

Englit 0400
Spring 2006
Andersen, K.

Introduction to Film
ENGLIT 0400
Spring 2006
Tues. & Thurs. 11-12:50 p.m.

Instructor: Kara Andersen
Office: 617U Cathedral of Learning
Office Hour: Tuesday, 1:15 - 2:15 p.m.
Email: kara.andersen@verizon.net

Texts

Required: *The Film Experience: An Introduction.* Tim Corrigan and Patricia White.
Other readings available on electronic reserve.

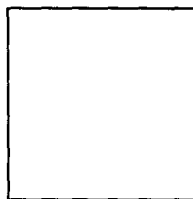
Recommended: *A Short Guide to Writing About Film.* Tim Corrigan
Film, Form and Culture. Robert Kolker. 2nd. Edition.

Course Description

This is a basic course on the visual arts (with a focus on film) that is aimed at freshmen and sophomore students. It offers the student a broad introduction to the medium of film. The focus of the course is on critical thinking about film. In considering such issues as: the process of contemporary film production and distribution; the nature of basic film forms (narrative, documentary, experimental); selected approaches to film criticism (auteurist, ideological, feminist); the role of cinema within culture and nation; comparisons between film and other media (e.g. photography, television), you will be asked to examine connections, contexts and possibilities. Through thinking, reading, viewing and writing, you will develop a personal and unique point of view.

Many people take film images to be an exact representation of what was “really there” – but anyone who has made a careful study of film knows that since the beginning, filmmakers have manipulated images and sounds, conveying not an absolute truth, but a representation. Therefore, although each week’s topic is based on the assigned readings, the films selected are all loosely centered around several questions: How are images manipulated to express ideas? How is this manipulation evident? What are the consequences of this manipulation? Is the photographic image inherently “realistic” or “truthful”? In what ways do films manipulate viewers? How can cinematic elements like editing, cinematography, mise-en-scène and sound create meaning above and beyond the images they accompany?

This course fulfills
as a first-level Music/Art



the humanities requirement
course.

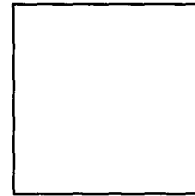
Course Policies

Grading

The grading system is a 100 point scale. The breakdown of assignments is as follows:

Individual Assignments:

Participation:	10 points
Response papers (4):	20 points
Group Project:	20 points
Midterm:	20 points
Final Essay:	30 points



Final Grades:

90-100:	A range
80-89:	B range
70-79:	C range
60-69:	D range
Below 60:	F

Film Screenings

All films will be shown in class. During screenings, you should behave more or less as if you were in a theater. Emotional responses (brief comments, laughter, gasping, etc.) and **quiet** eating is acceptable. Talking to your neighbor or text messaging is not acceptable, and you will be marked absent if I catch you doing it. You should be able to sit through a feature length film without needing a break, but if an emergency arises, please leave with as little disturbance as possible.

Please note that some of the films shown will contain violence and/or nudity. If you have a problem with this, see me to discuss it.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. As this is a discussion-based class, your participation in class is vital. **If you miss more than 2 classes without a documented excuse, your grade will be lowered by a portion of a letter grade for each absence. Missing more than 5 classes (excused or unexcused) is grounds for immediate failure.** If you know you have to miss a class for a legitimate reason (such as a religious holiday, documented sports absence or personal illness), it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and discuss with me how to make up the work. If you do not have a documented excuse, you cannot make up missed work.

Tardiness

If you are not in the classroom when I take roll you will be marked late. Every three late marks count as one absence. If you miss more than fifteen minutes of a class you will be marked absent.

Late Work

I do not accept late work. If you know you are going to miss a class when an assignment is due, either turn the assignment in early or arrange for someone else to turn it in for you. Quizzes, midterms or other in class work can be made up only in the case of religious holidays, sports absences, or illness (with a doctor's note).

If you are having personal or academic problems and need an extension on an assignment, talk to me before the deadline to see what arrangements can be made. Computer problems are not an excuse. Always save your work frequently and do not wait until the last minute to print - this way you will always have something to turn in even if you lose your later work.

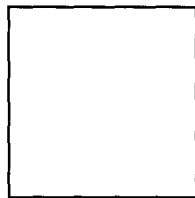
Academic Integrity

All work submitted for this course must be your own. If you refer to or use the work of anyone else, it must be properly documented. **My policy is that any student caught plagiarizing on any assignment will immediately fail the course.** For more information on the University of Pittsburgh's policy, please refer to the Academic Integrity Code at:

<http://www.fcas.pitt.edu/academicintegrity.html>. For help understanding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, visit the Pitt English Literature program's "Avoiding Plagiarism" website at: <http://www.pitt.edu/~englit/plagiarism.htm>

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please let both me and Disability Resources and Services (DRS) know as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.¹



¹ DRS can be reached at 216 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890/(412) 383-7355 (TTY).

