

Englit 0400  
Spring 2005  
Stevens, K.

## **Introduction to Film**

ENGLIT 0400  
Spring 2005  
M W 9:00-10:50  
209 David Lawrence Hall

Kyle Stevens  
Office: 517V  
Office Hours: Monday 11:00-12:00  
[Cks1@pitt.edu](mailto:Cks1@pitt.edu)

### **Course Description:**

This course will introduce students to the critical analysis of film. Through the study of selected films, assigned readings, lectures and discussion, students will learn to recognize and analyze the specific elements of film language and will be introduced to various approaches to film literature. By the end of this course students should have a solid understanding of how films produce meaning and how those meanings can be interpreted, or "read," through close textual analysis.

### **Required Texts:**

Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, *The Film Experience*  
Course Reader (available in on-campus bookstore)

### **Attendance:**

Since our class will be as discussion-centered as possible, I place great importance on class participation. If you are not in class, you can not participate. Come to class **on time**, be prepared with assignments and to take part in conversations. If there is a time when you are unable to come to class, it is your responsibility to communicate your reasons before class. It is also your responsibility to contact other students and/or me to find out what discussions and/or assignments you may have missed in order to make up and prepare accordingly. Missing more than two classes may be grounds for failure.

### **Preparation and Participation:**

Your individual success in this course, as well as the quality of class discussion and the course overall, require that you are fully prepared with all course materials prior to each class session. This means that you should not only have screened and/or read all assignments prior to each class, but that you should take notes on them and come to class ready to discuss them. Despite whatever experience you may have had with other courses and textbooks, reading assignments in this class are paramount. This class operates on the assumption that you are able to read. Class sessions are devoted to discussion and collective thinking, not to rehashing the assigned readings. Thus, you will be held responsible for terms and ideas from texts prior to their articulation in class.

**Assignments:**

The major written work in this course includes:

1. Homework Assignments (one FULL page, single-spaced)
2. Sequence Analysis Assignment (5-6 pp. essay)
3. Final Essay/Exam

In addition, group work and pop quizzes will be assigned and administered throughout the semester. I will also periodically ask you to hand in your screening notes. Grades on these materials will be factored into your participation grade.

**Grades:**

40% Participation (Includes class discussion, homework, quizzes, etc.)

25% Sequence Analysis Essay

35 % Final Exam

**Additional Information:**

This course may include printed or filmic material that some students may find objectionable due to the representation of violence, sexuality and/or other potentially controversial material. If you are concerned about such matters, please see the instructor.

Most films we will screen this semester will be on reserve at Hillman Library. To screen a film on your own, go to the media center on the first floor with the appropriate call number. Be sure to allow plenty of time to screen films, as copies are limited and many students may need to use them. If you have any trouble getting what you need, or if any materials are unavailable, contact me.

## Schedule of Classes and Assignments

### Unit One: Introduction

- Week 1  
W 1/4                      What is Film Studies? What is Film Analysis? What is Film Language?: Course Introduction
- Week 2  
M 1/9                      Looking at/in Movies (The Shot, The Look and Spectacle)  
Screen: *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954)  
Write and Review: Film Notes (Continue doing this every week!)  
Read: Corrigan, Ch. 1 (5-40)
- W 1/11                      Read: Selection from Christian Metz's *The Imaginary Signifier*

### Unit Two: The Fundamental Elements of Film Language

- Week 3  
M 1/16  
W 1/18                      Narrative One: The Classical Hollywood Film  
NO CLASS: MLK DAY  
Screen: *It Happened One Night* (Frank Capra, 1934); Read: Corrigan, Ch. 6 (214- 256)
- 1/17                      Last day to drop/add
- Week 4  
M 1/23  
W 1/25                      Narrative Two: Alternative Narrative Structures  
Screen: *Annie Hall* (Woody Allen, 1979)  
Read: Corrigan, Ch. 8 (288-324)
- Week 5  
M 1/30  
W 2/1                      Mise-en-scene and Cinematography I  
Screen: *The Bicycle Thief* (Vittorio de Sica, 1948); Read: Corrigan, Ch. 2 (41-74)  
**Due: Mise-en-Scene homework assignment** (Details in class)  
Screen in class: Clips from *Dogville*
- Week 6  
M 2/6  
W 2/8                      Mise-en-Scene and Cinematography II  
Screen: *In the Mood For Love* (Wong Kar-Wai, 2000); Read Corrigan, Ch. 3 (75-110)  
Read: Andre Bazin's "The Ontology of the Photographic Image"  
Screen in class: Clips from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*
- Week 7  
M 2/13  
W 2/15                      Editing  
Screen: *Run, Lola Run* (Tom Tykwer, 1998); Read Corrigan, Ch. 4 (110-165)  
Read: Eisenstein's "The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram"

Week 8  
M 2/20 Sound  
Screen: *Singin' in the Rain* (Donen and Kelly, 1952); Read  
Corrigan, Ch. 5 (166-212)  
W 2/22 **DUE: Sound Homework Assignment**  
Read Steven Cohan's "Case Study: Interpreting *Singin' in the Rain*"

Week 9  
M 2/27 Acting and the Star System  
Screen: *Closer* (Mike Nichols, 2003)  
W 3/1 Read: Béla Balázs' "The Close-up"  
Screen in Class: Clips from *The Passion of Joan of Arc*

M 3/6—W 3/8 NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Week 10  
M 3/13 Elements in Relation (Realism)  
Screen: *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942); Read Corrigan, Ch. 9  
(325-416)  
W 3/15 **DUE: Sequence Analysis Essay**

Unit Three: Applying the Fundamentals to Topics in Film Studies

Week 11  
M 3/20 Seeing Gender  
Screen: *Carnal Knowledge* (Mike Nichols, 1971); Read: Corrigan,  
Ch. 11 (417- 473)  
W 3/22 Read: Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

Week 12  
M 3/27 Documentary and the Filming of History  
Screen: *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (Alain Resnais, 1959)  
W 3/29 Read: Linda Williams' "Mirrors Without Memories: Truth, History  
and the New Documentary"  
Screen in class: *Night and Fog*

Week 13  
M 4/3 Interpretation  
Screen: *Wag the Dog* (Barry Levinson, 1997)  
W 4/5 Read: Barthes' "Interpretation" and Sontag's "Against  
Interpretation"

Week 14  
M 4/10 Spectatorship  
Screen: *Adaptaion* (Spike Jonze, 2003)  
W 4/12 Read Siegfried Kracauer's "Film in Our Time"

Week 15  
M 4/17 That's A Wrap  
Read/Review  
W 4/19 Read/Review

W 4/26 **Final Essay due to in my mailbox by 5:00 pm**