

Englitt 0400  
Spring 0007  
Stevens, K.

## Introduction to Film

ENGLIT 0400  
Spring 2007  
M W 11:00—12:50  
209 David Lawrence Hall

Instructor: Kyle Stevens  
Office: 617 F  
Office Hours: Monday 1-2 and BY APPT  
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### **Course Description:**

In our media-saturated society, it is becoming ever more crucial for you to develop sophisticated approaches to interacting with images, screens and representations. This course will introduce you to the critical analysis of film. Through the study of selected films, assigned readings, lectures and discussion, you 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 you should have a solid understanding of how films produce meaning and how those meanings can be interpreted, or “read,” through close textual analysis.

While we will be screening films in class, and I encourage you to enjoy the films, there is a distinction between “watching” a movie and “reading” it. Therefore, I encourage you to treat film screenings as scholarly activities by taking notes and coming prepared to pay attention. Using films as primary texts for the coursework of this class is often an opportunity to combine learning and pleasure, but due to the difficulty and range of films we will experience means such a combination is not always guaranteed. While emotional responses are certainly welcome during screenings, cell phones and “rude food” are not.

### **Required Texts:**

Timothy Corrigan and White and Patricia White, *The Film Experience*  
Course Reader (available online through course reserves)

### **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.

Plagiarism, it should go without saying, will not be tolerated in any form. For a useful reference about what constitutes plagiarism, as well as information on how to cite information correctly, visit <http://www.pitt.edu/~englit/plagiarism.htm>.

### **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. We will also have a mid-term exam.

### **Grade Breakdown:**

20% Participation (includes class discussion and attendance)

5% Quizzes

10% Homework Assignments

20% Mid-Term Exam

20% Sequence Analysis Essay

25 % Final Essay

### **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

Week 1 W 1/3	What is Film Studies? What is Film Analysis? What is Film Language?: Course Introduction
Week 2 M 1/8	Looking at/in Movies (The Shot, The Look and Spectacle) Screen: <i>Monty Python's Life of Brian</i> (Terry Jones, 1979) Write and Review: Film Notes (Continue doing this every week!)
W 1/10	Read: Corrigan and White, Ch. 1 (5-40)
Week 3 M 1/15 W 1/17 1/16	Narrative One: The Classical Film Narrative NO CLASS: MLK DAY Screen: <i>Casablanca</i> (Michael Curtiz, 1942); <b>Due: Homework on Exhibition</b> Last day to drop/add
Week 4 M 1/22 W 1/24	Narrative Two: Alternative Narrative Structures Screen: <i>Gosford Park</i> (Robert Altman, 2001) Read: Corrigan and White, Ch. 6 (214-256) Screen in Class: Clips from <i>Tokyo Story</i> (Yasujiro Ozu, 1953)
Week 5 M 1/29 W 1/31	Discontinuity and Montage Screen: <i>The Man with a Movie Camera</i> (Dziga Vertov, 1929) <i>Ballet Mécanique</i> (Fernand Léger, 1924) Read: Corrigan and White, Ch. 4 (110-166); <b>Due: Homework on Narrative</b>
Week 6 M 2/5 W 2/7	Mise-en-scène Screen: <i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i> (Robert Wiene, 1924) Read Corrigan and White, Ch. 2 (42-74) Screen in class: Clips from <i>Dogville</i>
Week 7 M 2/12 W 2/14	Cinematography Screen: <i>Brokeback Mountain</i> (Ang Lee, 2005) Read Corrigan and White, Ch. 3 (75-109); <b>Due: Mise-en-scène Homework</b>
Week 8 M 2/19 W 2/21	Sound Screen: <i>Singin' in the Rain</i> (Donen and Kelly, 1952) Read Corrigan and White, Ch. 5 (166-212) Read Mary Ann Doane's "The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space"
Week 9	Acting, Stars and Point of View

M 2/26                      Screen: *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1968)  
 W 2/28                      Read: Stanley Cavell: Selections from *The World Viewed*  
                                     Read: Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"  
                                     Screen in Class: Clips from *The Passion of Joan of Arc*  
                                     **Mid-Term Exam**

M 3/5, W 3/7              NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Week 10                      Realism  
 M 3/12                      Screen: *Berkeley in the Sixties* (Mark Kitchell, 1990)  
                                     Read Corrigan and White, Ch. 7 (257-287)  
 W 3/14                      Screen in class: Selections from Lumière and Méliès

Week 11                      Genre  
 M 3/19                      Screen: *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)  
 W 3/21                      Read: Corrigan and White, Ch. 8 (288- 324); **DUE: Sequence Analysis Essay**

Week 12                      Reflexivity  
 M 3/26                      Screen: *Tristram Shandy: A Cock and Bull Story* (Michael Winterbottom, 2005)  
 W 3/28                      Read: Bertolt Brecht's "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting"  
                                     Screen in Class: Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon*

Week 13                      Authorship  
 M 4/2                        Screen: *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954)  
 W 4/4                        Read Christian Metz's "Story/Discourse" and Robert Stam's "The Author"

Week 14                      Close Analysis  
 M 4/9                        Screen: *Contempt* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1963)  
 W 4/11                      Read: Roland Barthes' "Interpretation" and Susan Sontag's "Against Interpretation"

Week 15                      Film History and The Movie Today  
 M 4/16                      TBA MOVIE  
 W 4/18                      Read Corrigan and White, Ch.s 9 and 10 (325-416)

W 4/25                      **Final Essay due to in my mailbox by 5:00 pm**