



**Film 270-12A: Introduction to Film**  
Fall 1998 (M, W 12:00-1:15 pm, Multi-Media Center)  
Screening: Mondays, 2-4 pm.

Instructor: Andrew McAlister (amcalis@emory.edu)  
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Office Hours: M, 5-7 pm, by appointment; W, 2-4 pm, by appointment.

Required Texts

Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art*, 5th ed. (McGraw Hill, 1997). (FA)  
Mast, et al, *Film Theory and Criticism*, 4th ed. (Oxford, 1992). (FTC)  
Reserve articles and readings as added throughout the semester.  
*All the films and film clips shown in class and during screenings.*

***This syllabus will be your main schedule and guide through this course. If you let it, it will answer many of your questions. If you lose it, you will be sorry. Keep track of it.***

Course Objective

This course will introduce you to the fundamentals of film aesthetics and theory. Emphasis will be on active viewing. By the end of the course, you should be able to analyze the aesthetic and technological factors of films and discuss their economic and cultural contexts.

Requirements

All **readings** should be completed by the date they appear on the syllabus. You are responsible for the reading material whether it is covered in lectures or not. I will often announce additional selections from the texts or on reserve to be read by the following class period.

Your **grade** will be based on your participation (20%), an analytic film review on a film of our own choosing (10%), a multiple choice and essay midterm exam (25%), a similar final exam (25%), and a shot-by-shot analysis of an assigned portion of a film (15-20 pages; 20%). The questions on these tests will be drawn from your reading and from classroom lecture, discussion and screenings. The essay portion of these tests will give you an opportunity to interpret the reading and viewing you will do. I reserve the right to quiz you on your reading; since quizzes aren't a part of the grade breakdown, good showings will only help your final average. The **final** will be held **Friday, December 11, 2-5 pm** in our regular classroom. Topics and strategies for the shot-by-shot analysis will be covered in a separate handout later in the semester. **No late assignments will be accepted.** However, I will accept one additional extra credit analytic film review of at least three pages from each student (worth up to a point on your final average). These also will be discussed later in the semester.

**Make-up exams** for the Midterm will be given only if you present a note from the dean of the College explaining why you missed a test. See me for a make-up test request form. Make-ups will be given at the end of scheduled classes, but before the reading period. I'll announce the make-up date later in the course. The test will be a one- or two-question, closed-book, essay-only exam. I may ask you to view a particular film from Oxford's collection before your make-up. If you want to take a make-up test, I must receive your dean's note within a week of the missed midterm exam or your score will be recorded as a zero.

I will record **attendance**, but only to track chronic absentees per College regulations. If you don't attend class, it will show in your performance on tests and assignments. Late arrivals and early departures disrupt class--please be on time, and remain until class is dismissed.

### Miscellaneous

This course will not reward passive spectatorship. **Films are considered texts for this course.** Those listed for each unit are tentative. I may use others than those listed. If I show it in class, you are responsible for it. The selections shown in class and during screenings are critical to your understanding. Many of them are rented from commercial distributors and cannot be shown more than once. Don't miss the films. Don't take the class if you can't make the films. No smoking, no pets, no unauthorized guests permitted during screenings. **Screenings begin at 2:00 pm sharp each Monday in the Multi-Media Center, and will often go past 4:00 pm.** Watch carefully, take notes, and be prepared to discuss the films in the following class period. **Please be on time, and do not disrupt** your classmates' attention. You might want to discuss the significance of the films in groups after the screenings. That's why we have coffee houses.

***Please note:*** the clips in this course will depict shocking and sometimes disturbing images, including but not limited to violence, nudity, racism, homophobia, sexist behavior, genocide and acts of extreme nationalism. Please remember we are scholars working to understand the medium of film in all its forms, and doing so requires a broad viewing experience.

## Course Schedule

Aug 26 No Accidents: course introduction and orientation.

In Class Selections:

*Lost Highway* (Lynch, 1997)

*Patton* (Schaffner, 1969)

Week 1 Film Production: Methods and Modes

Aug 31-

Sep 2

**Reading:** FA, chapters 1, 2.

**Screening:** *Rear Window* (Hitchcock, 1954; 113 m.)

In Class Selections:

*A Nickle for the Movies* (20 m.)

