchPad (prompts are also on Moodle). What did you find most striking/engaging about the film? What do you make of the patterns you noticed? How did the textbook reading assignment for the day help you analyze the film better? What questions about film concepts did the film raise for you? Each entry must be completed prior to afternoon class and should be around 500-600 words.

I will respond to your notebooks weekly and will also spot check on them, so make sure to bring them to class and feel free to bring up insights from them in discussion. Your final grade on this assignment will be based on the accuracy and thoroughness of your note-taking, and the thoughtfulness and effort to integrate concepts and terminology from the readings in the reflection. Notebooks with fewer than seven *complete* entries will get a failing grade.

Two formal papers analyzing the effects of a set of assigned elements of cinematic language in a single film. These are analytical papers, each with a clear aim and precise and effective use of film terminology. Neither paper requires outside sources; both may build on Film Notebook entries. 1) **Anatomy of a Scene** (4+ pages/1.200-1.400 words) will be a close analysis of a single scene from either *Safety Last* or *Rome, Open City*, focusing on narrative, mise-en-scène, and cinematography. 2) **Allure and Distanciation** (5+ pages/1.500-1.700 words) will analyze editing and sound patterns and their effects in either *The Artist* or *The Thin Blue Line*. This paper will feature a close analysis of at least two formally distinct scenes.

More detailed instructions for the formal papers are available on the course Moodle site.

Quizzes. You will take two scheduled multiple choice quizzes on Film Studies concepts and terminology. Do the readings, use the LaunchPad resources to reinforce your grasp of the concepts, ask questions on confusing concepts, and you will do fine. There may be additional unannounced quizzes.

A group film trailer project with individual reflection and analytical write-up. In small groups, you will screen and then create a trailer advertising to college audiences of a touring movie program one of the following gems of contemporary global cinema: Werner Herzog's *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972), Deepa Mehta's *Fire* (1996), Roberto Begnini's *Life is Beautiful* (1997), Hany Abu-Assad's *Paradise Now* (2005), Feng Xiaogang's *Legend of the Black Scorpion* (2006), Catalin Mitulescu's *The Way I spent the End of the World* (2006), Stephen Daldry's *The Reader* (2008), Wim Wenders and Juliano Salgado's, *The Salt of the Earth* (2014). Each of you will follow up with a reflection and an analysis of another group's trailer, using relevant methods and terminology. Timeline and detailed instructions on Moodle.

A final exam in which you will demonstrate your skills in analyzing and interpreting cinematic language and your grasp of Film Studies vocabulary.

Individual assignments will be weighed as follows:

Class participation	5%
Film notebook	20%
Paper 1: Anatomy of a Scene	15%
Paper 2: Allure and Distanciation	15%
Quizzes (20 questions each)	10%

Film trailer group project	20%
Final exam	15%

POLICIES

Attendance: Class attendance is assumed; you are individually responsible to cover missed topics and exercises; excessive tardiness or missing more than two class sessions (film labs count as class sessions) will lower your final grade by two increments for each additional absence (e.g., from B+ to B-).

I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If you have a sports or other co-curricular activity that could interfere with class attendance, or plan to observe a religious holiday, please notify me in writing at the beginning of class. Consult the syllabus and check with your classmates on what you may have missed. If you need help with the material, arrange to meet with me as soon as possible before or after the missed session.

E-mail communication: Students must check their Cornell e-mail at least once daily and respond promptly to all course-related communication. Failing to respond to course-relevant e-mail communication within 24 hours will be treated as tardiness to class. Please indicate the course title (or number) in the subject heading of your e-mail.

Paper format and submission: Papers or other assignments turned in late get a grade of F. If you need an extension for health or other sound reasons, please let me know at least 24 hours in advance. All papers must be submitted electronically through the class Moodle website. Acceptable file formats are MS Word or pdf. The videos must be uploaded to Cole Library's YouTube channel.

Plagiarism (also known as intellectual theft) and cheating will not be tolerated. The official College policy stipulates:

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 2015-16 Catalogue (34-35).

For the purposes of this class (and most English classes), use MLA style to document other people's ideas. A useful summary of MLA and other documentation styles is

available on the Bedford/St. Martin's Student Site for Re-Writing (http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/rewriting2e/#526483_933800). Your textbook has a remarkable section on "Using and Documenting Sources" (453-61). I have compiled examples on incorporating and documenting film citations in the "Checklist for Formal Written Assignments on Theatre and Film" on the class Moodle site. If you're ever in doubt about how to credit a source, don't hesitate to ask me.

Cell phones, laptops, food: Turn off your cell phone and put it away before class. You may bring your laptop to class, but unless I ask a specific student to look up information, or unless you have a documented disability that necessitates its use, your laptop should remain closed during class. Taking notes with pen and paper keeps you focused; transcribing them is an excellent review strategy. You may bring a drink to class, but not food. This policy, which applies to both the labs and the discussion classes, is meant to secure your undivided attention and thoughtful contributions to the class.

