

Fayetteville State University
College of Arts and Sciences
English Department
English 332.01
Fall 2011

I. Locator Information:

Instructor: Dr. Chuck Tryon

Course # and Name: English 332

Semester Credit Hours: 3

Day and Time Class Meets: T/TH 12:30-1:45

Class location: SBE 109

Email address: ctryon@uncfsu.edu or chutry@msn.com

Total Contact Hours for Class: 3

Office Location: Butler 126

Office hours: T/TH 8-9:30, 11-12:30, 5-6

Office Phone: 672-2223

FSU Policy on Electronic Mail: Fayetteville State University provides to each student, free of charge, an electronic mail account (username@uncfsu.edu) that is easily accessible via the Internet. The university has established FSU email as the primary mode of correspondence between university officials and enrolled students. Inquiries and requests from students pertaining to academic records, grades, bills, financial aid, and other matters of a confidential nature must be submitted via FSU email. Inquiries or requests from personal email accounts are not assured a response. The university maintains open-use computer laboratories throughout the campus that can be used to access electronic mail.

Rules and regulations governing the use of FSU email may be found at
<http://www.uncfsu.edu/PDFs/EmailPolicyFinal.pdf>

II. Course Description: This course will introduce students to basic concepts in film and other visual media such as video and Internet imaging. This course introduces students to formal vocabulary and methodology for developing the ability to consider visual texts critically. Through understanding and application of the basic concepts of film language, students will learn how elements such as editing, lighting, and composition within the frame, cinematography and sound combine to constitute filmic discourse. In order to understand development in these categories, consideration will be given to film history.

III. Disabled Student Services: In accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) of 1990, if you have a disability or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1st Floor); 910-672-1203.

IV. Textbook: The following textbook is available at the university bookstore. It is required. You should also make plans to watch all of the assigned movies in English 332. They will be available on reserve at the library in the Media Center for two hour checkout. You might also plan to watch films using subscription services such as Netflix or Blockbuster online. Although all of the assigned movies are classics, many of them may not be available at local video stores. In addition to the textbook, we will also be reading essays posted online on Blackboard or on electronic reserves.

Corrigan, Timothy and Patricia White. *The Film Experience: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford-St. Martins, 2009.

V. Student Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Explain the ways in which films are produced, distributed, and exhibited, including the social and technological histories of film.
- 2) Describe the formal techniques by which films and other media make meaning.
- 3) Analyze Hollywood, independent, and international films using formal terminology.
- 4) Evaluate the social and political role of film in history and culture.
- 5) Create visual texts, such as storyboards or short films, that illustrate an understanding of visual literacy

Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria:

Attendance/Participation (storyboard)/Writing Journal: 10%

Paper 1 (mise-en-scene, cinematography): 15%

Paper 2 (sound, editing): 15%

Paper 3 (historical analysis): 25%

Midterm: 15%

Final Exam: 20%

Storyboard Project:

For the storyboard project, you will be grouped with 2-3 classmates and will draw storyboards of a single passage from a novel (which I will assign). These storyboards should not only be well-drawn, but should also demonstrate an understanding of the terms from film aesthetics. Individual storyboards should be clearly labeled, for example as long shots with low-key lighting (or whatever techniques you think appropriate).

Paper 1:

This paper will ask you to analyze the mise-en-scene or cinematography of a film (chosen from a list offered by the instructor) in order to see how those techniques help to reinforce or illustrate one of the film's major themes. I will be looking to see that you have used the terms of film aesthetics and that you understand how filmmakers use elements such as lighting, camera placement, and camera movement to help tell a story (3-4 pages).

Paper 2:

This paper will ask you to analyze the editing or sound of a film (chosen from a list offered by the instructor) in order to see how those techniques help to reinforce or illustrate one of the film's major themes. I will be looking to see that you have used the terms of film aesthetics and that you understand how filmmakers use elements such as cross-cutting, flashback, or off-screen sound, to name just a few examples, to help reinforce a theme or idea (3-4 pages).

Paper 3:

This paper will ask you to think more carefully about film as an experience, one that is constructed through "extratextual" materials such as reviews, trailers, merchandise, interviews, and other ephemera. You will select a film produced before 1980 and will be required to find two different kinds of research: first you must find at least one secondary source from an academic journal (or an *academic* book) and at least one "contemporary source," such as a news article, trailer, or some other promotional text that helps to position how the film was received and/or promoted at the time (5-7 pages).

