

Professor: Michelle Mouton  
Email: [mmouton@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:mmouton@cornellcollege.edu)  
Phone: 319-560-2973

Office: 203 South Hall  
Office Hours:  
or email for appointment

## ENG 202: INTRODUCTION TO FILM STUDIES BERLIN, THOMAS COMMONS

### REQUIRED TEXTS

Corrigan, Timothy and Patricia White. *The Film Experience: An Introduction*. 4th ed.  
Two Meade notebooks, or two similar spiral-less notebooks.  
Readings on Moodle (Always print to read, and bring to class.)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course introduces students to the academic discipline of Film Studies, a discipline that asks—and attempts to answer in a variety of ways—how films create meaning. More specifically, students will

- acquire skills of close viewing of a cinematic text.
- study and apply film studies terminology.
- encounter multiple types of film: narrative film, documentary film, experimental or avant-garde film (including animation).
- develop writing and discussion skills about cinematic subjects.
- develop an awareness of scholarly resources on film studies, including books, journal articles, reviews, subject encyclopedias, online scholarly databases, scholarly e-texts, academic blogs, and other media relevant to the study of film.
- be able to recognize multiple approaches to film prominent in film studies including genre theory, film as art, film history, film as cultural practice, film as industry, film theory.

Class time will include screenings, discussion, group activities, and mini-lectures.

### EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

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

### REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at Film Screenings. Films will be screened from 9:00-11:00, or until the end of the film. Lengths are indicated on the syllabus, and you should assume that films in week 3 will end by 11:30. You may wish to review films on your own in addition to a scheduled screening, particularly for writing assignments, but it is essential that you watch each film *also* at a scheduled screening from beginning to end. Films will start promptly at 9:00 and students who are late may be locked out, as latecomers are a distraction. Film credits should always be noted as a part of the film itself, not something that precedes the film proper.

Class Participation. In class, I expect universal participation each day: every person will contribute ideas and questions, and will listen carefully to others. This requires you not only to speak but to attend to whether other class participants have had a chance to contribute each day. When we have full class discussions, since this is a large class with theatre seating, please raise a hand for acknowledgement

before speaking so that I can encourage balance. Discussion can be especially meaningful when students talk to one another, so I will not respond personally to every comment—feel free to respond to your peers' comments and questions too, though you should still raise your hand for recognition to do so. Note points of agreement and disagreement, along with your reasoning, whether with peers, myself, or the readings. You are strongly encouraged to share alternative viewpoints.

Film Notebook. Title one of your notebooks **READING AND CLASS NOTES** and the other, **FILM NOTES AND REFLECTIONS**.

**FILM NOTES AND REFLECTIONS** will include a set of extensive and detailed viewing notes on each film, followed by 2-3 pages of reflections on each film.

Include a *header* for each film that specifies

- the name of the film

- the director of the film

- the date of the film's making

- if a scene rather than an entire film, provide a name for the scene

After the heading, take notes taken during the actual film viewing. We will discuss how to take notes on a film throughout the term, and practice together. Follow notes by 2-3 full pages of legible reflections on the film that you write after the screening but before class discussion. Writing reflections will help to solidify impressions and questions. For example, what patterns did you notice? What surprised you? What do you want to know more about? What aspect of the reading did you observe in the film? Reflections should be completed prior to class discussion on that film—not during class. (If you choose to continue them after class discussion or to create a “late” entry, mark these as “late” or “after discussion.”) Keep these up to date, as I may ask to see them at any time during class. I will not formally grade these but may ask to see them to evaluate your study strategies.

In **READING AND CLASS NOTES**, keep notes on your daily/nightly readings of the textbook, noting the chapter title. Notice that each chapter of Corrigan and White begins with a discussion of film history, then turns to film terminology and technique, and ends with a discussion of the significance of these techniques. Your notes on Corrigan and White should reflect this format; for example, for each chapter you may wish to keep a historical timeline including important figures and milestones in film history, a list of important or difficult terminology, and then note some key points made by the authors about the chapter's focus. You might also find it helpful to create index cards on terminology. Perhaps most importantly, include a list of questions about each chapter that you have as you read: what's interesting? surprising? unclear? What do you want to know more about?

