

FS_OX 270: Introduction to Film Studies
Fall 2004 Oxford College

Tuesdays, Thursdays, 11:30 am-12:45 pm Choir Recital Room, Few Hall
Mandatory Screening Tuesdays 3:00-6:00pm Choir Recital Room, Few Hall

Instructor: Matthew Kiesner, M.A.

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

Textbook

Phillips, William H. Film: An Introduction, Second Edition, 2002.

Course Objectives: This course will teach the student to understand the specific formal components within film/television/media that, when combined, help create both meaning and enjoyment in the spectator. By drawing from the course readings and films screened, the student will be able to conduct similar analysis towards any film or related media. Furthermore this course will explore the variety of film form and consider filmmaking within various national, economic, aesthetic and historical contexts, giving the student a greater understanding of the richness and complexity of cinema.

Requirements: You are required to complete one introductory 3-page paper, one shot-by-shot analysis, a 5-7 page film review and two exams (midterm and final). In the first paper, pick your favorite film (or at least a film you know well.) Give a brief plot synopsis and then describe an important scene and detail how the style makes that scene effective. For the shot-by-shot analysis, the class will watch the beginning of a film that I select. The clip will have multiple shots and various framing, camera, and editing devices. You will be responsible for describing the clip (shot-by-shot) and writing briefly on how the shots cumulatively create meaning. For the analytical film review you will select a film of your choosing (not screened in class) and write on how the film uses various devices to create meaning. You must submit a proposal beforehand so that I can approve your choice (but don't worry, I'm pretty open-minded about acceptable films).

Grade Breakdown

Attendance & Participation	10%
Introductory Paper	5%
Shot-By-Shot Analysis	15%
Midterm Exam	25%
Analytical Film Review	20%
Final Exam	25%

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. There will also be opportunities for extra credit periodically throughout the semester.

Attendance is mandatory for all scheduled classes and screenings. Attendance will be taken at all class meetings. While some of the films are available for rental, you will benefit immensely from seeing them on a large screen in a space void from distractions. If there is a conflict with the screening time and your schedule, I do not recommend taking this course at this time. The first absence is free, but any additional unexcused absences will cost you 10% of your attendance and participation grade (1% of your total grade). This can make a huge impact on your final grade, so please attend every class period. Think of in-class participation as bonus points that can prove to me that you are engaged with the course material.

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.

8/26

Introduction to course and film production
Phillips, appendix 532-539

8/31-9/2

Mise-en-scene
Phillips, Introduction, Ch. One,
Screening: *The Royal Tenenbaums* (Wes Anderson, 2001)

9/7-9/9

Cinematography
Phillips, Ch. Two
Corrigan and White "Values and traditions in *M*" on reserve
Screening: Excerpt from *I am Cuba* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1964); *M* (Fritz Lang, 1931)

9/9 Introductory Paper Due

9/14-9/16

Editing
Phillips, Ch. Three
Screening: *Walkabout* (Nicolas Roeg, 1971)
9/16 In class screening of shot-by-shot analysis

9/21-9/23

Sound

Phillips, Ch. Four,

Bordwell "Diegesis and Sound" on reserve

Corrigan and White "Values and traditions in *The Conversation*" on reserve

Screening: *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974)

9/23 Shot by Shot Analysis due

9/28-9/30

The Whole Picture

Phillips, Ch. Five

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

10/5-10/7

Sources of Fictional Films

Phillips, Ch. Six

Screening: *American Splendor* (Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini, 2003)

10/12-Fall Break**10/14 Midterm****10/19-10/21**

Hollywood Cinema

Phillips, Ch. 7, pp. 223-244

Schatz, "The New Hollywood" on reserve

Screening: *The Great Train Robbery* (Edwin S. Porter, 1903), *The Maltese Falcon* (John Huston, 1941)

10/26-10/28

Art Cinema

Phillips, Ch. 7, pp. 245-260

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)

11/2-11/4

Narrative

Phillips, Ch. Eight

Corrigan and White "Narrative Space and Time in *The Searchers*" on reserve

Screening: *The Searchers* (John Ford, 1956)

11/9-11/11

Documentary

Phillips, Ch. Nine pp. 299-316

Screening: *Heavy Metal Parking Lot* (John Heyn and Jeff Krulik, 1986), *Beyond the Mat* (Barry W. Blaustein, 1999)

11/16-11/18

Experimental Film and Animation

Phillips, Ch. Nine pp. 317-352

Brackhage, Excerpt from "Metaphors of Vision" on reserve

Screening: Experimental Film Festival

11/23-11/25

Films and Context

Phillips, Ch. Eleven

Screening: *Written on the Wind* (Douglas Sirk, 1956)

Proposal for Film Review Due 11/25

11/30-12/2

Films and Meaning

Phillips, Ch. Twelve

Screening: *Election* (Alexander Payne, 1999)

12/6 Last day of class!

Analytical Film Review Due

Screening: *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974)

Final Exam

Thursday December 9, 9-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.