

Film Studies 270S 000 Fall 2004: Freshman Seminar: INTRODUCTION TO FILM

Lectures: Tuesday, Thursday, 2:30 - 3:45 p.m., 103 Rich Building

Screenings: Thursdays, 6-8 p.m., 205 White Hall

Instructor:

Prof. Matthew Bernstein
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Office Hours
Mondays, Thursdays, 4-5:30
& by appointment

Textbooks (available at the Emory Bookstore)

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, Film Art, 7th ed. (B/T)

David Bordwell, McGraw-Hill Viewer's Guide (VG)

Bordwell/Thompson, Film Art CD-Rom

Reserve Readings (R), online via Euclid

Website: <http://www.mhhe.com/filmart7> (access code in B/T for special content)

Content and Goals: This seminar is designed to make you familiar with the various techniques and features that comprise the art of filmmaking. At first, we will together examine various components of filmmaking, the choices filmmakers can make in telling a story in aural and visual terms. We will then consider more conceptual issues in film criticism: what constitutes film authorship, film genres, film ideology and what alternatives exist to Hollywood narrative fiction filmmaking.

We have three aims in this course. One is that students should become aware of film's visual and aural techniques as well as its capacity to tell stories. Two is that, in addition to being more observant, students be able to develop skills in analyzing films, understanding in particular the consequences of particular artistic choices for a film's meaning. Our final goal is to explore with you a range of great movies from film history (as opposed to more recent films that you find more accessible). Our films will come from major directors like Orson Welles, Jean Renoir, Akira Kurosawa and Alfred Hitchcock, as well as highly regarded directors like John Huston, Mike Nichols, Jonathan Demme and Roman Polanski. Some of these films will be in black and white. Some of them will have subtitles. Some have both. All of them are worthwhile.

Format: I will present new material every Thursday, we will screen a film Thursday night and discuss the film and the readings on Tuesday. You should do each week's reading for Tuesday's class, in which we will discuss the film and the reading. After the third week of the semester, I will ask two of you to lead weekly discussions.

General Requirements: Attendance: You are expected to **attend all classes and screenings**. Our classes will sometimes include a great many clips and slides not available elsewhere. If you miss two classes or less all semester, I will award you extra credit in my calculation of your class grade. For **screenings**, viewing a film on a large screen allows you to notice details which your television set obscures. It also creates class community by viewing films together. **If you must miss a screening, it is your responsibility to locate a copy of the film, watch it, write a Learnlink journal entry on it, and be prepared to discuss it—all by the start of Tuesday's class. (In fact, if you cannot attend the screenings, you should drop the course.)**

Class Decorum:

You should arrive on time for all lectures and screenings; we will always begin on time. **Do not come late to class OR screenings—it is rude and distracting to others and annoying to us. Also, do not eat your lunch during class meetings or dinner at screenings for the same reason. TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONES AT SCREENINGS.** The screenings are a time for serious viewing, not only for your entertainment; you should be taking copious notes on pertinent features of each film to prepare for discussion and exams (I recommend a **penlight or small flashlight**, available at the Emory Bookstore, to help you see your writing). No pets are allowed at screenings (and guests are welcome only if they do not disrupt the group). Anyone talking, booing, taking cell phone calls or otherwise disrupting a screening will be asked to leave.

Writing Assignments: Every week, I will ask you to write a **1-2 page (3k – 5K) film interpretation (submitted on Learnlink)** on a given aspect of film technique or film analysis for the film screened that week. These assignments are crucial to the learning process in the course, because they compel you to use the vocabulary and analytical tools you are learning each week. I will provide comments on these weekly writings to encourage you to improve your writing. These journals should be carefully composed and organized, spell-checked and grammatically correct, and advancing an interpretation of the film and the ways in which certain techniques contribute to that meaning. They are graded on a check plus (9.5), check (8.5), check minus (7.5) basis on a 100 point scale—you must write them the first six weeks and a minimum of ten over the course of the semester.

This weekly assignment will help prepare you for the **mid-term and final exams** (giving you a body of writing that reviews film techniques and specific films) and especially prepare you for the **7 - 10 page term paper** you must write for the course. I will ask you for a rough draft on **November 4**; the revised, final paper, will be due **November 23 at the start of class.**

Grading: Your final grade will be based upon

Informed, thoughtful class participation	15%
a weekly Learnlink journal on films, readings assigned	40%
a short answer in-class exam, Thursday, October 7	10%
a seven to ten page term paper due, Tuesday, Nov. 23	25%
a final essay and short answer exam Thursday, Dec. 9 (12:30 – 3)	10%

I will also provide opportunities for extra credit--special film screenings outside of class which you can attend and critique in a short (1-2 pp.) response.

