**ENG 202: INTRODUCTION TO FILM STUDIES**

**Prof. Katy Stavreva** **Film Lab**: starts at 9 AM (details in schedule)

**Office**: 200 South Hall, x4255 **Class**: typically 1-3 PM (details in schedule)

**Office Hours**: T & W 3-4 and by appointment **email:** [kstavreva@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:kstavreva@cornellcollege.edu)  
**Printshop Hours (VEL House):** F 3-5

**REQUIRED TEXTS & SUPPLIES**

Barsam and Monahan, [*Looking at Movies*](http://books.wwnorton.com/books/webad-detail-editions.aspx?id=4294998663) (6th edition) ebook, loose leaf, or paperback + InQuisitive and interactives (packaged with textbook). Digital landing page at <https://digital.wwnorton.com/movies6>.

Film Notebook

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

In this course, you will be introduced to the discipline of Film Studies as part of the larger and rapidly globalizing field of English Studies. Specifically, you will

* screen and discuss a variety of films: narrative and documentary, as well as to films from a range of historical eras and cultural and national traditions;
* learn the skills of close analysis of cinematic “texts,” canonical or not;
* learn and use basic Film Studies concepts and terminology;
* be introduced to multiple approaches to Film Studies, including narrative theory, film history, film as cultural practice, film as art, etc.;
* practice critical writing in the field of Film Studies;
* learn basic video editing skills.

Class activities will include film screenings (labs), discussion, mini-lectures, in-class writing, and group projects.

*The course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, inquiry, communication (oral, written, visual), and inter-cultural literacy.*

**FORMAT, ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION**

**Film labs.** Most films are meant for uninterrupted public screening. To get as close to the full experience as the classroom setting allows, you are required to attend the scheduled screenings marked on the syllabus. During the screening, take focused notes in your film notebook (the glare from screens can be distracting) and be respectful of your peers’ attention.

Consider how to get the most out of the film lab. Would it be helpful to do the textbook reading before screening the film, then reinforce your grasp of Film Studies concepts through the digital resources of the textbook (InQuizitive, Interactives, video tutorials), or else, looking at the video tutorials and checking the questions on InQuizitive before the screening, and studying the textbook assignment in depth after? You may choose to review films later, especially if you have a formal paper on them, but make sure that borrowing the film from the class reserve shelf does not conflict with a scheduled screening.

**Class discussion** is the backbone of this course. Read all assigned material carefully, think about it, take notes, jot down questions and ideas you want to bring to the attention of the class. To earn full credit for participation, you must complete all in-class involvement opportunities:

* offer definitions and illustrations of film concepts;
* share in-class writing;
* raise pertinent and well-informed questions;
* engage thoughtfully and productively with discussion questions and contributions made by the professor, presenters, or other class members;
* complete unannounced quizzes, should the need arise.

Because the screen-facing seating in our classroom may interfere with sight-lines, please raise a hand before speaking, so I can encourage balance. I will try to summarize discussion trends and emphasize valuable insights, but may not be able to respond to every student comment. In the interest of collaborative discussion, practice attentive listening: this means listening to what each class member is saying, and what they may *not* be saying. Make an effort to engage with and build on the contributions of your peers. Be clear and respectful, and refrain from speech-making. If you have not contributed in a relevant manner to the daily class discussion, your contribution would be to summarize discussion trends in the last ten minutes of class time.

**A film notebook with six entries** on films we will screen, as marked on the schedule. Please follow the following format. In a physical notebook, 1) create a header with the film title, director, year of release, and date and time of your screening. Skip a line and enter your descriptive notes taken during the actual film screening. The notes can focus on any scene(s) that grabbed your attention, but you should make an effort to take notes on one or two of the key concepts listed on the syllabus for the day. Of course, if anything else grabs your attention, jot down a note. 2) After the screening, develop analytical reflections on the film responding to the prompt on Moodle. What did you find most striking/engaging about the film? What do you make of the patterns/cinematic language elements that you noticed? How did the textbook reading assignment for the day help you analyze the film better? What questions about film concepts did the film raise for you? Each entry must be completed on the day it is assigned and should be around 500-600 words. Do not rehash class discussion; keep your reader interested in your ideas.

