

ENGL 245—INTRODUCTION TO CINEMA STUDIES

Spring 2022

Tues/Thurs: 2:00-3:15 pm

Combs 139

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WEBSITE (for blog posts, readings, and assignments)

www.literatureoftheamericas.com

OFFICE HOURS

Tues/Thurs: 8:45-9:30 am; 10:45-11:00 am; 11 am-2:00 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 the multimillion-dollar industry that produces it. We stress the Hollywood tradition while tracing production, distribution, and exhibition within a filmmaking universe. We also explore the conventions of film genres (pursuing the study of one genre in particular). We proceed with cinema artistry through the work of one filmmaker. We conclude the course with a unit on adaptation, where we trace the intersection of literature and audiovisuals. Selections of readings, viewings, genres, and filmmakers vary each year/semester.

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 film 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 literature and audiovisual film language.

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

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, all screenings will take place at home.

***you are responsible for acquiring and viewing copies of the films ahead of class meetings.**

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) complete the assigned readings carefully before each class.
- 2) turn in all work on time.
- 3) be respectful to me and to your classmates.
- 4) contribute to class activities on a regular basis.
- 5) maintain a positive attitude as we deal with Covid-19 restrictions.

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 email me should you have undue difficulty with the course. Assignments include:

- 1) three blog posts
- 2) one 5-page midterm exam consisting of an analysis of a scene
- 3) one group adaptation project
- 3) one final exam consisting of two short essays

*I will send you instructions for completing assignments at least a week before they are due.

Below is the course grade distribution:

- 1) Group Project: 20%
- 2) Midterm: 25%
- 3) Final Exam: 25%
- 4) Blog Posts: 30%

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 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, using correct grammar and punctuation, and 4) keep to the word length.

***Group Project:**

I will assign your group a letter grade based upon how well you apply the grammatical terminology of cinema 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.

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 to the Honor Council.

Engl 245—Introduction to Cinema Studies
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Week #1

1/11 Tues
1/13 Thurs

CINEMA GRAMMAR

Introduction to the course
Industry: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 1]

Week #2

1/18 Tues
1/20 Thurs

Mise-en-Scene: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 4]
Cinematography: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 5]

Week #3

1/25 Tues
1/27 Thurs

Editing: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 6]
Sound: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 7]

Week #4

2/1 Tues
2/3 Thurs

***Midterm Due** [online]
Midterm Feedback [online]

Week #5

2/8 Tues

2/10 Thurs

GENRE: Romantic Comedy
Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*:
<http://www.literatureoftheamericas.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Thomas-Schatz-Hollywood-Genres1.pdf>
Frank Capra, *It Happened One Night* (1934)

Week #6

2/15 Tues
2/17 Thurs

Woody Allen, *Annie Hall* (1977)
***Blog Post #1 Due (100 words)** [online]

Week #7

2/22 Tues

2/24 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>
Eraserhead (1977)

Week #8

3/1 Tues
3/3 Thurs

Spring Break
Spring Break

Week #9

3/8 Tues
3/10 Thurs

Blue Velvet (1986)
***Blog Post #2 Due (100 words)** [online]

Week #10

3/15 Tues

3/17 Thurs

ADAPTATION: The Stepford Wives
Brian McFarlane, *Novel to Film*:
<http://www.literatureoftheamericas.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Brian-McFarlane-Novel-to-Film.pdf>
Levin, Ira, *The Stepford Wives* (1972) [Part I]

Week #11

3/22 Tues
3/24 Thurs

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

Week #12

3/29 Tues
3/31 Thurs

Student Project Drafts Consultations
Student Project Drafts Consultations

Week #13

4/5 Tues
4/7 Thurs

***Student Projects Due** [online]
Feedback on Student Projects [online]

Week #14

4/12 Tues
4/14 Thurs

Bryan Forbes, *The Stepford Wives* (1975)
Frank Oz, *The Stepford Wives* (2004)

Week #15

4/19 Tues
4/21 Thurs

**Blog Post #3 Due (100 words)* [online]
Conclusion to the Course

Week #16

4/28 Thurs

**Final Exam (due by 6pm—as per University Calendar)*

APPENDIX:

All students are expected to adhere to the policies and expectations of the University to mitigate risk and support the health and safety of the UMW community, including refraining from attending class if experiencing symptoms. A comprehensive set of the current policies and expectations can be found at the [COVID-19 information page](#). This includes the requirement that all unvaccinated employees, students and visitors are required to wear masks inside any university building and are strongly encouraged to do so when outside in group settings.

UMW policy ALSO stipulates that **all employees, students, and visitors, regardless of vaccination or booster status, must wear masks indoors in public spaces** (which includes all classrooms, laboratories, meeting spaces, foyers and hallways, and auditoriums) **until further notice**. *The use of KN-95 masks or equivalent is highly encouraged.*

Changes to this requirement will be communicated to the campus community by the COVID-19 Director and updated at the university's COVID-19 information page.

No food is permitted in classrooms and other instructional areas; drinks permitted in closed containers only and not in areas where expressly prohibited.

Failure to comply with UMW policies and expectations will result in disciplinary action consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

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.