

Film Studies: Basics of Film and Television
Fall 2013



Dr. Brett Paice

Course Objectives

This course will teach you how to analyze film and television texts and the cultural and industrial frameworks in which they develop. You will learn about the basic elements that distinguish film and television from other aesthetic forms, including editing, cinematography, sound, *mise-en-scene*, and visual narrative. Classical Hollywood, including its industrial conditions and aesthetic impact, will represent a significant part of our study. We will also examine some of the critical methods used to analyze films in more depth, drawing on interpretive frameworks such as genre theory, auteurism, and ideological analysis.

Required Text

- Film: A Critical Introduction (Second Edition), Maria Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis, (Boston: Pearson, 2006). ISBN 0-205-43348-0.
- Supplemental theoretical readings will be provided

The list of required films is subject to revision. Credits for the films can be found at the Internet Movie Database, www.imdb.com

Participation

Twenty percent of your grade will be based on your participation and attendance at all meetings of the class, including screenings. Asking questions is one way you can participate. Participation also involves coming to class on time, taking notes, and paying close attention. Behavior that demonstrates a lack of engagement with the course—arriving late, sleeping, talking, texting, or working on other assignments—will lower your participation grade.

Screenings

The films we will watch have been chosen to illustrate creative uses of the film medium and to introduce you to different types of filmmaking. Please try to have an open mind about them. You will see “old” movies, silent movies, black-and-white movies, and foreign films with subtitles.

You are expected to watch the films carefully from beginning to end, so please arrive on time and refrain from talking during the screenings. **LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONES ARE NOT PERMITTED DURING SCREENINGS.** I recommend that you take notes on the films during and following the screenings so that you are able to remember how they use sound, the camera, editing, sets and costumes. These notes will be helpful for discussions and will assist you in preparing for tests. **You will be tested on specific elements from the films.** If you are confused about anything in the films, please bring up your questions in class. Films are created to be discussed.

Please note that some of the films and television programs may feature adult content and subjects, deal with mature or controversial themes, and contain strong language and scenes of a graphic nature. If you are a person sensitive to violent or disturbing material, strongly consider whether or not you will be prepared to engage with these films analytically.

Written Requirements

- (1) **A film journal** in which you record observations on our screenings. The journal will contain questions that you should answer about each film. These questions are meant to stimulate your thoughts, and you are free to write more. At a minimum you must have a one page entry for each required film screening.
- (2) **A scene analysis paper.** Being able to analyze specific components of a film and understand how they work together is a fundamental goal for our course. For this paper you will watch a segment from a film in your discussion section and analyze it in detail. Your paper should be 3-4 pages, typed, double-spaced in 12 point font, with standard margins.
- (3) **A final essay** of 3-4 pages on a topic from a list that I will provide. This essay will afford you the opportunity to integrate a range of ideas from the course.
- (4) **Quizzes and exams** on course readings, screenings and lectures.

Policies on Written Work

All work submitted for this class—papers, journals, exams—must be completed on your own and should reflect your own ideas and efforts. Plagiarism, copying, and other forms of cheating will result in academic failure.

Papers must be submitted on the day they are due or they will be considered late. Essays must be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font (Times New Roman or Garamond) and **submitted in hardcopy.**

Grading and Due Dates

WRITING	60%
QUIZZES AND EXAMS	20%
PARTICIPATION	20%

Golden Opportunities

Throughout the semester I encourage you to attend the film screenings at various cinemas around Louisville. You can complete a 1-2 page journal entry for the film and receive extra credit. Consult with me if you would like to pursue this opportunity.