Follow each set of reading notes with class discussion notes. Be aware that you are responsible for all of the reading, not only those parts discussed in class, so be sure that you bring questions to class on the readings when discussions are unclear or are contested so that we can clarify concepts and tease out difficulties.

Terms and Key Concept Quizzes (3). Each Friday you will complete a quiz that requires you to define and apply film terminology covered in the readings that week. If technology cooperates, these will be done by computer and will largely be multiple choice. To prepare, as you read the textbook, pay particular attention to the terms in italics, and bring questions about these terms to class. Use flashcards or notes to study them throughout the week.

Midterm Exam. The final exam will assess your memorization, understanding, and application of film history and film terminology.

Essays (2). Each paper should have a clear aim, be analytic, be coherent, and be readable. They should employ film terminology correctly and effectively. You must *carefully* document any works that you consult, including online sources, using MLA's citation style. It should be 4 pages, Calibri 11-point font, and formatted otherwise according to MLA recommendations. Further paper parameters will be distributed in class.

Mid-Term and Final Exams. The final exam will assess your memorization, understanding, and application of film history and film terminology. It will build on knowledge and skills assessed in the mid-term.

## **GRADING POLICY**

Papers will be graded holistically according to the following rubric:

"A" = thoughtful and in-depth analysis of the text, highly convincing and memorable presentation of ideas, clear and careful organization, smooth and concise writing with very few or no errors;

"B" = solid development of ideas, good organization, generally good writing with few errors;

"C" = presentation of ideas is adequate but still sketchy in some places, organization is not always clear, writing is rough in a number of places (major and minor writing errors);

"D" = incomplete development of ideas, unproved assertions, unclear organization, many errors in writing;

"F" = undeveloped ideas, little or no organization, lack of focus, multiple mechanical errors in writing (e.g., poor grammar, inappropriate choice of words, misspellings, etc.).

Note that grades are earned and not assumed. That is, you should not assume that you begin with 100 points and are "marked down" for errors, particularly in writing assignments. Instead, you *earn* credit for what is good about your critical thinking and writing, while being pointed to areas for improvement. Furthermore, your written work will be graded based on its quality and not simply based on the fact of your having completed it, or on the effort you spend on it.

Your final grade will be weighted (roughly) as listed here:

15%	Quizzes and Participation
20%	Paper 1
20%	Midterm
20%	Paper 2
20%	Final Exam

Your final grade will reflect the overall quality of your work in the course.

## **POLICIES**

Technology: Laptops and cell phones may not be used in class or during screenings. Be certain that your cell phone is turned off (not on vibrate) at the start of class.

Professionalism in the classroom: While class discussion may seem relatively informal at times, behaviors that suggest disinterest, such as yawning, engaging in side conversations, eating breakfast, and so forth suggest immaturity; lateness to class will suggest disorganization. Please be on time and alert.

Accessibility: Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>.

Attendance: I expect you to come to class every day and to participate constructively. Because our class format will be based primarily on discussion, you'll learn most from being fully present and engaged. Any absence after two missed class periods (not days) will result in the automatic diminishment of your final grade by ½ letter grade. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so I advise you to save these two class periods for illness, travel, co-curricular events, and other times you might really need them. Perfect attendance will work in your favor should your final grade be a borderline percentage.

Coordinating Co-Curricular Activities and Religious Observances: Although I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, if you have a sports or other co-curricular activity scheduled that could interfere with your ability to attend class, or plan to observe a religious holiday, please notify me at the beginning of the term and provide me with a schedule of events. Afterwards, you should consult others in the class about what you may have missed. I will also meet with you before or after that class period at your request to discuss options.

Deadlines: Because getting behind on the block plan can be fatal for later assignments, I typically will not accept late papers, and I do not grant extensions except for true emergencies. If you find yourself falling behind, talk with me about it as soon as possible, and I will help you to strategize.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is using others' words, research, or ideas without crediting them fully and accurately, and it is a serious academic offense. Plagiarism can include writing a classmate's paper, stealing (or buying) an essay and submitting it as your own, cutting and pasting from the internet, or mis-paraphrasing an article that you document. Cheating includes receiving unauthorized assistance in class discussions or exams (e.g., relying on crib notes rather than your own reading). We will talk more in class about what constitutes plagiarism and cheating and how to avoid them. Whatever the form, know that you are ultimately the person responsible for maintaining academic integrity. If you plagiarize or cheat, whether it is intentional or not, you'll receive an F as your final course grade and I will document the incident with the registrar. Feel free to ask me questions any time about properly documenting sources, or the distinction between collaboration and cheating. Here is Cornell's official policy:

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 Catalogue, under the heading "Academic Honesty."