I will respond to your notebooks at the end of week one to give you a sense of how you are doing, before grading the entire assignment. Note, too that I will also spot check on them, so make sure to bring them to class and feel free to bring up insights from them in discussion. Your final grade on this assignment will be based on the accuracy and thoroughness of your note-taking, and the thoughtfulness and effort to integrate concepts and terminology from the readings in the reflection. Notebooks with four or fewer *complete* entries will get a failing grade.

**Two formal papers** analyzing the effects of a set of assigned elements of cinematic language in a single film. These are analytical papers, each with a clear aim and precise and effective use of film terminology. Neither paper requires outside sources; both may build on Film Notebook entries. 1) **Narrative Choices** (4+ pages/1.200-1.400 words) is an analysis of the function of a scene from *Pan’s Labyrinth* or *Citizen Kane* that is key to the film’s overall plot; the narrative perspective(s) in the scene, its diegetic or non-diegetic elements, and its treatment of time. 2) **Anatomy of a Scene** (5+ pages/1.500-1.700 words) will analyze mise-en-scène, cinematographic choices, editing, and sound patterns in either *The Artist* or *The Thin Blue Line*. This paper will establish the significance of the scene, develop a close analysis of its cinematic language, explain whether the formal choices have been echoed elsewhere in the film (whether they are part of a larger pattern, or deviate from it), and explain the effects of the formal choices made.

More detailed instructions for the formal papers are available on the course Moodle site.

**Two scheduled tests,** to include multiple-choice quizzes on Film Studies concepts and terminology, and a short, targeted scene or shot analysis, identifying a cinematic concept in the scene/shot and explaining its effect. Do the readings, use InQuisitive and the video tutorials on the Norton site of *Looking at Movies* to reinforce your grasp of the concepts, ask questions on confusing concepts, and you will do fine. There may be additional unannounced quizzes.

**A group film trailer project with individual reflection and analytical write-up.** In small groups, you will screen and then create a trailer advertising to college audiences one of a set of gems of global cinema that I will assign. All films are on Kanopy, and accessible through Cole Library. Each of you will follow up with a reflection and an analysis of *another* group’s trailer, using relevant methods and terminology. Timeline and detailed instructions on Moodle.

Individual assignments will be weighed as follows:

Class participation 10%

Film notebook 20%

Paper 1: Narrative 15%

Paper 2: Anatomy of a Scene 15%

Test 1 (20 questions + applied concept/s 10%

Test 2 (20 questions + applied concept/s 10%

Film trailer 20%

**POLICIES**

**Attendance**: Class attendance is assumed; you are individually responsible to cover missed topics and exercises; excessive tardiness or missing more than two class sessions (film labs count as class sessions) will lower your final grade by two increments for each additional absence (e.g., from B+ to B-).

I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If you have a sports or other co-curricular activity that could interfere with class attendance, or plan to observe a religious holiday, please notify me in writing by first Tuesday, or at least a week prior to the event. Consult the syllabus and check with your classmates on what you may have missed. If you need help with the material, arrange to meet with me as soon as possible before or after the missed session.

**E-mail communication**: Students must check their Cornell e-mail at least once daily and respond promptly to all course-related communication. Failing to respond to course-relevant e-mail communication within 24 hours will be treated as tardiness to class. Please indicate the course title (or number) in the subject heading of your e-mail.

**Paper format and submission:** Papers or other assignments turned in late get a grade of F. If you need an extension for health or other sound reasons, please let me know at least 24 hours in advance. All papers must be submitted electronically through the class Moodle website and as a printed copy in class. Acceptable file formats are MS Word or pdf.

**Plagiarism** (also known as intellectual theft) and cheating will not be tolerated.  The official College policy stipulates:

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College’s requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty.

The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in the 2018-19 Catalogue.

