

Film Studies 270-000: Introduction to Film

Fall Semester, 2000

MWF 9:35-10:25, WH 205

Screening Wednesdays, 6-8pm, WH 101

Professor Victoria Sturtevant

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Office: Rich Bldg. 109F

Office Hours: Mon. 11-12, and by appt.

Required Texts: Stephen Prince, *Movies and Meaning: An Introduction to Film* (MM)
Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film, 3rd Ed.*
Various Reserve Texts and Articles (R)

This course will introduce you to basic issues of structure, aesthetics, and ideology in film. In order to learn these fundamentals, it is absolutely essential that you be willing to discard passive viewing habits and force yourselves to become knowledgeable, critical, and informed consumers of visual culture. This process is harder than it sounds, and it will take practice. In the pursuit of this goal, the course will take up a great deal of your time: in addition to a full reading/writing load, I require one screening a week, plus visual media assignments to be completed in Candler Media library. These assignments must be approached with an active mind: take notes, make connections, formulate theses as you watch. Students who regard media assignments as opportunities to sit back and take in a movie will not perform well in class participation, writing assignments, or exams. On the other hand, as you learn to watch visual media in different ways, your ability to take pleasure in a really good, really interesting film will increase dramatically. It is an exciting class, and it is a hard class. Please be prepared for both.

Requirements and Particulars:

Readings: Complete the assigned readings before the first class of the week. You will be responsible for the information contained in the readings whether I go over it in lecture or not. I also reserve the right to assign extra readings during the course of the semester, with as little as one class-period warning. If you miss a class, please check with another student in case there has been some supplemental reading assigned.

Screenings: There is a screening for this course every Wednesday evening from 6-8 p.m. If you know now that you will miss this screening even once this semester, drop the class now. Attendance will be taken religiously. Every film screened is absolutely vital to your experience of the class. *Do not assume* that you can rent the video in lieu of a screening. Video store copies of films, when not letterboxed, cut off large portions of the image in order to fit it into the aspect ratio of your television. VHS also compromises sound quality, as well as image quality. *Do not assume* that you can get the laserdisc or DVD out of Candler media and watch it before class on Friday. Candler issues media into my possession for large blocks of time, so the film will very likely be unavailable when you try to take it out. *Be early to every screening.* We will start promptly at 6, and people slipping through the door after the lights are out is highly distracting and tends to make me irritable. Be prepared to take notes.

Conferences: Students may arrange to meet with me any time during the semester. If you have any concerns about your performance, your grade, or if you are falling behind, *please let me know as early as possible* so we can arrange a strategy to help you. It is your responsibility to let me know if you need help. I am available by email, by office phone, during office drop-in hours (Mon. 11-12) or by appointment.

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If you have any condition or disability which requires accommodation, please notify me as soon as possible (today after class or via email).

Grading: Your grade will be broken down in the following way:

Participation (20%): This grade includes attendance, preparedness, attention, and verbal class comments. Attendance alone is not remotely sufficient. Each student is responsible for making one comment, or asking or answering one question at each and every class meeting. It is up to you to make sure you are an active part of the class dynamic. If you miss more than 3 class periods, this grade will suffer. Please notify me if you know that you will be absent for any reason, so I can give you make-up materials. Although it is helpful to me to know where you are, be advised that notifying me does not constitute an 'excused' absence.

I reserve the right to quiz you on the readings any day of the semester. Quiz grades will count toward your participation grade. If you are absent on the day of a quiz, the quiz will not be figured into your grade, although the absence will.

Short papers, group work, and other daily informal assignments will also be figured into the participation grade. Do not take this 20% for granted: you start with zero and must earn your way up.

Midterm Exam (20%) and Final Exam (20%): Both exams will be in an essay/short answer format, and both will be quite difficult. A review session will precede each exam, but please do not take for granted that I will cover every question at these sessions. As some of the exam questions will involve film clips that I will show during the exam period, make-up or early examinations will only be permitted under the most dire circumstances.