Revisions:

You may revise both of the first two papers for a higher grade. I will grade and comment on your papers and provide some instructions on revising them. You may then take my comments and use them to rework your original paper for a higher grade. Minor changes (correcting commas and formatting) will not be considered serious revisions. When you revise, your new grade will be calculated by averaging the grades of the original paper and the revision. Ex: If your original paper was an 80 and your revision grades out as a 90, you would earn an 85.

Exams:

Exams will involve three different sections. The first section will entail identifications of key terms that we have discussed in class or encountered in the textbook. The second section will involve the visual analysis of a film still, and the third section will consist of essay questions. Much more detail about the exams will be provided in study guides handed out approximately two weeks before each exam.

Grading Scale

A 90-100 B 80-90 C 70-80 D 60-70 F 59 and under

Academic Honesty:

Because this course involves a significant amount of writing, absolutely every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph that you submit for credit must be your own work. Because you have all graduated from high school or the equivalent, you obviously understand the difference between your words and the work of others. This course's instructor has adopted a "zero tolerance" policy on plagiarism. This means that any student who turns in another writer's work pretending that it is his or her own will earn an "F" for the entire course.

Blackboard Grading Rubric:

Students must complete a total of 10 responses to assigned films and readings by the end of the semester in the Discussion Board section of Blackboard. All posts should be approximately 200 words and should attempt to engage not only with the assigned readings and films but also with other students in the course and, in the best cases, with secondary readings about the assigned texts. **Posts are due on Thursday mornings at 9 AM on the week the film is listed.**

Below I have included the rubric I will be using to assess your responses:

Total Points	0-10	11-15	16-20
Quality of Posting	Post is superficial, too short, or otherwise fails to engage with the assigned readings or films; post is off-topic; serious grammatical concerns; posts are submitted late; plagiarized posts will also receive a 0	More detailed post; post uses film aesthetic terminology to describe films/scenes from films; sparks discussion or responds to others in the class in thoughtful ways; minor grammatical concerns; outside material, if included, is inadequately cited	Excellent post; post clearly and thoughtfully draws from film aesthetic vocabulary to analyze assigned film; sparks thoughtful discussion or responds to others in insightful ways; devoid of grammar errors; cites and uses outside material in a thoughtful way

Attendance/Film Screenings:

Students in English 332 will benefit from attending class regularly and participating in class discussion. To that end, the University policy on attendance is in effect in this class. The FSU policy on tardiness is also in effect: "Students are required to arrive at each class on time and remain in class until dismissed by the instructor" (70). Tardiness may, at the instructor's discretion, be counted as an absence—especially when the late arrival disrupts the class. Four or more unexcused absences will result in your overall grade for the course being lowered by one letter per absence.

You are responsible for watching the films for English 332. All movies will either be available in the Media Center or online (or both). All movies should also be easily accessible via Netflix or Blockbuster Online. When you use such services, you should plan several days in advance to ensure that you get the right movie in a timely fashion. **Note:** It's not official yet, but I am currently working on a plan to make all of this semester's films available through a secure site on Blackboard. If this works out, it should make it much easier for you to access films from the class.

Cell phone/behavior policy:

I allow cell phones in class, but I require them to be in a pocket and on vibrate. If your cell "rings," you are to leave the room quietly to answer it. I do not want them out on a desk or in view at any time. Do not text message in my class. In general, you should behave respectfully towards your peers and towards the instructor in order to contribute to the best possible learning environment for yourself and your classmates. If you have any questions, be sure to consult the university's guide on recommended student behavior.

VI. Course Outline and Assignment Schedule

Tentative Schedule:

All reading and writing assignments will be due by the date they are listed. If a reading assignment is listed as due on Friday, then you should read it no later than Thursday night. Please note that FE=Film Experience, CW=Course website and ER=Electronic Reserves. We will start talking about movies on the Thursday of the week they are scheduled.

Week 1:

August 18:

Films: Thomas Edison, Lumiere, and Melies shorts
Musketeers of Pig Alley (1912), dir. D.W. Griffith
Reading: Tom Gunning, "Cinema of Attractions," OL.
Hays Code, OL.

Week 2:

August 23-25:

Film: *North by Northwest* (1959), dir. Alfred Hitchcock
Reading: FE, "Telling Stories about Time: Narrative Films," 227-270.
FE, "Introduction to the Film Experience," 5-14.

Week 3:

August 30-September 1:

Film: *Do the Right Thing* (1989), dir. Spike Lee
Reading: FE, "Exploring a Material World: Mise-en-Scène," 61-94.
Jason Matloff, "Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* Turns Twenty," OL.

Week 4:

September 6-8:

Film: *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), dir. John Huston
Reading: FE, "Seeing Through the Image: Cinematography," 95-134.
Paul Schrader, "Notes on Film Noir," OL.

