

A Century of Armenian Film

Final Presentation / Project: Anatomy of a Scene

Classes end—but, hopefully, the ideas we pick up along the way don't. **This final assignment is meant to encourage you to engage deeply with a scene from a film of your choice from this class, or with a scene from another film that matters to you (more on that below).**

Emphasis on that last part – I want you to focus on something that is either truly meaningful to you (and not just what you might think / might think is meaningful to you) or that you find intellectually engaging (in dialogue with the themes of this course).

Like we've been doing together throughout the semester, you will be walking us through a scene of your choice, teaching us how to read or understand it through your eyes.

So, please put some careful thought into what case study you might choose to share with us!

Here are the basic contours of this assignment:

- 1) It will have a **live** presentation component in class. **Presentations will be short – think roughly SIX minutes, which includes the time needed to screen a scene OR describe your scene in class -- and will take place on the last two days of class: April 17 and April 22.**

To make this fair, we'll just go by alphabetical order for presentation order:

APRIL 17:

Harout

Madison

Caylyn

Dante

Yusuf

Katie (Katherine)

Kanishk

Diamond

Jack

APRIL 22:

Jacob

Fionnan

Grace

Abbi (Abbigail)

Oscar

Dash

Jim

Jacqueline

If for some reason you're not able to make it on that date for a legitimate medical or other reason, please be in touch with me to discuss the possibility of recording yourself and email the recording of the presentation with me, which I will also share with the group.

2) **The assignment will also have a written component, due APRIL 30 by 8pm.** This was originally our final exam day, and this simplified writing assignment will take the place of the final.

Please put both dates on your calendar now, so you don't forget later.

PART ONE: THE PRESENTATION

Over the semester, we've read a wide variety of articles and chapters that are aimed to help us think critically about the history of film and the theme of survival.

For the final presentation, you will pick out a useful idea from ONE of these critical readings (so, maybe Chion's added value, or Parajanov's understanding of poetic cinema, or Hirsch's concept of postmemory). Think of this as basically the same thing we've been doing in our response papers: you're choosing a quote (or a paraphrase of a quote) and showing us how the idea it expresses is useful for unpacking the scene you're analyzing.

You may either: **pick any film from the course and use your quote to analyze a scene in class; OR pick a scene from a film outside the class (BUT, you MUST get my permission first if you go for the second option).**

If your scene has some content warning that you want to share, or run by me first, I'm sure your peers would appreciate that.

You will do a few things during your presentation:

- Give us a very short introduction to your film/scene, and tell us why you chose it. (about 1 minute)

- Give us a very brief overview of how the critical thinker you chose (from one of our course readings) defines the concept/idea/theory you're working with. Why is this idea useful for understanding the film you've chosen (about 1 minutes)?
- If you'd like, you may show us a clip from the scene you've chosen. Before you show the scene, help to prime our attention, and tell your audience what to pay attention to or think about as they watch. If it isn't possible to show your scene, or if your scene is too long, you can always show us some still images and describe it, guiding our attention to what you want us to see, just like in our response paper exercises. You can also play an audio clip if you want. This 2nd choice is probably easier in this speedy format, in my opinion, but I leave the first option open if you prefer. **(no more than 2 minutes MAX)**
- Tie the scene together with the concept you've chosen. How does one help to illuminate the other? What does your concept / quote / idea help us to understand or see about the film you've chosen? And last (and this can be very simple), why does it matter (i.e., how does it shape our understanding of the film, the scene, the idea, this class – it's open ended, but you do have to make a very short case for why we should care). (about 2 minutes)
- Question and answers: no presentation is complete without some group engagement! (about 2 minutes)

I think you'll find this time will go by very fast -- so please practice it in advance so you're not going over time! You will only have SIX MINUTES for your whole presentation, and then two for questions. To make this work, I'll be monitoring the clock closely, and will stop you if needed to be fair to everyone.

I also need you to send me whatever material for a Powerpoint or for your chosen scene at least ONE HOUR before class so I can get it ready in time.

After each presentation, we will have a couple of minutes to ask a few brief questions or make some short comments. **Everyone must comment on or ask a question to at least one of your classmates (and this will count toward your grade for this project).**

A final note on presentations: these are meant to be casual, and, hopefully, fun. Basically, I want you to show me that you've thought about the larger themes of the course, and how they might apply to something personal beyond the case studies we've examined together. And, I want us all to have one last conversation together before we go our separate ways!

Don't put this off till the last minute! I'm also here to help you brainstorm and talk through your material.

PART TWO: THE WRITTEN COMPONENT (IN LIEU OF A FINAL EXAM)

This will be short and sweet -- think about 3 - 4 pages, double spaced, typed -- and will offer a **slightly more in depth look at the example you chose for your case study.**

Think of this, basically, as our final response paper in the class. You'll be doing all of the same things you did for the other response papers:

To give you some structure, this assignment also has some particular things you'll need to do.

- 1) The first step is to describe the scene you've chosen. Help set the stage for us a little, in the same way you do when you catalogue the important elements of a scene in class. What's going on in the scene (possibly in terms of content, narrative, staging, camerawork, sound, etc. – you don't need to talk about all these things; they're only suggestions to get you started).
- 2) You'll need to choose a short quotation by your theorist/author of choice. We've been working on identifying keys (a sentence or passage that opens something up for you in our readings) together already; think of this as a key that helps your reader to get into the theorist's/author's headspace. You'll also need to briefly explain what you meant in "your" quotation. That is, don't just assume the quotation explains or speaks for itself. You'll need to step in and tell the reader why you picked it! What does the quotation help us to understand? What concepts does it give us to work with? Why does it matter?
- 3) Using the passage you've selected as a starting point, tell us what you think "you" (aka, the film theorist / scholar / author you've selected) would say about this scene. What would "you" find interesting here? What kind of analysis would you want to do? Does your quotation (or any of the ideas/terms in it) help you to understand something important here?
- 4) Make a brief case for why your interpretation matters. This doesn't need to be a dazzling idea or rocket science – think of it more like you're just spelling out, in whatever way you'd like, why you think the reader should care about what you've just said.

The only meaningful differences here are: 1) you have slightly more pages to work with, and 2) you have the ability to analyze a scene from a film outside of this course.

The aim, hopefully, is twofold: you gain some experience "close reading" an example that's not from this course, and second you get to explore thematically how the questions of the course might have relevance beyond it. I will be grading these in the same way, using roughly the same rubric, that I used on the midterm. And that's it!

If you find yourself struggling with any of the above, don't panic -- just get in touch with me, and we can brainstorm a little together.