Calendar

Week 1

Thursday, 01/05: Course overview

Week 2

Distribution, Promotion & Exhibition: Who Gets to See What and When?

Read: Chapter 1

Tuesday, 01/10: Discussion

Thursday, 01/12: *Visions of Light*. (US 1992 dir. Arnold Glassman and Todd McCarthy 1992) 92 min.

Week 3

Mise-en-scène: Props, Scenery and Other Stuff

Read: Chapter 2

Tuesday, 01/17: Discussion

Thursday, 01/19: *Psycho* (US 1960, dir. Alfred Hitchcock) 108 min.

Week 4

Cinematography: The Art of the Camera

Read: Chapter 3

Tuesday, 01/24: Discussion, **Response 1 due**

Thursday, 01/26:

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Week 5

Connecting Shots: Film Editing

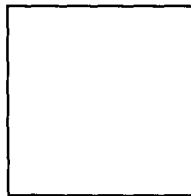
Read: Chapter 4

Tuesday, 01/31: Discussion

Thursday, 02/02: *Chelovek s Kinoapparatom* (The Man with the Movie Camera). (USSR 1929, dir. Dziga Vertov) 80 min.

- Week 6** **Film Sound: “Well of course we talk. Don’t everybody?”**
- Read:** Chapter 5
- Tuesday, 02/07:** Discussion, **Response 2 due**
Thursday, 02/09: *Singin’ in the Rain*. (US 1952, dir. Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly) 103 min.
- Week 7** **True Stories: Documentary Film and Subjectivity**
- Read:** Chapter 7
- Tuesday, 02/14:** *Roger & Me*. (US 1989, dir. Michael Moore) 91 min.
Thursday, 02/16: **Midterm Exam**
- Week 8** **The Weird and Obscure:
Experimental Film and New Media**
- Read:** Siegfried Kracauer “The Establishment of Physical Existence” (electronic reserve)
- Tuesday, 02/21:** Discussion. Assign group project.
- Thursday, 02/23:** *Meshes of the Afternoon*. (US 1943, dir. Maya Deren, Alexander Hammid)
Mothlight. (US 1963, dir. Stan Brakhage)
Red vs. Blue: The Blood Gulch Chronicles. (US 2003, dir. Burnie Burns, Matt Hullum)
- Week 9** **Narrative: The Dominant Film Form**
- Read:** Chapter 6
- Tuesday, 02/28:** *Casablanca*. (US 1942, dir. Michael Curtiz) 102 min.
Response 3 due.
- Thursday, 03/02:** Group work on project
- Week 10**
- Mar. 5 - 12: Spring Break - No Class**

- Week 11** **Film Genre: The Love of Repetition**
- Read:** Chapter 8
- Tuesday, 03/14:** Discussion. **Assign final essay.**
Thursday, 03/16: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (US 1953, dir. Howard Hawks) 91 min.
- Week 12** **The Politics of Representation
Critical Methods and Theories**
- Read:** Chapter 11 and 12
- Tuesday, 03/21:** Discussion.
Thursday, 03/23: *Bamboozled*. (US 2000, dir. Spike Lee) **135 min.**
- Week 13** **Conventional Film History**
- Read:** Chapter 9
- Tuesday, 03/28:** Discussion. **Response 4 due.**
Thursday, 03/30: *Grand Hotel*. (US 1932, dir. Edmund Goulding) **112 min.**
- Week 14** **Global and Local Film: What's Outside of Hollywood?**
- Read:** Chapter 10
- Tuesday, 04/04:** Discussion. **Groups 1 and 2 project presentations.**
Thursday, 04/06: *Les Quatre cents coups*. (The 400 Blows) (France 1959, dir. François Truffaut)



Week 15

Film and Celebrity

Read: Richard Dyer, Chapter 2: "Stars as Stars" (electronic reserve)

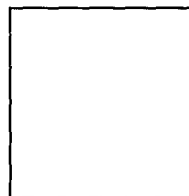
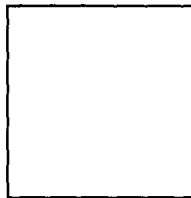
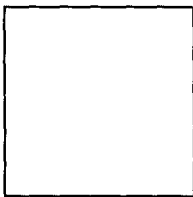
Tuesday, 04/11: Discussion. **Groups 3 and 4 project presentations.**

Thursday, 04/13: *Lost in Translation*. (US/Japan 2003, dir. Sofia Coppola)
102 min.

Week 16

Tuesday, 04/18: Discussion. **Groups 5 and 6 project presentations.**

Thursday, 04/20: **Group 7 project presentation. Final essay due.**



Contact Information & Questionnaire

Name:

Major:

Email:

Year:

1. What other film courses have you taken?

2. What interests you most about this course?

3. What do you want me to know about you, as a student or a person?

4. Would you be willing to spend money to see a movie currently in theatres as part of this course? If not, why not?