For the purposes of this class (and most English classes), use MLA style to document other people’s ideas. A useful summary of MLA and other documentation styles is available on the site of the Purdue Online Writing Lab, <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html>. I have compiled examples on incorporating and documenting film citations in the “Checklist for Formal Written Assignments on Theatre and Film” on the class Moodle site. If you’re ever in doubt about how to credit a source, don’t hesitate to ask me.

**Cell phones, laptops, food:** Turn off your cell phone and put it away before class. You may bring your laptop to class, but unless I ask a specific student to look up information, or unless you have a documented disability that necessitates its use, your laptop should remain closed during class. Taking notes with pen and paper keeps you focused; transcribing them is an excellent review strategy. You may bring a drink to class, but not food.This policy, which applies to both the labs and the discussion classes, is meant to secure your undivided attention and thoughtful contributions to the class.

**Help**: Please talk to me if you’re struggling with a reading or are concerned about an assignment. I'm happy to meet with my students outside of class, and besides, there's always tea in my office. Please note that on Fridays, I hold office hours in the atmospheric print shop in the basement of the VanEtten-Lacey House; (Free-Write Fridays take place upstairs at the same time). I’m as happy to talk about film there as to show you some of the tricks of letterpress printing. If you need to reach me urgently in the evening or on weekends, you may text me at 319 930 1687. Do not expect a response between 9 PM and 9 AM.

**Accessibility and help**: If you have a documented disability that requires accommodation, please come see me during the first two days of classes.

Students who need accommodations for learning disabilities must provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. For more information see the section on “Disability Services and Resources” on the Cornell web site (<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>). Students requesting services may schedule a meeting with the disabilities services coordinator as early as possible to discuss their needs and develop an individualized accommodation plan. Ideally, this meeting would take place well before the start of classes.  
  
For help with writing, I highly recommend the services of the Writing Studio in the library (<https://www.cornellcollege.edu/library/ctl/writing-studio/index.shtml>).

**SCHEDULE**

This schedule is not written in stone. Needed changes will be announced in class. *LM*=*Looking at Movies*. You can always check your grasp of Film Studies concepts by doing the chapter quizzes on InQuizitive; this would be excellent preparation for the scheduled quizzes.