*A Movie* (Conner, 1958)

*Sweet Sweetback's Baaadassss Song* (Van Peebles, 1971)

*Living in Oblivion* (DeCillo, 1995)

Week 2 The Concept of Form

Sep 7

**NO CLASS:** Labor Day Holiday

Sep 9

**Reading:** FA, chapter 3.

In Class Selections:

*Alice's Restaurant* (Penn, 1969)

*Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976)

*The Fisher King* (Gilliam, 1991)

Week 3 Narrative

Sep 14, 16

**Reading:** FA, chapter 4; pp. 384-394.

**Screening:** *Citizen Kane* (Welles, 1941; 119 m.)

In Class Selections:

*8 1/2* (Fellini, 1963)

*Deconstructing Harry* (Allen, 1997)

*Vanya on 42nd Street* (Malle, 1996)

*Bliss* (Lawrence, 1985)

*Raising Arizona* (Coen, 1987)

*Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (Resnais, 1959)

*Hard Boiled* (Woo, 1992)

*Slacker* (Linklater, 1991)

*Prick Up Your Ears* (Frears, 1987)

*The Usual Suspects* (Singer, 1995)

Week 4 Mise-en-scène, Color and Performance Style

Sep 21, 23

**Screening:** *Do The Right Thing* (Lee, 1989; 120 m.)

**Reading:** FA, chapter 6.

In Class Selections:

*South Pacific* (Logan, 1955)

*The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and her Lover* (Greenaway, 1991)

*Brazil* (Gilliam, 1983)

*Days of Heaven* (Malick, 1977)

*The Last Action Hero* (McTiernan, 1992)

*The Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991)

*Dick Tracy* (Beatty, 1990)

*Rebel Without a Cause* (Ray, 1955)

*Last Tango in Paris* (Bertolucci, 1971)

*The Unbelievable Truth* (Hartley, 1990)

- Week 5**  
 Sep 28 **Camerawork and Cinematography**  
**\*\*\*First Film Review Due Monday, Sep 28\*\*\***  
**Reading:** FA, chapter 7.  
**Screening:** *MASH* (Altman, 1970; 116 m.)  
 In Class Selections:  
*Lola Montes* (Ophuls, 1955)  
*Once Were Warriors* (Tamahori, 1994)  
*Gone with the Wind* (Fleming, 1939)  
*Much Ado about Nothing* (Branagh, 1993)  
*Lone Star* (Sayles, 1996)  
*Boogie Nights* (Anderson, 1997)  
*The Red and the White* (Jancsó, 1967)  
*Seven* (Fincher, 1995)  
*SFW* (Levy, 1995)  
*The Manchurian Candidate* (Frankenheimer, 1962)  
*Rules of the Game* (Renoir, 1939)  
*The Draughtsman's Contract* (Greenaway, 1983)  
*Goodfellas* (Scorsese, 1990)  
*Talk Radio* (Stone, 1988)  
*The Quick and the Dead* (Raimi, 1993)  
*Scarface* (DePalma, 1983)  
 Sep 30 *Conference Day* (Yom Kippur)
- Week 6**  
 Oct 5, 7 **Editing**  
**Reading:** FA, chapter 8; FTC, Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema"; Eisenstein, "The Cinematic Principle and the Ideogram" and "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form."  
**Screening:** *Battleship Potemkin* (Eisenstein, 1925; 74 m.)  
 In Class Selections:  
*Catch-22* (Nichols, 1970)  
*8 1/2* (Fellini, 1963)  
*Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (Jones, 1975)  
*Rashomon* (Kurosawa, 1950)  
*Bringing Up Baby* (Hawks, 1938)  
*Lady From Shanghai* (Welles, 1948)  
*The Road Warrior* (Miller, 1981)  
*October* (Eisenstein, 1928)  
*The Wild Bunch* (Peckinpah, 1969)  
*Searching for Bobby Fischer* (Zaillian, 1993)  
*Apocalypse Now* (Coppola, 1979)  
*The Parallax View* (Pakula, 1974)  
*Prospero's Books* (Greenaway, 1991)  
*They Live* (Carpenter, 1988)
- Week 7**  
 Oct 12 **Review**  
 Oct 14 **NO CLASS or SCREENING: Fall Break**  
**No Reading. Midterm exam review.**  
 In Class Selections: TBA
- Week 8**  
 Oct 19 **Sound**  
**\*\*\*Midterm exam\*\*\* (Essay Portion due Wednesday, Oct 21)**  
**Screening:** *The Conversation* (Coppola, 1974; 113 m.)  
 Oct 21 **\*\*\*Essay Portion of Midterm due\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Shot-by-Shot Analysis Assigned\*\*\***

