

ENGL 245—INTRODUCTION TO CINEMA STUDIES

Spring 2020

Section 1

Tues/Thurs: 6:00-7:15 pm

Combs Hall 139

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WEBSITE (for blog posts, readings, and assignments)

www.literatureoftheamericas.com

OFFICE HOURS (Combs Hall 324)

Tues/Thurs: 2:15-3:30 pm

4:45-6:00 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designated “general education” (GE). It provides students with the basic tools for a critical understanding of the cinema and of the industry that produces it. We emphasize the Hollywood tradition while examining filmmaking in relation to narrative techniques and the business demands of production, distribution, and exhibition. Next, we explore the conventions of film genres (and pursue the study of one genre in particular). We continue by studying the role of individual artistry (“auteurship”) through the work of one filmmaker. We conclude with a unit on adaptation, where we trace the intersections of literature and audiovisual film techniques. Selections of readings and viewings vary from year to year.

COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

To encourage active viewership by introducing students to the fundamentals of filmmaking, including business aspects (production, distribution, and exhibition) and aesthetic endeavors (including mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound).

To analyze at least one major film genre through a combination of secondary readings and film examples. We will pay careful attention to the historical and cultural development of the genre’s conventions and to the concept of genre itself.

To introduce the role of individual artistry within the multimillion-dollar film industry through a combination of secondary readings and primary examples that focus on at least one major filmmaker.

To introduce students to cinema adaptation through the in-depth study of at least one literary text and one or more corresponding cinematic texts. We take a medium specific approach that underscores the fundamental differences between audiovisual film language and literature.

REQUIRED TEXTS (Available at the University Bookstore)

Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction* (McGraw-Hill, 12th edition)

Levin, Ira. *The Stepford Wives* (any complete edition)

FILM SCREENINGS (Held at 6:00 pm in Simpson Library 225)(Thereafter available under “Reserve: Barrenechea” in Simpson Library)****

Wed. 2/12 – Frank Capra, *It Happened One Night* (105 mins.)

Mon. 2/17 – Woody Allen, *Annie Hall* (93 mins.)

Wed. 2/19 – Garry Marshall, *Pretty Woman* (119 mins.)

Wed. 2/26 – David Lynch, *Blue Velvet* (120 mins.)

Mon. 3/9 – David Lynch, *Lost Highway* (134 mins.)

Wed. 3/11 – David Lynch, *Mulholland Drive* (146 mins.)

Mon. 4/20 – Bryan Forbes, *The Stepford Wives* (115 mins.)

Wed. 4/22 – Frank Oz, *The Stepford Wives* (93 mins.)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course has a constant and sometimes demanding workload. Active participation during class discussion is essential to doing well. At a minimum, I expect you to:

- 1) have excellent attendance
- 2) arrive and leave on time
- 3) do the assigned readings/viewings carefully before class
- 4) turn in your work on time
- 5) bring the necessary materials and texts to class
- 6) listen respectfully to me and to your classmates (no cell phone use in class)
- 7) contribute to class discussion and activities on a regular basis.

It is your own responsibility to find out what you miss when you are not in class. *I suggest that you exchange email information with at least one other classmate in order to ensure that you are always prepared. Do not email me asking what you missed.* Note that you will receive an *unsatisfactory* mark on your mid-semester report if you fail to comply with these requirements and/or have a working course grade lower than a C. **I will accept no late submissions of any kind from you without a medical note.**

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

I want students to learn and to earn the grades that they deserve, so please make an appointment with me should you have undue difficulty with the course. Written assignments include:

- 1) three blog posts
- 2) one midterm exam consisting of a 5-page shot-by-shot breakdown and analysis of a scene
- 3) three screening reports.
- 4) one final exam consisting of two essays

Oral assignments include:

- 1) one 20-minute group presentation of a shot-by-shot cinematic rendering of a literary passage.

*You will receive instructions for completing these assignments at least a week before they are due.