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|  | **Morning Film Lab** | **Reading and Writing Assignments for the Day** | | |
| **1st Mon**  **3/18** | Introductions and in-class screening of *Safety Last* (70 min). | For PM class, read from *LM* chapter 1: “Ways of Looking at Movies,” pp. 7-15. **Concepts**: cinematic invisibility and visibility, manipulation of narrative and POV on character (cutting on action, fade-out/fade-in, camera angle), cultural invisibility, cultural analysis (implicit and explicit meaning), viewer expectations.  Class discussion of key concepts as embodied in *Safety Last*.  **Homework:** Film Notebook entry #1 on *Safety Last* (prompt on Moodle).Bring your Film notebook to class; we’ll start writing in the afternoon. | | |
| **1st Tue**  **3/19** | *Pan’s Labyrinth* (118 min). | Before the film screening, be sure to read the sections in *LM* on “Formal Analysis” and “Alternative Approaches to Analysis” in chapter 1, pp. 15-23, to prepare for note-taking on a film sequence.  For PM class, read from *LM* chapter 2: “Form and Expectations,” “Patterns,” “Fundamentals of Film Form,” pp. 35-49. **Concepts**: expectations and MacGuffins, patterns and their reversal; light and lighting; frame and camera mediation of space; shot/reverse-shot; parallel editing, crosscutting; manipulations of time.  In class screening of “Formal Analysis: *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*” (*LM* Norton Videos), then analysis of recurrent patterns and the formal language of selected scenes from *Pan’s Labyrinth.*  Introduce paper 1.  **Homework**: Film Notebook Entry #2 on *Pan’s Labyrinth* (prompt on Moodle). | | |
| **1st Wed**  **3/20** | none | For PM class, read 1) from *LM* chapter 2: “Realism, Antirealism, and Formalism,” and “Cinematic Language,” pp. 49-57; 2) from *LM* chapter 4, “What is Narrative” and “The Screenwriter,” pp. 116-29.  **Concepts**: cinematic realism, anti-realism, formalism, verisimilitude; narrative, narration, narrator; character, protagonist, anti-hero, antagonist; elements of narrative structure.  Discussion of *Pan’s Labyrinth* with a focus on fantasy and realism; narrative structure and narrative desire.  **Homework**: Film Notebook Alternative Entry #2 on *Pan’s Labyrinth* (prompt on Moodle). | | |
| **1st Thur**  **3/21** | *Citizen Kane* (120 min). **Turn in your film notebook.** | For PM class, read from *LM* chapter 2, “Elements of Narrative,” pp. 129-43.  **Concepts**: story and plot; diegetic and non-diegetic elements of plot; plot, story, and screen duration and their relationship; suspense and surprise; repetition; setting; scope.  In-class introduction of “Narrative Choices” assignment.  No homework. Use InQuizitive to prepare for tomorrow’s test. | | |
| **1st Fri**  **3/22** | *The Battle over* Citizen Kane (113 min). | Skim *the entire* chapter 11, “How the Movies Are Made,” and pay close attention to “How a Movie Is Made,” pp. 417-20; read the essay on “Exhibiting *Citizen Kane* (1941)” (Moodle). **Test #1 on concepts from week 1 (multiple choice and brief applied discussion of a scene).** | | |
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| **2nd Mon**  **3/25** | *Moonlight* (115 min).  [No class lab; screen on your own through Kanopy.] | **“Narrative Choices” paper (#1) due in class.**  For PM class, read from *LM*, chapter 5, “What is Mise-en-Scène,” Design,” “Lighting,” pp. 154-71.  **Concepts**: setting (location or set), décor, properties; costume, makeup (motion capture as digital makeup), hairstyle; lighting: key-, fill-, backlight; high-key and low-key lighting; back-, frontal, and top lighting; three-point lighting.  **Homework**: Film Notebook Entry #3 on *Moonlight* (prompt on Moodle). | | |
| **2nd Tue**  **3/26** | *Legend of the Black Scorpion* (131 min) | For PM class, read from *LM*, chapter 5, “Composition,” “Kinesis,” “Approaches to Mise-en- Scène,” pp. 171-81.  **Concepts**: composition of the shot, rule of thirds (2-D and 3-D), compositional stress, negative space and deep space in the composition of the shot; figure and camera movement.  **Homework**: Film Notebook Alternative Entry #3 on *Legend of the Black Scorpion* (prompt on Moodle). | | |
| **2nd Wed**  **3/27** | Screen on your own the video tutorials for chapter 6 on the Norton Digital Resources site, <https://digital.wwnorton.com/movies6>. | For PM class, read *LM* chapter 6, “Cinematography,” pp. 188-234, focusing on “Lenses,” “Implied Proximity to the Camera,” “Depth,” “Camera Angle and Height,” “Framing and Point of View,” Speed and Length of the Shot” and “Special Effects.”  **Concepts**: planned shot, take, setup; depth of field and rack focus; shot types according to camera proximity; deep-focus and soft-focus cinematography; camera angles and movement; single-character, group-, omniscient point of view, separation sequences; mobile framing; mechanical vs. visual/optical special effects.  In-class introduction of “Anatomy of a Scene” assignment.  **Homework**: Film Notebook Entry #4 on *Moonlight* (prompt on Moodle). | | |