Writing Studio: The Writing Studio is part of Cornell's Center for Teaching and Learning and is housed on the third floor of Cole Library. Peer tutors and professional writing instructors are available to meet with you

throughout your writing process—whether to talk through ideas or to respond to drafts. They will not *edit* your work for you, but rather provide consultation and feedback as you write and revise. They accept walk-ins when there's room, but also schedule appointments. Appointments are recommended, particularly toward the end of term.

Contacting Me: I would be happy to discuss your coursework during my office hours or by appointment. The best way to reach me is either through email or through my campus phone number (messages left here go directly to my email).

## Schedule

9:00-11:00 (or 11:30 if needed): Morning screening; or regular classtime if no screening is indicated.

1:00-3:00: Lecture and discussion. Have readings completed prior to the day on which they are listed below. You do not need to read blue-page essays unless specified.

**Films must begin promptly, and students not present for the start of the film may be locked out.** Note that some films will be longer than 2 hours, as indicated below, and prepare accordingly.

## WEEK I

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| M   | Focus Film: <b><i>The Cheat</i></b> (59 mins)<br>Focus Chapter: <b>14</b> —Preparing to Write About Film   |
| T   | Focus Film: <b><i>Bicycle Thieves</i></b> (1 hr, 33 mins)<br>Focus Chapter: <b>2</b> —Mis-en-Scene   |
| W   | Focus Film: <b><i>Rear Window</i></b> (1 hr, 55 mins)<br>Focus Chapter: <b>3</b> —Cinematography<br><b><i>Field Trip to Englert: Man With the Movie Camera. Meet at 6:00 PM in Commons Circle</i></b>  |
| Th  | No morning class. Students pre-excused from the Englert trip for co-curricular events should screen the film before afternoon class.<br>Focus Film: <b><i>The Man With the Movie Camera</i></b> (1 hr, 20 mins)<br>Focus Chapter: <b>4</b> —Editing  |
| F   | Focus Film: <b><i>The Conversation</i></b> (1 hr, 53 mins)<br>Focus Chapter: <b>5</b> —Sound<br>Key Concepts: <b>Quiz 1</b> (chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 14)  |
| Sun | <b>Paper 1 due</b> by 12 noon. Submit to Moodle in MSWord or RTF format. Moodle will stop accepting papers at 12 noon sharp. The paper will be considered late if it is not in Word or RTF format. See “Course Policies” below regarding consequences of submitting late papers. Be cautious: plagiarism will not be tolerated. Cite any source you consult, using MLA citation style. |

## WEEK II

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| M | Focus Film: <b><i>Memento</i></b> (120 minutes)<br>Focus Chapter: <b>6</b> —Narrative |
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- T Focus Film: **The Killer of Sheep** (1 hr, 23 mins)  
Focus Chapter: **2**—Production
- W **Midterm Exam** (2 hours); may use textbook and film notes.
- Th Focus Film: **Watermelon Woman** (1 hr, 30 mins)  
Focus Chapter: **7**—Documentary
- F Focus Film: **The Teddy Bear Project** (c. 60 mins)  
Focus Chapter: **7**—Documentary  
Terms and Key Concepts: **Quiz 2**

### WEEK III

- M Film Focus: **Chinatown** (2 hrs 11 mins)  
Chapter Focus: **9**—Genres
- T Film Focus: TBA  
Chapter Focus: **9**—Genres 2
- W Film Focus: TBA  
Chapter Focus: **10**—Historiography
- Th Film Focus: TBA  
Chapter Focus: **11**—Reading about Film
- F Film Focus: TBA  
Chapter Focus: **11** and **Articles** on Moodle  
Terms and Key Concepts: **Quiz 3**

### WEEK IV

- M Workday. Paper Due 5:00 PM. Upload to Moodle.
- T Study Day for Final Exam.
- W 9:00 AM: **Final Exam, Open Book; may use Film Notes**