

ENG 2300: Film Analysis: The History of (History On) Film
Section: 1807

Instructor: Jimmy Newlin
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Classroom: TUR 2334
Times: MWF 6 (12:50 – 1:40)

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Screenings: M E1-E3 (7:20-10:10)

Required texts:

Dick, Bernard F. *Anatomy of Film*. Sixth Edition. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010.
Print. ISBN: 978-0-312-48711-9

Class Course Pack. (Only available at Orange and Blue Textbooks.)

Course Description and Objectives:

This course serves as a suggested prerequisite for any of the department's 3000-/4000-level film courses. Through the ENG 2300 coursework, you will explore film art, film formal techniques, theory, and history as you view, think, discuss, and write about film. While an appreciation of film will no doubt help you enjoy this course, ENG 2300 is *not* a course in film "appreciation."

Instead, as you might discern from the course title, we will focus on developing skills of critical assessments of film, coupled with effectively translating those analyses into writing. Since ENG 2300 is a Gordon Rule class, you will write extensively about filmic and theoretical questions: writing two short analysis papers and two longer papers involving analysis of both a film and other secondary sources. The student learning outcomes for this course are as detailed in the Undergraduate Catalog at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html#requirements>.

This course is also not primarily a film history or film theory course (topics which are covered in greater depth in ENG 3121/3122 – History of Film Parts 1 & 2 and ENG 3115 – Introduction to Film Theory & Criticism). ENG 2300 should not be considered a substitution for those courses, but it can be considered an introduction to the study of film history and theory: as such, we will take special care to read some of the classic works of film theory and criticism, as well as place the films in historical context. However, in addition to our more general goals of learning the skills of film analysis, we will be paying special attention to issues of history and historicizing *in* the films that we will study this semester. President Woodrow Wilson reportedly described D.W. Griffith's enormously influential and controversial film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), a celebration of the Ku Klux Klan, as being "like history written with lightning." This anecdote—which itself is historically disputable—tells us much about film's potential as a force of history: both as a subject of history and an author of history. In developing our skills of film analysis, determining how films *mean*, we will consider what they mean and why they mean as both objects and subjects of history, with occasional reference to theories of history by writers like Benjamin, Curtius, and Greenblatt.

University of Florida General Education Outcomes:

COMPOSITION (C)

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html>. Composition courses provide instruction in methods and conventions of standard written English (i.e. grammar, punctuation, usage) and the techniques that produce effective texts.

HUMANITIES (H)

The humanities requirement enables students to think critically about what artists and thinkers (past and present) have to teach us about the nonmaterial qualities of human beings and human values. In courses in the humanities, students become acquainted with the enduring products—in words, sounds, paint, stone, metal, and many other media—in which thoughtful and gifted human beings have attempted to meet our individual and collective needs for emotional, spiritual, or intellectual fulfillment.

UNIVERSITY WRITING REQUIREMENT (WR E6)

This course can satisfy the UF requirement for Writing. For more information, see: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggordon.html>.

UF has recently instituted minus grades. As a result, letter grades now have different grade point equivalencies. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

*Note: You must earn a C or better in the course to receive Composition, Writing Requirement, or Humanities credit. A C- will not confer credit for these requirements.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

PAPER 1: Close Reading (1000 words) (3 pages)

A close reading seeks to explicate or pull a very detailed meaning out of a single, brief detail of a film that was assigned for the course (i.e. do not try and write about *all* of *Citizen Kane* or *The Man Who Shot Liberty Vallance* in three pages). While your writing may be somewhat exploratory, you should still have a strong, identifiable thesis statement supported by evidence from the film and correctly identified formal, filmic techniques. You do not need to cite any outside sources. The use of and reference to screen-grabs is *highly* encouraged, but not required.

PAPER 2: Close Reading (1000 words) (3 pages)

PAPER 3: Close Reading with “theory” (1500 words) (5 pages)

Much the same as the earlier close reading assignments, only this time in addition to a close analysis of a sequence of your choice from a film in the course, you must also apply one of the theorists or critics that we have read in class as well. The point of this assignment is not to “plug-and-play” one text into another, but rather to use your skills with close reading and critical thinking to test the “conversation” between a film and a critic or theorist.

