

## FS 270 – Introduction to Film Spring 2003

### Instructor

Matt Miller  
Language 102  
Office Hours: T 1:15-2:45  
Phone: 4-4609 (Office)  
Email: cinemattthew@hotmail.com

### Class

Few Hall  
Chorale Room  
T-Th 11:30-12:45  
**Screening**  
T 3:00-6:00

### Course Objectives

In this course, you will become familiar with the various techniques and practices involved in the art of film with the goal of being able to analyze films critically. The first half of the course will cover the basic visual, aural and narrative components of filmmaking utilized by filmmakers to create meaning. Using those concepts, we will then consider broader issues in film: what constitutes film authorship, genres, international filmmaking, how audiences approach films and alternatives to narrative filmmaking. In addition, it is my hope that this course will introduce you to some films and filmmakers that you might not otherwise see.

### Text

- Film Art: An Introduction by David Bordwell & Kristin Thompson, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.
- Additional Readings on Electronic Reserve

\*Readings for the week are to be completed by the beginning of class on Tues.

### Grading

The following breakdown will be used to determine your grade for the course. Grades will be assigned according to Oxford College's plus/minus grading scale (page 83 of the Catalog of Oxford College).

Midterm Exam	20%
Screening Response Papers	15%
Final Paper	35%
Final Exam	15%
Participation	15%

**A note on grading:** Completing all the requirements of this course does not earn a student a grade of 'A'. To earn an 'A,' you must complete all the requirements in a way that I find exceptional.

## **Participation**

The 15% participation grade includes attendance, preparedness, attention and verbal class comments. Students are expected to attend all classes and screenings. Missing class sessions and/or films could seriously hamper your performance in this class. It is up to you to make sure that you are an active participant in the class dynamic. If you miss more than 3 class periods (including screenings), sleep in class, or do not contribute to class discussions, this grade will suffer. I also reserve the right to quiz you on readings any day of the semester. Quiz grades will count toward your participation grade. If you are absent the day of the quiz, the quiz will not be figured into your grade, although the absence will.

## **Writing Assignments**

Screening Response Papers: For each of the first 5 films screened, you will write a 1.5- to 2-page (Times New Roman 12-pt font, double spaced) response paper, examining that film in terms of the material covered that week in the readings and in lectures. Do not spend any of the paper recounting the film's plot—we've all seen the movie. Instead, I want to see that you have thought about the film in context of the week's topic. Each response paper is due in class on the Thursday following the screening of the film in question. These will be graded on a 10 point, check/check +/check – system. A “check +” is worth 10 points, a “check” is worth 8 points, and a “check -” is worth 5 points. Late papers will only be accepted on the Tuesday after the screening of the film in question, and will receive an automatic “check --”

Final Paper: Each of you will write an 8-10 page paper to be turned in on April 29, the last day of class. Using the skills and concepts learned in the course, you will compare a film and a remake of that film. You may choose any films from the attached list, or another pair of films approved by me. March 6<sup>th</sup>'s class will be devoted to explaining the paper assignment in more depth, and a rough draft will be due on April 10.

## **Extra Credit**

There will be an extra credit film each week that you may watch on your own. I will try to have each of these films available for screening in the library. After watching the film, you may write an additional response paper, following the guidelines for the regular screening papers. Each extra credit paper judged acceptable will be worth half a point added to your final grade, for a total possible 6 points added to your average.

## Honor Code

I assume that each of you is familiar with the Oxford College Honor Code. The Code will be strictly enforced in this course, both in exams and in terms of your writing assignments. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. If in doubt, ask me or consult the Code (pages 94-97 in the Catalog).

## Other Notes

- There is no auditing of this course.
- An absence due to emergency/school function/medical problem must be documented in writing to be considered “excused.”
- Screenings are mandatory, and watching the films on video at home is not a substitute.
- If you have any questions or concerns about the class and/or your performance, please don’t wait to meet with me. I’ll be glad to help, but it’s your responsibility to come to me.

## Course Schedule (subject to change)

**1/16**

**Introduction**

**1/21—1/23**

**The Basics—Production, Distribution, Exhibition**

Read: B&T, pp. 2-37

Screening: The Player (Altman, 1992)

“10 Minute Film School” (Rodriguez, 1993)

**1/28—1/30**

**Camerawork**

Read: B&T, pp. 193-248

Screening: Sunset Boulevard (Wilder, 1950)

EC: The Graduate (Nichols, 1967)

**2/4—2/6**

**Mise-En-Scene**

Read: B&T pp. 156-192

Screening: The Royal Tenenbaums (Anderson, 2001)

EC: Brazil (Gilliam, 1984)

**2/11—2/13**

**Editing**

Read: B&T pp. 249-290  
Screening: Psycho (Hitchcock, 1960)  
EC: Breathless (Godard, 1960)

**2/18—2/20**

**Sound**

Read: B&T pp. 291-326  
Screening: 2001: A Space Odyssey (Kubrick, 1968)  
EC: Apocalypse Now (Coppola, 1979)

**2/25—2/27**

**Narrative Structure/Narration**

Read: B&T pp. 59-78  
Screening: Run Lola Run (Twyker, 1999)  
The General (Keaton, 1927)  
EC: The Limey (Soderbergh, 1999)

**3/4**

**Midterm**

**3/6**

**The Final Paper**

**3/11—3/14**

**Spring Break**

**3/18—3/20**

**Pulling it all Together—Citizen Kane**

Read: B&T pp. 78-89, 332-339  
Screening: Citizen Kane (Welles, 1941)  
EC: The Battle over Citizen Kane (Epstein & Lennon, 1995)

**3/25—3/27**

**Film Movements: The French New Wave**

Reading: B&T 399-428; Reserve TBD  
Screening: The 400 Blows (Truffaut, 1959)  
EC: Breathless (Godard, 1960)

**4/1—4/3**

**Authorship: Akira Kurosawa**

Reading: Reserve TBD  
Screening: Yojimbo (Kurosawa, 1961)  
Ikiru (Kurosawa, 1952)  
EC: High and Low (Kurosawa, 1963)

**4/8—4/10**

**Genre & Ideology: The Western**

Reading: B&T pp. 94-109

Screening: The Wild Bunch (Peckinpah, 1969)

EC: McCabe & Mrs. Miller (Altman, 1971)

**4/15—4/17**

**Documentary & Experimental Films**

Reading: B&T pp.110-144

Screening: Meshes of the Afternoon (Deren, 1943)

Un Chien Andalou (Bunuel & Dali, 1928)

Roger & Me (Moore, 1989)

Assorted films by Stan Brakhage

EC: Gates of Heaven (Morris, 1978)

**4/22**

**Gender & The Gaze**

Read: Reserve TBD

Screening: Orlando (Potter, 1992)

EC: Just Another Girl on the IRT (Harris, 1994)

**4/24**

**No Class**

**4/29**

**Conclusion/Last Day of Class**

Screening: Class Choice

\*\*Final paper due at the beginning of class—no late papers accepted