

**FS\_OX 270: Introduction to Film Studies**  
**Fall 2011 Oxford College**

**Mondays, Wednesdays, 2:00 PM-3:15 PM Library Video Conference**  
**Mandatory Screening Wednesdays 3:30-6:30 PM LVCC**

**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 Thursday 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**

### **8/24**

Introduction to course and film production

Phillips, appendix 694-701

Screening: *The Royal Tenenbaums* (Wes Anderson, 2001)

### **8/29-8/31**

Mise-en-scene

Phillips, Introduction, Ch. One,

Rausch, "George Melies and the Artificially Arranged Scene" on reserve

Screening: *Seconds* (John Frankenheimer, 1966)

### **9/5 Labor Day Holiday**

#### **9/7**

Cinematography

Phillips, Ch. Two Rausch, Ch. Fifteen

Screening: *The Limey* (Steven Soderburgh, 1999)

### **9/12-9/14**

Editing

Phillips, Ch. Three

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

**9/14 Introductory Paper Due**

**9/19-9/21**

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: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941)

**9/26**

Understanding Film Form in action

Rausch, "Citizen Kane" on reserve

**9/28 Midterm**

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

**10/3-10/5**

Sources of Fictional Films

Phillips, Ch. Five

Screening: *Election* (Alexander Payne, 1999)

**10/10 Fall Break**

**10/12 Narrative**

Phillips, Ch. Six

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

**10/17-10/19**

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

**10/24-10/26**

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: *Beyond the Mat* (Barry Blaustein, 1999)

**10/31-11/2 Documentary**

Phillips, Ch. Eight

Screening: Experimental Film Festival

**11/7-11/9**

Experimental Film and Animation

Phillips, Ch. Nine

Brakhage, Excerpt from "Metaphors of Vision" on reserve

Screening: *Terrorvision* (Ted Nicolaou, 1986)

**11/14-11/16**

Films and Context

Phillips, Ch. Ten

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

Screening: *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974)

**Proposal for Final Paper Due 11/14**

**11/21** Catch up week

**11/23** Thanksgiving Holiday

**11/28-11/30**

Films and Meaning

Phillips, Ch. Eleven

Screening: Surprise film for the final

**12-5**

Last Class

**Final Paper Due**

**Final Exam**

**Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 9 AM- 12 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 Rec