Help: Please talk to me if you're struggling with a reading or are concerned about an assignment. I'm happy to meet with my students outside of class, and besides, there's always tea in my office. Please note that on Fridays, I hold office hours in the atmospheric print shop in the basement of the VanEtten-Lacey House. I'm as happy to talk about film there as to show you some of the tricks of letterpress printing. If you need to reach me urgently in the evening or on weekends, you may call me at home at 319/337-3879 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Accessibility and help: If you have a documented disability that requires accommodation, please come see me during the first two days of classes.

Students who need accommodations for learning disabilities must provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. For more information see the section on "Disability Services and Resources" on the Cornell web site (<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/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.

For help with writing, I highly recommend the services of the Writing Studio in the library (<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/library/ctl/ws>).

SCHEDULE

This schedule is not written in stone. Needed changes will be announced in class and then updated on LaunchPad welcome page. You can skip the blue "Film in Focus" essays from the textbook, unless specifically assigned. For each chapter from the textbook, I have also assigned a chapter summary on LaunchPad. The latter is optional, but very helpful reading, as it offers terrific distillations of the main ideas. You can always check

your grasp of Film Studies concepts by doing the chapter quizzes on LaunchPad; this would be excellent preparation for the scheduled quizzes.

	Morning Film Lab	Reading and Writing Assignments for the Day
1st Mon 3/14	Introductions and <u>sign-up for screening facilitators</u> . In-class screening of <i>Safety Last</i> (70 min).	Before 1 p.m. class, read from Introduction: “Film Spectators and Film Cultures” and “Form in Action: Identification, Cognition, and Film Variety” (9-13). 1-2 p.m. class discussion of film culture, identification (including genre), cognition; in-class work on Film Notebook entry #1 on <i>Safety Last</i> following the prompt on LaunchPad/also on Moodle . Bring your Film notebook.
1st Tue 3/15	<i>Rome, Open City</i> (103 min).	Before the film screening, read from ch. 12 “Writing an Analytical Film Essay” and “Preparing to Write about Film” (431-41, skip blue-page essay). <u>For PM class</u> , read ch. 6 “Telling Stories: Narrative Films”, including essay on “Classical and Alternative Traditions in <i>Mildred Pierce</i> and <i>Daughters of the Dust</i> ” (248-49); finish Film Notebook entry #2 on narrative in <i>Rome, Open City</i> ; extra credit: respond to the discussion questions on <i>Mildred Pierce</i> on LaunchPad.
1st Wed 3/16		Before class, read ch. 2 “Exploring a Material World: Mise-en-Scène,” including the blue-page essay on “Naturalistic Mise-en-Scène in <i>Bicycle Thieves</i> ” (63-93). Screen on your own in LaunchPad the video essay on “Mis-en-scène in <i>Do the Right Thing</i> .” Develop Film Notebook entry #3 on mise-en-scène in <i>Rome, Open City</i> . [evening film lab <i>Citizen Kane</i> (120 min)]
1st Thur 3/17	<i>Citizen Kane</i> (120 min).	For class, read ch. 3 “Framing What We See: Cinematography,” including “Meaning through Images in <i>M</i> ” (95-131). Screen on your own in LaunchPad the video essay “Cinematography: Meaning through Images in <i>M</i> .” Extra credit: short answers on “Film in Focus: <i>M</i> ” (in LaunchPad). In-class introduction of “Anatomy of a Scene” assignment (with a glimpse at LaunchPad: “Plot and Narration in <i>Apocalypse Now</i> ”). [evening film lab <i>The Battle over Citizen Kane</i> (113 min)]
1st Fri 3/18	<i>The Battle over Citizen Kane</i> (113 min).	Read ch. 1 “Encountering Film: From Preproduction to Exhibition” (19-59), including blue-page essay on “Exhibiting <i>Citizen Kane</i> (1941)” (56-57). Film concepts quiz 1. Turn in your film notebook.