Below is the course grade distribution:

- 1) Attendance, Participation, and Blog Posts: 10%
- 2) Screening Reports: 30%
- 3) Group Presentation: 20%
- 4) Midterm: 20%
- 5) Final Exam: 20%

GRADING CRITERIA

I have designed the following criteria guidelines to help you grasp how I conduct a large part of the grading. I divide formal written assignments in the following ways:

***Papers: Content and Analysis (70%)**

--An average paper (C) demonstrates a superficial understanding of the topic; it is usually based almost exclusively on class notes. It generally relies too much on summary rather than explicit analysis of textual points, and uses quotations ineffectively.

--A better paper (B) incorporates readings that have been assigned in other contexts (including in-class assignments), analyzes literary and film devices as they are employed in a text, and uses specific quotations from texts in order to illustrate the grounding of its analysis.

--A superior paper (A) demonstrates all the qualities of a “B” paper, and includes a more sophisticated understanding of the chosen topic. That is, an “A” paper uses the tools of textual analysis, apt use of quotation, concise and explicit remarks justifying that analysis, while drawing on all the available resources of the course.

***Papers: Form, Style, Mechanics and Usage (30%)**

--An average paper (C) demonstrates a reasonable control of basic English syntax, verb and subject (including pronoun) agreement, tense consistency, proofreading, paragraph organization, etc.

--A better paper (B) demonstrates an ability to vary sentence structure, has few if any proofreading errors, employs careful transitions and organization in a more sophisticated way, and controls grammar.

--A superior paper (A) demonstrates all the qualities of a “B” paper, and in addition demonstrates an ability to control complex sentence structure, vary verbs effectively, and contains no proofreading errors.

***Blog Posts:**

I will grade these as part of your overall “participation” grade. I require that you: 1) post by the deadline, 2) respond to the opening post with ample evidence that you have completed the reading/viewing for the unit, and, 3) post a response only after careful reflection, and using correct grammar and punctuation.

***Screening Reports:**

I will grade each of these: 10-9 (outstanding), 8-7 (very good), 6-5 (satisfactory), 4-3 (has weaknesses), 2-1 (requires improvement), or 0 (insufficient/not completed). At the end of the term, I will total these numbers for your overall screening-response grade (out of a total of 30 points: 30% of your course grade).

***Group Presentation:**

I will assign your group a letter grade based upon how well you apply the critical terminology of cinema grammar to the literary passage, and on the overall care of your visual diagram. I will also grade you on how well you collaborate with your classmates to create a coherent vision. You must keep to the allotted 20-minute timeframe, which is designed to ensure that everyone gets an equal opportunity to present.

HONOR CODE

You must pledge all of your work, as the honor pledge obtains for all work submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for this course. I will refer all violations, without exception, to the Honor Council.

Engl 245—Introduction to Cinema Studies

Spring 2020

Section 1

Week #1

1/14 Tues

1/16 Thurs

CINEMA GRAMMAR

Introduction to the course

Industry: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 1]

Week #2

1/21 Tues
1/23 Thurs

Form: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 2-3]
Mise-en-Scene: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 4]

Week #3

1/28 Tues
1/30 Thurs

Cinematography: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 5]
Editing: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 6]

Week #4

2/4 Tues
2/6 Thurs

Sound: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 7]
***Midterm Due in Class**

Week #5

2/11 Tues

2/13 Thurs

GENRE: Romantic Comedy
Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres* [excerpt]:
<http://www.literatureoftheamericas.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Thomas-Schatz-Hollywood-Genres1.pdf>
Frank Capra, *It Happened One Night* (1934)
***50-Word Blog Post Due by 12:00 pm (#1)**

Week #6

2/18 Tues
2/20 Thurs

Woody Allen, *Annie Hall* (1977)
Garry Marshall, *Pretty Woman* (1990)
***Screening Report Due in Class (#1)**

