

ENGL 245—INTRODUCTION TO CINEMA STUDIES

Spring 2023

Mon/Wed: 6:00-7:15 pm

Combs 139

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WEBSITE (for readings and assignments)

www.literatureoftheamericas.com

OFFICE HOURS

Mon/Wed: 3:30-6:00 pm (in Combs 324)

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 behind it. We focus upon the Hollywood tradition while tracing a universe of production, distribution, and exhibition practices. 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 cinema 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 artistic expression through 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 consider individual artistry within the cinema 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)

Andrews, V.C. *Flowers in the Attic* (any edition)

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

Malick, Terrence. *Badlands* (any DVD/Blu Ray)

FILM SCREENINGS

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

For digital copies, search here for pay-per-view streaming options: <https://www.justwatch.com/>

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.

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 screening reports
- 2) one 6-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) Screening Reports: 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.

***Screening Reports:**

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

***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 code 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
Spring 2023

Week #1

1/9 Mon
1/11 Wed

CINEMA GRAMMAR

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

Week #2

1/16 Mon
1/18 Wed

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (school closed)
Mise-en-Scene: Bordwell/Thompson, *Film Art* [ch. 4]

Week #3

1/23 Mon
1/25 Wed

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

Week #4

1/30 Mon
2/1 Wed

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

Week #5

2/6 Mon

2/8 Wed

GENRE: Superhero

Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*:
<http://www.literatureoftheamericas.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Thomas-Schatz-Hollywood-Genres1.pdf>
Richard Donner, *Superman: The Movie* (1978)

Week #6

2/13 Mon
2/15 Wed

Christopher Nolan, *The Dark Knight* (2008)
Patty Jenkins, *Wonder Woman* 1984 (2020)

Week #7		AUTEURSHIP: Terrence Malick
2/20	Mon	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
2/22	Wed	*Screening Report #1 Due in Class Terrence Malick, <i>Badlands</i> (1973)
Week #8		
2/27	Mon	Spring Break
3/1	Wed	Spring Break
Week #9		
3/6	Mon	Terrence Malick, <i>The New World</i> (2005)
3/8	Wed	Terrence Malick, <i>The Tree of Life</i> (2011) *Screening Report #2 Due in Class
Week #10		ADAPTATION: Flowers in the Attic
3/13	Mon	Brian McFarlane, <i>Novel to Film</i> : http://www.literatureoftheamericas.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Brian-McFarlane-Novel-to-Film.pdf
3/15	Wed	Andrews, V.C., <i>Flowers in the Attic</i> (1979) [Prologue-The Attic]
Week #11		
3/20	Mon	Andrews, V.C., <i>Flowers in the Attic</i> (1979) [Wrath of God-Holidays]
3/22	Wed	Andrews, V.C., <i>Flowers in the Attic</i> (1979) [The Christmas Party-Growing Up, Growing Wiser]
Week #12		
3/27	Mon	Andrews, V.C., <i>Flowers in the Attic</i> (1979) [A Taste of Heaven-My Stepfather]
3/29	Wed	Andrews, V.C., <i>Flowers in the Attic</i> (1979) [Color All Days Blue, But Save One for <i>Black</i> -Epilogue]
Week #13		
4/3	Mon	*Student Presentations
4/5	Wed	*Student Presentations
Week #14		
4/10	Tues	*Student Presentations
4/12	Thurs	Presentation Feedback (online)
Week #15		
4/17	Tues	Jeffrey Bloom, <i>Flowers in the Attic</i> (1987)
4/19	Thurs	Deborah Chow, <i>Flowers in the Attic</i> (2014) *Screening Report #3 Due in Class
Week #16		*Final Exam Due through Email (as per University Calendar)

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.