Read the following:

It is vital that every student understand that this syllabus forms an implied contract. I seek to share their knowledge and analytical skills. In return, the student is understood to be in regular attendance, both physically and mentally. The schedule of readings/screenings may change. The papers are due when they are due; the reading assignments are to be read and films viewed. There will be no incompletes given in the course, and make-up exams will be permitted only in the most serious circumstances (family emergency or illness) which must be documented to my

satisfaction. Students are to do their own work, neither cheating nor plagiarizing: **I expect every student to observe and obey the Honor Code of Emory College.**

Lecture Topics	Screening	Readings
Week 1 (Thursday, August 26) Introduction: Film Form	<u>Rear Window</u> (Hitchcock, 1954)	B/T: Ch.'s 1, 2 VG: entire
Week 2 (Sep 2) Narrative & Narration	<u>Citizen Kane</u> (Welles, 1941)	B/T: Ch. 3 CD Rom: Ch. 3
Week 3 (Sep 9) Mise-en-scene	<u>High and Low</u> (Kurosawa, 1963)	B/T: Ch. 6, 472-474 CD Rom: Ch. 6
Week 4 (Sep 16) Camerawork	<u>The Graduate</u> (Nichols, 1967)	B/T: Ch. 7 CD Rom: Ch 7
(Note: September 16 is Rosh Hashanah; class and screening will be rescheduled)		
Week 5 (Sep 23) Editing	<u>Silence of the Lambs</u> (Demme, 1991)	B/T: Ch. 8, 478-481 CD Rom: Ch. 8
Week 6 (Sep 30) Sound	<u>A Man Escaped</u> (Bresson, 1956)	B/T: Ch. 9 CD Rom: Ch. 9
Week 7 (Oct 7) Exam review	Exam	-----
***October 11-12: Fall Break! No Class on Tuesday		
Week 8 (Oct 14) Film Analysis Term papers assigned	<u>Rules of the Game</u> (Renoir, 1939)	B/T: 389-401; 414-428 R: Corrigan
Week 9 (Oct 21) Authorship	<u>Notorious</u> (Hitchcock, 1946)	R: Sarris, Wood
Week 10 (Oct 28) Film Genres/Ideology	<u>The Maltese Falcon</u> (Huston, 1941)	B/T: Ch. 4, 452-462 R: Luhr; CD Rom: Ch. 4

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**Bernstein
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Lecture Topics	Screening	Readings
Week 11 (Nov 4) Genre Evolution	<u>Chinatown</u> (Towne, 1973)	B/T: 468-471 R: John Cawelti
Week 12 (Nov 11) Art Cinema	<u>8 and 1/2</u> (Fellini, 1963)	B/T: 485-489; R: Bordwell
Week 13 (Nov 18) Avant-Garde Film ***Term paper due Tuesday, November 23	<u>Meshes of the Afternoon</u> (Deren, 1943); <u>A Movie</u> (Conner, 1965); <u>Begone Dull</u> <u>Care</u> (McLaren, 1948); <u>Scorpio Rising</u> (Anger, 1962)	B/T: 146-150, 157-162; 409-412; R: Sitney
Week 14 ((Nov 25) Film History ****Thursday November 25-Sunday November 28: Thanksgiving Recess, No class	-----	
Week 15 (Dec 2) Documentary Conclusion	<u>High School</u> (Wiseman, 1968)	B/T: 128-146 CD Rom: Ch. 5

Electronic Reserve Readings

1. Tim Corrigan, "Style and Structure in Writing," in A Short Guide to Writing About Film, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 2000), 122-142.
2. Andrew Sarris, "Alfred Hitchcock," "Jean Renoir," and "Orson Welles," from The American Cinema (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1968), 56-61, 73-74, 77-81.
- [[3. Robin Wood, "Introduction" (excerpts) from Hitchcock's Films Revisited (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 55-87.]]
4. Maurice Yacowar, "Hitchcock's Art and Imagery," in A Hitchcock Reader, Marshall Deutlebaum and Leland Poague, eds. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1986), 16-26.
5. Robin Wood, "Retrospective," in A Hitchcock Reader, Marshall Deutlebaum and Leland Poague, eds. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1986), 27-40.
6. William Luhr, "The Maltese Falcon, the Detective Genre, and Film Noir," in W. Luhr, ed. The Maltese Falcon, John Huston, Director (New Brunswick: Rutgers U Press, 1995): 3-16.
7. John Cawelti, "Chinatown and Generic Transformation in Recent American Films," in Barry Keith Grant, ed., Film Genre Reader I (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1986), 183-201.

8. David Bordwell, "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice," in L. Braudy and M. Cohen, Film Theory and Criticism, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 716-724.
9. P. Adams Sitney, "Meshes of the Afternoon," from Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-1978 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 3-19.