Week #7

2/25 Tues

2/27 Thurs

AUTEURSHIP: David Lynch
Andrew Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962":
<http://www.literatureoftheamericas.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Notes-on-the-Auteur-Theory-in-1962.pdf>
David Lynch, *Blue Velvet* (1986)
***50-Word Blog Post Due by 12:00 pm (#2)**

Week #8

3/3 Tues
3/5 Thurs

Spring Break
Spring Break

Week #9

3/10 Tues
3/12 Thurs

David Lynch, *Lost Highway* (1997)
David Lynch, *Mulholland Drive* (2001)
***Screening Report Due in Class (#2)**

Week #10

3/17 Tues

3/19 Thurs

ADAPTATION: The Stepford Wives
Brian McFarlane, *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* [excerpt]:
<http://www.literatureoftheamericas.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Brian-McFarlane-Novel-to-Film.pdf>
Instructor Away at a Professional Conference (no class)
***50-Word Blog Post Due by 12:00 pm (#3)**

Week #11

3/24 Tues
3/26 Thurs

Ira Levin, *The Stepford Wives* (1972) (Part I)
***Class meets at 5:00 pm for Gayle Wald Lecture**

Week #12

3/31 Tues
4/2 Thurs

Ira Levin, *The Stepford Wives* (1972) (Part II)
Ira Levin, *The Stepford Wives* (1972) (Part III)

Week #13

4/7 Tues
4/9 Thurs

**Group Presentations*
**Group Presentations*

Week #14

4/14 Tues
4/16 Thurs

**Group Presentations*
**Group Presentations*

Week #15

4/21 Tues
4/23 Thurs

Bryan Forbes, *The Stepford Wives* (1975)
Frank Oz, *The Stepford Wives* (2004)
**Screening Report Due in Class (#3)*

Week #16

**Final Exam Due via Email*

APPENDIX:

Accessibility Statement

“The Office of Disability Resources has been designated by the college as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through the Office of Disability Resources and require accommodations for this class, make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs. Bring your accommodation letter, along with a copy of our class syllabus with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you have not made contact with the Office of Disability Resources and have reasonable accommodation needs, (note taking assistance, extended time for tests, etc.), I will be happy to refer you. The office will require appropriate documentation of disability.”

Title IX Statement

University of Mary Washington faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the University’s Policy on Sexual and Gender Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence. Under Title IX and this Policy, discrimination based upon sex or gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex or gender based discrimination, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to me, understand that as a “Responsible Employee” of the University, I MUST report to UMW’s Title IX Coordinator what you share. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, please contact the below confidential resources. They can connect you with support services and help you explore your options. You may also seek assistance from UMW’s Title IX Coordinator. Please visit <http://diversity.umw.edu/title-ix/> to view UMW’s Policy on Sexual and Gender Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence and to find further information on support and resources. Resources Confidential Resources On-Campus Stefanie Lucas-Waverly, M.S. Talley Center for Counselling Services Title IX Coordinator Lee Hall 106, 540-654-1053 Office of Title IX Fairfax House Student Health Center 540-654-5656 Lee Hall 112, 540-654-1040 slucaswa@umw.edu Crystal Rawls Off-Campus Title IX Deputy for Students Empowerhouse Assistant Director of Student Activities 24-hr hotline: 540-373-9373 540-654-1801 crawls@umw.edu Rappahannock Council Against Sexual Assault (RCASA) 24-hr hotline: 540-371-1666

Recording Statement

Classroom activities in this course may be recorded by students enrolled in the course for the personal, educational use of that student or for all students presently enrolled in the class only, and may not be further copied, distributed, published or otherwise used for any other purpose without the express written consent of the course instructor. All students are advised that classroom activities may be taped by students for this purpose. Distribution or sale of class recordings is prohibited without the written permission of the instructor and other students who are recorded. Distribution without permission is a violation of copyright law. This policy is consistent with UMW’s Policy on Recording Class and Distribution of Course Materials.