| **2nd Thur**  **3/28** | *The Artist* (100 min). | For PM class, read chapter 8 “Editing,” pp. 282-300 (up to the section “Major Approaches to Editing: Continuity and Discontinuity”); screen the videos on your own LaunchPad: “An Editing Tutorial in *A Man with a Movie Camera*” and “Patterns of Editing in *Bonnie and Clyde*.”  **Concepts**: the cut, coverage; functions of editing: 1) organization of fragmented action and events (master scene technique, parallel editing/cross-cutting vs. intercutting, split screen); 2) meaning through juxtaposition/montage editing (vs. montage technique), 3) spatial relationship of shots and 4) temporal relationship of shots (ellipsis, overlapping action, freeze frame), shot pace and rhythm.  **Homework**: 1) For the Friday morning workshop, read the sections from *The Film Experience*, chapter 1, on the film trailer (on Moodle) and John Long, *9 (Short) Storytelling Tips From A Master Of Movie Trailers*, at <http://www.fastcocreate.com/3031012/9-short-storytelling-tips-from-a-master-of-movie-trailers>.2) Film Notebook entry #5 on *The Artist*(read the prompt on Moodle before screening the film to take useful notes). 3) Sign up for WeVideo. | | |
| **2nd Fri, 3/29. Class meets 9 to 11.**  In-class introduction of the Film Trailer Group Project.  The Film Trailer: goals, storyboards, rules, and misrules: a workshop with Laura Farmer and Matt Zhorne. Sign up for film for your trailer project and for Monday morning video editing workshop time.  **Turn in your film notebook.**  **Weekend: 1)** Determine if you want to **screen the movie for your trailer project** on your own on Kanopy, or with your team members. After the screening, **meet with the** **team to** **develop a storyboard**. | | | | |
| **3rd Mon**  **4/1** | Video editing workshop in Academic Technology studio. **Bring a trailer storyboard.**   * group A: 9:00-10:00 * group B: 10:05-11:05 * [group C: 11:10-12:10]   On your own, screen the video tutorials on 1) “The Evolution of Editing: Continuity and Classical Cutting” and 2) “The Evolution of Editing: Montage” on the Norton Digital Resources site, <https://digital.wwnorton.com/movies6>. | | **12:30-3:00 p.m.**: In-class screening of *Battleship Potemkin* (70 min) and discussion of continuity vs. discontinuity editing. In preparation, read *LM*, from chapter 6, section on “Major Approaches to Editing,” pp. 300-12; from chapter 10, section on “1924-1930: The Soviet Montage Movement,” pp. 373-76. |
| **3rd Tue**  **4/2** | Work on your trailer: Cole 126 (Academic Media Studio) has been reserved for our class this morning and help will be at hand (Matt, Amy, and/or peer consultants). | | **Test #2** on mise-en-scène, cinematography and editing concepts (multiple choice and application of concepts in scene discussion).  Introduce Paper 2: Anatomy of a Scene. | |
| **3rd Wed**  **4/3** | *Cleo from 5 to 7* (90 min). [No class lab; screen on your own through Kanopy.] | | For PM class, read 1) *LM*, chapter 9 “Sound,” focusing on the sections on “What Is Sound” (pp. 320-21), “Sources of Film Sound” and “Functions of Film Sound” (pp. 326-50); 2) Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (on Moodle); 3) *LM*, from chapter 10, “1959-1964: French New Wave, pp. 382-85.  **Concepts**: types of cinematic sound (diegetic and nondiegetic; on-screen and off-screen; simultaneous, nonsimultaneous, asynchronous; internal and external; vocal, environmental, music, and silence); sound montage and sound bridge; cinematic desire and the male gaze; auteur, pastiche/intertextuality.  **Homework**: Film Notebook entry #6 on Cleo from 5 to 7 (prompt on Moodle). | |
| **3rd Thur**  **4/4** | **Turn in your Film Notebook by 10 AM (South Hall 200).** | | Work time for trailer production and paper. | |
| **3rd Fri**  **4/5** |  | | **Workshop of finished rough drafts of trailers** (upload as instructed). **Paper #2 due by noon on Saturday**. | |

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| **4th Mon**  **4/8** | Work time to finalize trailers. | **Class meets at 12:30**. Read section on “Documentary Movies” from *LM*, chapter 3, pp. 69-74. Screening and discussion of Deeyah Khan, *White Right: Meeting the Enemy* (56 min). |
| **4th Tue**  **4/9** |  | Film intros and trailer screenings. **Upload your videos to Cole Library’s YouTube channel and submit your individual reflections (Moodle)**. |
| **4th Wed**  **4/10** |  | **Trailer analysis due by 2 p.m. (Moodle).** |