		Before you draft your paper, read from ch.12 “Elements of a Film Essay” (441-45). As you draft, keep referring to the writer’s checklist (445). “Anatomy of a Scene” paper due by noon on Sunday (on Moodle). [Sun. evening film lab <i>The Artist</i> (100 min).]
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2nd Mon 3/21	<i>The Artist</i> (100 min).	Read ch. 4 “Editing” (133-53, up to the section “Art Cinema Editing”) and screen on your own LaunchPad: “An Editing Tutorial in <i>A Man with a Movie Camera</i> ” and “Patterns of Editing in <i>Bonnie and Clyde</i> .” Film Notebook entry #4 on editing elements and their function in <i>The Artist</i> (read the prompt <u>before</u> screening the film). [evening film lab <i>Battleship Potemkin</i> (70 min).]
2nd Tue 3/22	<i>Battleship Potemkin</i> (70 min).	Read ch. 4 “Editing,” from “Art Cinema Editing” to end of chapter (153-73), including blue-page essay on “Montage in <i>Battleship Potemkin</i> ” (170-71). Film Notebook entry #5 on graphic and/or rhythmic patterns established through editing in <i>Battleship Potemkin</i>. In-class screening and discussion of LaunchPad video essay: “Montage in <i>Battleship Potemkin</i> and <i>The Untouchables</i> .” [evening film lab <i>The 400 Blows</i> (100 min).]
2nd Wed 3/23	<i>The 400 Blows</i> (100 min).	Read ch. 5 “Listening to the Cinema: Film Sound” (176-209). Skip blue-page essays and section on “Sound Production.” Film Notebook entry # 6 on sound continuity and/or sound montage in <i>The 400 Blows</i>. Extra credit: <i>Winter’s Bone</i> clip and discussion questions in LaunchPad. In-class introduction of paper 2 “Allure and Distanciation” assignment. [evening film lab <i>The Thin Blue Line</i> (102 min).]
2nd Thur 3/24	<i>The Thin Blue Line</i> (102 min).	Read ch. 7 “Representing the Real: Documentary Films” (254-81). For the Friday morning workshop, review the sections from ch. 1 on the film trailer (46-48) and read John Long, 9 (<i>Short</i>) <i>Storytelling Tips From A Master Of Movie Trailers</i> , at http://www.fastcocrete.com/3031012/9-short-storytelling-tips-from-a-master-of-movie-trailers .

<p>2nd Fri, 3/25. Class meets 9 to noon. In-class introduction of the Film Trailer Group Project. The Film Trailer: goals, storyboards, rules, and misrules: a workshop with Laura Farmer and Brooke Bergantzel. Sign up for film and Monday video editing workshop time. Film concepts quiz 2. Turn in your film notebook.</p> <p>Saturday midnight: “Allure and Distanciation” paper due (on Moodle). Sunday: with your group member(s), screen the movie for which you will be making a trailer and develop a storyboard.</p>		
<p>3rd Mon 3/28</p>	<p>Video editing workshop in Academic Technology studio. Bring a trailer storyboard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group A: 9:00-10:00 • group B: 10:05-11:05 • group C: 11:10-12:10 	<p>12:20-3:00 p.m. in classroom: Screening of <i>Ran</i>.</p>
<p>3rd Tue 3/29</p>	<p>Work on your trailer. Schedule an appointment in the Academic Technology Studio if needed.</p>	<p>Read from ch. 9 “A Short History of Film Genre” (313-16), “The Elements of Film Genre” (317-20), “Westerns” and “Melodramas” (324-29), “Making Sense of Film Genres” (338-48); Kathy Howlett, “Are You Trying to Make Me Commit Suicide? Gender, Identity, and Spatial Arrangement in Kurosawa’s <i>Ran</i>” (on Moodle). Film concepts review: mise-en-scène, cinematography (framing, movement), sound. Film notebook entry #7 on the engagement of <i>Ran</i> with classical and revisionist genre traditions. [evening film lab <i>Taxi Driver</i> (1:53 h).]</p>
<p>3rd Wed 3/30</p>	<p><i>Taxi Driver</i> (1:53 h).</p>	<p>Skim ch. 10 “History and Historiography” (356-78), focus on the sections on Hollywood (356-58, 361-63, and 367-69); Leonard Quart, “A Slice of Delirium: Scorsese’s <i>Taxi Driver</i> Revisited” (on Moodle); Cynthia J. Fuchs, “‘All the Animals Come Out at Night’: Vietnam Meets <i>Noir</i> in <i>Taxi Driver</i>” (on Moodle). Film concepts review: mise-en-scène (acting, costume, set); character type, archetype, stereotype; narrative perspective; sound; genre. Film Notebook entry #8 on the depiction of gender in the film, in terms of point of view on the narrative, or gendered spaces, or acting style.</p>
<p>3rd Thur 3/31</p>	<p>Review for final exam. Turn in your Film Notebook.</p>	<p>Work time for trailer production.</p>
<p>3rd Fri 4/1</p>	<p>Final exam.</p>	<p>Workshop of finished rough drafts of trailers (upload as instructed).</p>

4th Mon 4/4	Work time for trailer production.	Class meets at 12:30. Read sections from ch. 10 “History and Historiography:”: “The Lost and Found of Film History” (378-94). Screening and discussion of Lotte Reiniger’s shadow animated film <i>The Adventures of Prince Achmed</i> (67 min).
4th Tue 4/5		Film intros and trailer screenings. Upload your videos to Cole Library’s YouTube channel and submit your individual reflections (Moodle).
4th Wed 4/6		Trailer analysis due by 2 p.m. (Moodle).