PAPER 3: Paper proposal/presentation (300 words) (1 page)

In addition to a single page paper proposal, outlining the basic argument and abstract of your final assignment, you must make a brief presentation to the class about your project. This will be a valuable exercise not just as a way to rehearse your project's ideas and argument, but also as a means of soliciting suggestions from your classmates.

PAPER 4: Research Paper (2500 words) (8 pages)

Your final project is a research assignment where you will draw upon external sources to support and frame an argument about one or two films that we have studied this semester. (An outside primary text, such as another film by Welles or Chaplin, or one of the films excerpted in class, in addition to or in the place of one of the films we have studied, is also a suitable topic for the research paper. But *all such projects must be cleared in advance by your instructor.*) We will be practicing and learning how to navigate UF's library so that your research is both thorough and helpful.

Format Guidelines

All essays must be typed, printed in black ink, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font or equivalent; one inch margins, stapled, numbered pages with your name, course, and section number at the top of the page. Always have two (2) copies of anything you turn in. Also, unless requested specifically by the instructor, all papers *must be handed in as paper copies. **Electronic submissions will not be accepted.***

Grading Criteria

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a re-submission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and make available this material.

Additionally, late work will be penalized by one letter grade per day (unless a prior agreement with the instructor was made). Assignments are due at the beginning of class.

Course Grading Scale

Points 1000

A	91 – 100 %	(910-100)
B+	87 – 90 %	(870-909)
B	81 – 86 %	(810-869)
C+	77 – 80 %	(770-809)
C	71 – 76 %	(710-769)
D+	67 – 70 %	(670-709)
D	61 – 66 %	(610-669)
F (E)	60 % below	(001-609)

Individual Conferences

You are required to meet with me at least twice during the quarter in a mandatory conference. If you schedule and fail to attend the conference, it will count as two absences. I encourage you to

schedule additional appointments with me at any time during the session in addition to the required conferences. Class is where material gets introduced and discussed broadly; conferences are where real writing work gets done.

Classroom Behavior

Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. I absolutely require that you demonstrate respect for your classmates and for ideas that may differ from your own. Our goal is for dialogue to occur, not conflict or proselytizing.

Attendance & Participation

Class discussion is a major element of this course; therefore, attendance is vital for the success of the class. **You cannot miss more than three days of class.** You will be expected to participate in class discussion, which entails being prepared to discuss the readings, handing in assignments on time, etc.

General Education Learning Outcomes

You must pass this course with a grade of C or better to receive 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit (E6). You must turn in all writing assignments to receive credit for writing 6,000 words and pass with a “C” or better. A grade of C or better satisfies the University's General Education Composition (C) requirement. You must pass with a grade of C or better if this course is to satisfy the CLAS requirement of a second course in Composition (C). If you are not in CLAS, check the catalog or with your advisor to see if your college has other writing requirements.

Academic Honesty

As a University of Florida student, your performance is governed by the UF Honor Code, available in its full form at <http://itl.chem.ufl.edu/honor.html>. The Honor Code requires Florida students to neither give nor receive unauthorized aid in completing all assignments. Violations include cheating, plagiarism, bribery, and misrepresentation, all defined in detail at the aforementioned website.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting accommodation should contact the Students with Disabilities Office, Peabody 202. Accommodations are only granted when the student provides official documentation from the Students with Disabilities Office.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the student academic honor code. You commit plagiarism when you present the ideas or words of someone else as your own. You commit plagiarism if you use without crediting the source:

- a) any part of another person's essay, speech, or ideas
- b) any part of an article in a magazine, journal, newspaper, any part of a book, encyclopedia, CD-ROM, online www. page, etc.

c) any idea from another person or writer, even if you express that idea in your own words.

Important tip: There should never be a time when you copy and paste something from the Internet and don't provide the exact location from which it came. All acts of plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment and may result in failure of the entire course. Plagiarism can occur even without any intention to deceive if the student fails to know and employ proper documentation techniques. Unless otherwise indicated by the instructor for class group work, all work must be your own.