**Reading:** FA, chapter 9; FTC, Affron's "Voice and Space."

In Class Selections:

*The Long Goodbye* (Altman, 1973)  
*Miller's Crossing* (Coen, 1990)  
*Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986)  
*Halloween* (Carpenter, 1978)  
*The Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991)  
*Night Moves* (Penn, 1975)  
*Contact* (Zemeckis, 1997)  
*The Abyss* (Cameron, 1989)  
*Robocop* (Verhoeven, 1986)  
*Playtime* (Tati, 1966)  
*The Hunger* (Scott, 1983)  
*The Exorcist* (Freidkin, 1973)  
Annie Lennox, "Keep Young and Beautiful"

Week 9  
Oct 26, 28

Non-Narrative Film: Documentary

**Reading:** FA, pp. 42-46, 128-145, 409-415.

**Screening:** *High School* (Wiseman, 1968; 70 m.); *Night and Fog* (Resnais, 1955; 27 m.)

In Class Selections:

*Roger and Me* (Moore, 1989)  
*The Hour of the Furnaces*, Pt. 1 (Solanas and Getino, 1968)  
*The Thin Blue Line* (Morris, 1989)  
*Harlan County, USA* (Koppel, 1976)  
*Tongues Untied* (Riggs, 1990)  
*Kids* (Clark, 1996)  
*J.S. Bach* (Downey, 1981)  
*Tanner '88* (Altman, 1988)

Week 10  
Nov 2, 4

Non-Narrative Film: Art Film, Avant-Garde Film

**Reading:** FA, pp. 146-164, 399-405; FTC, Deren's "Cinematography," and Brakhage's "Metaphors on Vision."

**Screening:** *Breathless* (Godard, 1959; 89 m.); *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Deren, 1943); *A Movie* (Conner, 1965)

In Class Selections:

*Begone Dull Care* (McLaren, 1981)  
*Bonnie and Clyde* (Penn, 1967)  
*Scorpio Rising* (Anger, 1962)  
*Entr'acte* (Clair, 1928)  
*Ballet Mecanique* (Leger, 1924)

Week 11  
Nov 9, 11

Genre Criticism and Style

**Reading:** FA, pp. 51-60; FTC, Braudy's "Genre: The Conventions of Connection"; Feuer's "The Self-Reflexive Musical and the Myth of Entertainment."

**Screening:** *Singin' in the Rain* (Donen/Kelly, 1952; 103 m.)

In Class Selections:

*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Hawks, 1953)  
*The Searchers* (Ford, 1956)  
*The Grifters* (Frears, 1988)  
*Double Indemnity* (Wilder, 1944)

Week 12      Classical Film Theory



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Summer Session II, 1997  
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Student Information

The information I'm requesting on this sheet serves two purposes: it will allow me to contact you in emergencies, and it will help me put your name and attitudes about film with your face. It is completely confidential. If you feel any of the questions are intrusive, don't answer them. I do not sell my mailing list.

NOTE: If you have medical conditions or special learning disabilities that I should know about, and that you have discussed or plan to discuss with the Dean of the College, please describe them on the back of this sheet or talk with me privately. This, too, will be completely confidential.

Name, and any preferred nicknames:

ID#:

Phone#:

Campus mailing address:

E-mail address:

Year (freshperson, sophomore, etc.):

Major:

Home region:

Favorite pre-WWII film, and why:

Favorite film of all time, and why:

Favorite film in the last six months, and why:

Why are you taking this class?