

FS_OX 270: 11J
Introduction to Film

T/Th 11:50-1:30
& T 3:00-6:00

Language Hall
Room 202

Dr. Elizabeth Venell
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OH: T/Th 2:00-3:00
& by appointment

Humanities 205

Textbook: Phillips, William. *Film: An Introduction*. 4th edition. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.

Content: How are movies made, and how do movies make meaning? These are the fundamental questions that animate film studies. This course is an introduction to the techniques and elements that comprise the art and industry of filmmaking. We will consider the language of film form alongside the historical and aesthetic contexts of filmmaking, developing and focusing our abilities to analyze cinema from *aperture* to *zoom*. The course content gives rise to three major objectives: students will learn to recognize and name film techniques; students will use their educated observations to consider how those techniques produce meaning; and students will develop their capacities for comprehending, discussing, and writing about the significance of films' constructed meanings.

Format: In general, new topics will be introduced during class time on Tuesdays, and quizzes and film reviews will be due on Thursdays. Screenings are a critical component of film studies; attendance is mandatory for every film. There will be minimal lecture and discussion during the screening sessions. However, students are expected to take notes during screenings for future reference in class discussions, on quizzes, for film reviews, and for the final paper.

Evaluation: Participation (20%) is composed of attendance as well as informed and thoughtful contributions to class discussions. Absences and tardiness will reduce the participation grade. Multiple absences (due to emergencies or illness) must be documented to the instructor's satisfaction to avoid penalties. Quizzes (30%) and Reviews (30%) based on course materials make up the bulk of the students' opportunities for evaluation; it follows that steady engagement and diligence will be rewarded. There will be one exam (10%) during the semester. A final scene analysis (10%) is the major cumulative assignment of the semester.

Honor Code: As in all courses, students are required to abide by the Oxford College Honor Code, available for review at http://www.oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/Academic/academic-success/student-honor-code. In film studies, common knowledge extends to basic information about a film, including its year, director, cast, and country of origin. However, information such as plot summaries are

the unique work of particular authors, and they require citation. Content from outside sources, including specific arguments, descriptive phrases, and general information beyond the scope of our class discussions must be cited. Additionally, this syllabus forms an implied contract. Only the instructor may change the schedule of readings, quizzes, and writing assignments; students are required to complete all of the above as scheduled, including assignments distributed in class and exercises conducted in class.

Additional Classroom Policies: No cell phones, no laptops, no tablets, and no meals are permitted during classes and screenings. Any exceptions must be approved by the instructor on a case-by-case basis (for example, the course is conducted in accordance with the ADA). Use of unapproved electronic devices and/or significant food and beverage consumption will be considered an offense punishable by a critically reduced participation grade, public embarrassment, temporary confiscation, and/or instructor's consumption.

Note on Explicit Content: During the lectures and screenings, students will encounter graphic content, including but not limited to nudity, explicit sexuality, vulgarity, drug use, and violence, which may be troubling to viewers. Enrollment in this course indicates the student's awareness of this fact, as well as a willingness to approach these representations in a mature—and sensitive—critical manner. If you are concerned that particular themes or images may be triggering, alternative or supplementary arrangements can be made in advance and in coordination with the instructor.