

**ENGL 245—INTRODUCTION TO CINEMA STUDIES**

**Spring 2021**

**Sections 1-3**

**Online (asynchronous—**

**Arranged as a Tues/Thurs schedule)**

**\*THIS COURSE DOES NOT MEET ON ZOOM.**

Dr. Antonio Barrenechea

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**WEBSITE** (for blog posts, readings, and assignments)

[www.literatureoftheamericas.com](http://www.literatureoftheamericas.com)

**OFFICE HOURS**

Anytime, by email

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designated “general education” (GE). It provides students with the basic tools for a critical understanding of the cinema industry. We emphasize the Hollywood tradition while examining filmmaking and the business demands of production, distribution, and exhibition. Next, we explore the conventions of film genres (pursuing the study of one genre in particular). We continue by studying the role of individual artistry through the work of one filmmaker. We conclude with a unit on adaptation, where we trace the intersections of literature and audiovisual techniques. Selections of readings, viewings, genres, and filmmakers 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 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, any 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) do 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) have 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 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, and using correct grammar and punctuation, and 4) keep to the word length.

**\*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.

**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**

Spring 2021--Sections 1-3

**Week #1**

**CINEMA GRAMMAR**

1/26 Tues

Introduction to the course [email]

1/28 Thurs

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

**Week #2**

2/2 Tues

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

2/4 Thurs

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

**Week #3**

2/9 Tues

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

2/11 Thurs

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

**Week #4**

- 2/16 Tues Cinema Grammar Review [student questions on blog]  
2/18 Thurs **\*Midterm Due by 12:00 pm**

**Week #5**

**GENRE: Romantic Comedy**

- 2/23 Tues Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres* [excerpt]:  
<http://www.literatureoftheamericas.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Thomas-Schatz-Hollywood-Genres1.pdf>  
[email]  
2/25 Thurs Frank Capra, *It Happened One Night* (1934) [email]

**Week #6**

- 3/2 Tues Woody Allen, *Annie Hall* (1977) [email]  
3/4 Thurs **\*Blog Post #1 Due (100 words) by 12:00 pm**

**Week #7**

**AUTEURSHIP: David Lynch**

- 3/9 Tues 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>  
[email]  
3/11 Thurs David Lynch, *Eraserhead* (1977) [email]

**Week #8**

- 3/16 Tues Spring Break  
3/18 Thurs David Lynch, *Blue Velvet* (1986) [email]

**Week #9**

- 3/23 Tues David Lynch, *Mulholland Drive* (2001) [email]  
3/25 Thurs **\*Blog Post #2 Due (100 words) by 12:00 pm**

**Week #10****ADAPTATION: The Stepford Wives**

3/30 Tues

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>  
[email]

4/1 Thurs

Ira Levin, *The Stepford Wives* (1972) (Part I) [group work]

**Week #11**

4/6 Tues

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

4/8 Thurs

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

**Week #12**

4/13 Tues

*\*Student Projects due by 12:00 pm*

4/15 Thurs

*\*Student Projects due by 12:00 pm*

**Week #13**

4/20 Tues

*\*Student Projects due by 12:00 pm*

4/22 Thurs

*\*Student Projects due by 12:00 pm*

**Week #14**

4/27 Tues

Feedback on Student Projects

4/29 Thurs

*\*Blog Post #3 Due (100 words) due by 12:00 pm*

**Week #15**

*\*Final Exam Due*

**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.



