

FS_OX 270: Introduction to Film Studies
Spring 2010, Oxford College

Tuesdays, Thursdays, 11:30 am-12:45 pm Library Video Conference Center
Mandatory Screening Tuesdays 3:00-6:00pm Library VCC

Instructor: Matthew Kiesner, M.A.

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

Textbook

Phillips, William H. Film: An Introduction, forth 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 onto a standard academic grading scale. (A=93, A-=90, B+=87, B=83, B-=90)

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.

Introductory paper: 5 points

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

Final Paper: 20 points

A five to seven page paper on a film of your choice. This paper must 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.

Electronic Device Policy: Laptops and PDAs are not permitted to be used 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

NOTE: The reading listed for each week should be done before class on Tuesday.

1/14

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

1/19-1/21

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

1/26-1/28

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

1/28 Introductory Paper Due

2/2-2/4

Editing
Phillips, Ch. Three
Screening: *The Limey* (Steven Soderburgh, 1999)

2/9-2/11

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)

2/16-2/18

Understanding Film Form in action

Rausch, "Citizen Kane" on reserve

Screening: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941)

2/23-2/25

Sources of Fictional Films

Phillips, Ch. Five

Screening: *Ghost World* (Terry Zwigoff, 2001)

2/23 Midterm**3/2-3/4**

Narrative

Phillips, Ch. Six

Screening: *Election* (Alexander Payne, 1999)

3/9-3/11**Spring Break****3/16-3/18**

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)

3/23-3/25

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)

3/30-4/1

Documentary

Phillips, Ch. Eight

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

4/6-4/8

Experimental Film and Animation

Phillips, Ch. Nine

Brakhage, Excerpt from "Metaphors of Vision" on reserve

Screening: Experimental Film Festival

Proposal for Final Paper Due 4/6

4/13-4/15

Films and Context

Phillips, Ch. Ten

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

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

4/20-4/22

Films and Meaning

Phillips, Ch. Eleven

Screening: *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974)

4/27

Last Class

Surprise Screening

Final Paper Due

Final Exam

Friday, April, 30th 2-5 PM

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.