UNIT 1: HOW TO READ A FILM (AND WHY)

Week 1: August 22 - 26

M: Course Introduction

Screening: *Real Life* (Brooks, 1979)

W: *AoF*: "Understanding The Medium" (1-20); *recommended but not required reading*: Gardner "Literary Criticism and Literary Theory"; discuss film

F: *AoF*: "Film, Space, and Mise-en-Scene" (51-98), Kracauer "Basic Concepts"; *recommended but not required reading*: Prince "Models of Film Theory"

Week 2: August 29 – September 2

M: *AoF*: "The Film Director" (238-267)

Screening: *Citizen Kane* (Welles, 1941)

W: *AoF*: "Interpreting *Citizen Kane*," "Guidelines For Film Criticism" (375-385)

F: Bazin: "Technique of *Citizen Kane*" or Bordwell on *Citizen Kane*; Sarris "Toward a Theory of Film History"

Week 3: September 5 – 9

M: **No Class**

Screening: *Rules of the Game* (Renoir, 1939) **SCREEN ON YOUR OWN**

W: discuss film

F: *AoF*: "Associations..." (213-237), Peter Wollen "Rules of the Game"

Week 4: September 12 – 16

M: *AoF*: "Film Theory and Criticism" (345-374); Mast/Kawin "France Between The Wars"; *recommended but not required reading*: Mast/Kawin "Neorealism, the New Wave..."

Screening: *Passion of Joan of Arc* (Dreyer, 1928)

W: discuss film

F: Tom Milne from *The Cinema of Carl Dreyer*; Antonin Artaud "Theater of Cruelty"

Week 5: September 19 – 23

M: **FIRST CLOSE READING DUE**, clips from *Modern Times* in class

Screening: *Monsieur Verdoux* (Chaplin, 1947)

W: discuss film

F: Agee on Verdoux, Bazin on Chaplin and Verdoux

Week 6: September 26 – 30

M: Benjamin “Theses on the Philosophy of History”

Screening: *The Seventh Seal* (Bergman, 1957), *Un Cien Andalou* (Dali and Bunuel, 1929)

W: discuss films

F: David Bordwell “Art Cinema As a Mode of Film Practice”

UNIT 2: FILM GENRE (OR, HOW MANY WAYS CAN YOU TELL THE SAME STORY?)

Week 7: October 3 – 7

M: *AoF*: “Film Genres” (119-199)

Screening: *Touch of Evil* (Welles, 1958)

W: Robert Warshaw “The Gangster As Tragic Hero,” summary of *Othello* (Wikipedia is fine; reading the whole play is even better! ;-)

F: Schrader “Notes on Film Noir”

Week 8: October 10 – 14

M: **SECOND CLOSE READING DUE**, continue discussing *Touch of Evil* and noir

Screening: *The Searchers* (Ford, 1956)

W: discuss film

F: Bazin “The Western” and “The Evolution of the Western” or Pye “The Western (Genre and Movies)”; clips in class

Week 9: October 17 – 21

M: Stuart Byron “The Searchers: Cult Movie of the New Hollywood” (on Google Books)

Screening: *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976)

W: discuss film

F: Jonathan Rosenbaum “New Hollywood and the Sixties Melting Pot”

Week 10: October 24 – 28

M: Clips from *Paris, Texas*

Screening: *Pickpocket* (Bresson, 1959) with Paul Schrader’s intro to the film from Criterion DVD

W: discuss film

F: Sontag “Spiritual Style...” or Kline “Picking Dostoevsky’s Pocket”; Bresson “Notes on the Cinematographer”

Week 11: October 31 – November 4

M: **CLOSE READING WITH THEORY DUE**

Screening: *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Hooper, 1974)

W: discuss film

F: No Class

UNIT 3: “MAKING” HISTORY

Week 12: November 7 – 11

M: Carol Clover, “Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film”

Screening: *Elephant* (Clarke, 1989), *Elephant* (Van Sant, 2003)

W: discuss films

F: No Class

Week 13: November 14 – 18

M: Benjamin “Critique of Violence”

Screening: *Hunger* (McQueen, 2008)

W: discuss film

F: **PAPER PROPOSALS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Week 14: November 21 – 25

M: **PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

Screening: No Screening

W: No Class

F: No Class

Week 15: November 28 – December 2

M: Philip Rosen “Detail, Document, and Diegesis...”

Screening: Class’s Choice

W: discuss film

F: **RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

Week 16: December 5 – 7

M: Greenblatt “The Touch of the Real”

Screening: no screening

W: Course Wrap-up