Two 5-page Papers (20% each) These will both be very structured assignments. Many many details to follow.

The Honor Code is in effect throughout this course. Academic honesty is absolutely essential to our conduct as a university, and any student found to be in violation of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Council and will receive an F in the course.

Course Schedule

Sept. 1 **Introductions, basics**

Sept. 4 Labor Day, No Class

Sept. 6-8 **Structure**

Reading: MM Ch. 1

Sept. 6 <i>Run Lola Run (Lola Rennt)</i> (Tom Tykwer, 1998)	81 min.	DVD
<i>Creature Comforts</i> (Aardman, 1990)	33 min.	VHS

Sept. 11-15 **Cinematography and Production Design**

Reading: MM Ch. 2

Sept. 13 No Regular Screening

Instead, you are required to attend a screening of *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (James Cameron, 1991) as part of Emory's 70mm Film Festival either Wed. Sept. 13, or Saturday Sept. 16, 7:30pm WH208. Your attendance at these events will be recorded (do not even try to get away with renting the video). 70mm is spectacular. You're going to love it. If you haven't seen *The Terminator* (Cameron, 1984), I do recommend you watch that video before viewing the sequel (or better yet, get the laserdisc in Candler Media, VD 1093).

Sept. 18-22 **Mise-en-Scene**

Reading: MM Ch. 3

Sept. 20 <i>Modern Times</i> (Charlie Chaplin, 1936)	103 min.	LD
<i>Begone Dull Care</i> (Norman McLaren, 1949)	9 min.	16MM

September 25-29 **Editing and the Continuity System**

Reading: MM Ch. 4

Sept. 27 *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954) 112 min. LD

Oct. 2-6 **Sound**

Reading: MM Ch. 5

Oct. 4 *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968) 148 min. DVD
(plan for screening to run 6-8:30 this night only because film is *long*)

Oct. 9-13 **Narrative/Narration/Meaning**

Reading: MM Ch. 6

Oct. 11 *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941) 119 min. LD

Oct. 16 Fall Break, No Class

Oct. 18 Exam Review

Oct. 18 *Yojimbo* (Akira Kurosawa, 1961) 110 min. DVD
(screening required, it will be on the midterm)

Oct. 20 Midterm Exam

Oct. 23-27 Documentary

Reading: MM pp. 216-225, Corrigan Ch. 1-3

Oct. 25 *The Thin Blue Line* (Errol Morris, 1988) 103 min. VHS

Oct. 30-Nov. 3 Genre and Ideology

Reading: MM pp. 242-253, Corrigan Ch. 4-7

Nov. 1 *Singin' in the Rain* (Stanley Donen/Gene Kelly, 1952) 120 min. DVD

Nov. 6-10 Industrial Issues and Film Criticism

Reading: MM Ch. 8, packet (R)

Nov. 8 *Being John Malkovich* (Spike Jonze, 1999) 113 min. DVD

Nov. 13-17 National/Historical Contexts

Reading: MM Ch. 9

Nov. 15 *Rome, Open City* (Roberto Rossellini, 1946) 105 min. LD

Nov. 17 Paper 1 Due

Nov. 20 Writing/Criticism

Reading: MM Ch. 10

Nov. 22-24 No Class/ No Screening (Thanksgiving Break)

Nov. 27-Dec. 1: Writing/Criticism II: Film as Art

Reading: Deren, "Cinematography" (R), Brakhage, "Metaphors on Vision" (R)

Nov. 29 *The Seventh Seal* (Ingmar Bergman, 1956) 96 min. DVD
Meshes of the Afternoon (Maya Deren, 1943) 14 min. 16MM

Dec. 4-8 Gender and the Politics of Vision

Reading: TBA

Dec. 6 TBA

Dec. 11 Exam Review

Dec. 11 Paper 2 Due

Dec. 20 Final Exam 8:30-11:00 am WH205