Storyboard: Group storyboard project: Due September 8.

Week 5:

September 13-15:

Film: *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), dir. Arthur Penn.
Reading: FE, "Relating Images: Editing," 135-84.

Paper I: Using Mise-en-scène and cinematography to analyze a film: Due September 15

Week 6:

September 20-22:

Film: *Citizen Kane* (1941), dir. Orson Welles
Reading: FE, "Listening to the Cinema: Film Sound," 166-212
Robert Carringer, *The Making of Citizen Kane*, selections, ER.

Week 7:

September 27-29:

Film: *District 9* (2009), dir. Neill Blomkamp.
Reading: FE, "Distribution, Promotion, and Exhibition," 15-57.
Henry Jenkins, "District 9 (Part One): Can a Bench Be a Transmedia Extension?" and
"District 9 (Part Two): Out of Afrofuturism?," OL.

Paper 2: Sound and Editing: Due September 29.

Week 8:

October 4-6:

Film: *His Girl Friday* (1940), dir Howard Hawks.

Reading: FE, "Rituals, Conventions, Archetypes and Formulas: Movie Genres," 331-367.

David Bordwell, "Creating a Classic, With a Little Help from Your Pirate Friends," OL.

Midterm: October 6, in class.

Week 9:

October 11-13:

Film: *Breathless* (1960), dir. Jean Luc Godard.

Reading: FE "Conventional Film History," 371-404.

Week 10:

October 18-20:

Film: *Lone Star* (1996), John Sayles

Reading: FE, "Writing a Film Essay: Observations, Arguments, Research, and Analysis," 507-43.

Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womack, "Forget the Alamo: Reading the Ethics of Style in John Sayles' *Lone Star*," OL.

Fall Break: No class scheduled for Tuesday.

Week 11:

October 25-27:

Film: *Harlan County, USA* (1976), dir. Barbara Kopple.

Reading: FE "Representing the Real: Documentary Films," 257-87.

Peter Biskind, "*Harlan County USA: The Miners' Struggle*," OL.

E. Ann Kaplan, "*Harlan County, USA: The Documentary Form*," OL.

Revised Papers due October 25.

Week 12:

November 1-3:

Film: *The Harder They Come* (1972), dir. Perry Henzell.

Reading: FE "Global and Local: Inclusive Histories of the Movies," 405-453.

Week 13:

November 8-10:

Film: *Daughters of the Dust* (1991), dir. Julie Dash.

Reading: ER, Jacqueline Bobo, "Black Women Reading *Daughters of the Dust*," ER.

Week 14:

November 15-17:

Film: *Chungking Express* (1994), dir. Wong Kar-Wei.

Reading: OL, Wendy Gan, "Affectivity and Urban Space in *Chungking Express*," Scope, OL.

Paper 2: Historical Research on Film Marketing and Promotion, November 17.

Week 15:

November 22-24:

Film: *The Thin Blue Line* (1989), dir. Errol Morris.

Reading: Linda Williams, "Mirrors without Memories," OL.

Charles Musser, "Film Truth, Documentary, and the Law," OL (may be accessible via Lexis-Nexis).

Thanksgiving Break: No class Thursday.

Week 16:

November 29-December 1:

Film: *Adaptation* (2002), dir. Spike Jonze.

Reading: Susan Orlean, *The Orchid Thief*, excerpts, ER.

Thomas Leitch, "Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory," OL.

Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, selections, ER.

Graduating Seniors only: Final Exam due Thursday, December 1.

VII. Bibliography: (Some selected readings in film and media studies).

Acland, Charles. *Screen Traffic: Movies, Multiplexes, and Global Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken, 1968.

Bordwell, David, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. London: Routledge, 1985.

Friedberg, Anne. "The End of Cinema: Multimedia and Technological Change." *Reinventing Film Studies*. Ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams. London: Arnold, 2000. 438-52.

Gunning, Tom. "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In) Credulous Spectator." *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*. Ed. Linda Williams. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 114-34

Hansen, Miriam. *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991.

Kracauer, Siegfried. *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997.

Mulvey, Laura. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

Tryon, Chuck. *Reinventing Cinema: Movies in the Age of Media Convergence*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009.

Waller, Gregory A. *Moviegoing in America: A Sourcebook in the History of Film Exhibition*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.

Zimmermann, Patricia R. *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

IX. A Note on Assignments: I will provide handouts for all major papers well in advance of the due dates. I will also provide a study guide several days before the midterm and final, including the text of all of the possible essay questions.