

FS_OX 270: Introduction to Film Studies
Fall 2011 Oxford College

Tuesdays, Thursdays, 11:30 am-12:45 pm East Village Alpha 157
Mandatory Screening Tuesdays 3:00-6:00 pm East Village Alpha 157

Instructor: Matthew Kiesner, M.A.

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Office Hours: Tu/Thurs 1:00-2:45 Humanities 205. (office phone 4-4605)

Textbook: Phillips, William H. Film: An Introduction, fourth Edition, 2009.

The moving image is an ever-increasing presence in our lives. Technology has broken down the barriers of production and exhibition. Understanding the cinematic art is now more important than ever. This course teaches students the fundamentals of film form allowing students to better understand, analyze and create films. The course approaches a variety of film types through historical, economic, aesthetic and social contexts in order to build a student's general knowledge about films and filmmaking.

Grading and Assignments

The course is out of 100 points and the total will correlate with to a standard academic grading scale. (A=93, A-=90, B+=87, B=83, B-=80)

Attendance and Participation: 10 points

Attendance is mandatory for all scheduled classes and screenings. Attendance will be taken at all class meetings. I allow one absence, but any additional unexcused absences will reduce your attendance grade one point. Excused absences are allowed for medical, legal or religious reasons.

Weekly Responses: 15 points

Students need to send an e-mail response about each screening. Each response is due by noon on Wednesday after each screening. The responses should be about how the film connects with the weekly topic and readings and use relevant examples.

Introductory paper: 5 points

A three page paper on a film of your choice. The paper should include a summary and an analysis of an important scene of your choosing.

Final Paper: 20 points

The term paper is five to seven pages on a film of your choice. This paper must be thesis oriented with a strong argument and effective examples.

Midterm Exam and Final Exam: 25 points each

My grading will use the +/- system on the final grade for accuracy. Late work will not be accepted, unless you provide a letter of explanation from Oxford faculty and/or administration.

Citations and Plagiarism: In terms of film studies, common knowledge extends to basic information about a film, including its year, director and cast. However, any plot summary of a film is the unique work of the author and needs citation. Using Internet sources in responses without citation will count as plagiarism. This includes descriptive phrases and information beyond the scope of in-class lectures. Using sources without citation in responses or papers will lead to failure of the assignment and may necessitate an incident report to the Honor Council.

Electronic Device Policy: Use of Laptops, tablets and smart phones is not permitted during lectures or screenings. Cell phones must be silenced during lectures and screenings. Checking of messages and texting is not permitted. All headphones, ear buds and Bluetooth headsets must be removed. Failure to respect these policies will lead to a point loss on your attendance and participation grade of up to five points.

Please Note that this course will show films, stills and clips that include nudity, explicit sexuality, vulgar language, and graphic violence that some students may find troubling. Your enrollment in this course indicates your awareness of this and your willingness to approach these films and/or images in an adult, critical manner.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

8/25

Introduction to course and film production
Phillips, appendix 694-701

8/30-9/1

Mise-en-scene
Phillips, Introduction, Ch. One,
Rausch, "George Melies and the Artificially Arranged Scene" on reserve
Screening: *The Royal Tenenbaums* (Wes Anderson, 2001)

9/6-9/8

Cinematography
Phillips, Ch. Two
Rausch, Ch. Fifteen
Screening: *Seconds* (John Frankenheimer, 1966)

9/13-9/15

Editing

Phillips, Ch. Three
Screening: *The Limey* (Steven Soderburgh, 1999)
Introductory Paper Due 9/15

9/20-9/22

Sound

Phillips, Ch. Four,
Rausch, "The Movies learn to Speak" on reserve
Bordwell "Diegesis and Sound" on reserve
Corrigan and White "Values and traditions in *The Conversation*" on reserve
Screening: *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974)

9/27

Understanding Film Form in action
Rausch, "Citizen Kane" on reserve
Screening: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941)

9/29 Midterm

10/4-10/6

Sources of Fictional Films
Phillips, Ch. Five
Screening: *Ghost World* (Terry Zwigoff, 2001)

10/11 Fall Break

10/13 Continue Sources/Narrative

10/18-10/20

Narrative
Phillips, Ch. Six
Screening: *Election* (Alexander Payne, 1999)

10/25-10/27

Hollywood Cinema
Phillips, Ch. Seven, pp. 307-332
Rausch, "The Edison Monopoly Decision," "The Hollywood Studio System"
"The Dark Streets of Film Noir," on reserve
Schatz, "The New Hollywood" on reserve
Screening: *The Great Train Robbery* (Edwin S. Porter, 1903), *The Maltese Falcon* (John Huston, 1941)

11/1-11/3 Art and International Cinema

Phillips, Ch. Seven, pp. 333-360
Rausch, "Italian Neorealism," Andre Bazin," "French New Wave" on reserve
Bordwell, "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice" on reserve

Screening: *Breathless* (a.k.a. *A Bout de Souffle*) (Jean-Luc Godard, 1960)

11/8-11/10

Documentary

Phillips, Ch. Eight

Screening: *Grizzly Man* (Werner Herzog, 2005)

11/15-11/17 Experimental Film and Animation

Phillips, Ch. Nine

Brakhage, Excerpt from "Metaphors of Vision" on reserve

Screening: Experimental Film Festival

Proposal for Final Paper Due 11/15

11/22

Films and Context

Phillips, Ch. Ten

Rausch, "The Hays Code," "The Emergence of Television"

Screening: *Wild in the Streets* (Barry Shear, 1968)

11/24 Thanksgiving Holiday

11/29-12/1

Films and Meaning

Phillips, Ch. Eleven

Screening: *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974)

12-6

Last Class

Surprise Screening

Final Paper Due

Final Exam

Tuesday, December 13th, 9 AM until Noon

Oxford's Final Exam policy:

Students must have the permission of the Dean of Academic Affairs to take an exam earlier or later than scheduled. Permission is usually granted for medical reasons or for participating in educational programs.

Leaving early for rides or flights, vacations, relatives' or friends' weddings or graduation, jobs or having more than one exam on one day, are not considered valid reasons to request an earlier or later exam.

Requests must be in writing and turned in to the Records and Registration Office.