

FILM ANALYSIS--Fall 2006

EngLit 0530
Tel. 412-422-1383

CRN 12285
jidst2+@pitt.edu

CL249

Th. 6:00-9:50PM

Office Hrs. in CL caf. WH 4-6 PM & by appt.

Instructor: Jill Dione

Texts: At the bookstore, **Understanding Movies**, 10th ed., by Louis Giannetti (NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2005). ISBN 013 189 0980. In addition to this text, handouts will be distributed on an ad hoc basis.

Course Description: In Film, Form, and Culture, author Robert Kolker contends that "[w]e find films realistic because we have learned certain kinds of responses. . . from them, and when we see. . . or feel these responses again in a film, we assume they are real--because we've seen and felt them before. . . [and] probably even imitated them" (xv). Thus, through this cycle--of seeing films that reaffirm the very behavior that they have taught us to emulate--we construct a notion of what is "real." But because we construct this notion of reality from "the infinite loop" of cinematic-reaffirmation-of-cinema-learned-behavior, "[w]hat we call 'realistic' in film is, more often than not, only the familiar" (xv). Only by examining film's form and content, then, can we disrupt this infinite loop--wherein familiarity masquerades as reality--and subsequently "denaturalize our responses" by attempting to understand not only the ways in which such responses are culturally determined but also the ways in which films contribute to--or even conspire in--such determination. In this course, we'll engage in these kinds of critical and denaturalizing examinations of films in an attempt to identify the cultural determinations at work in them and on us so that, ultimately and optimally, we can reshape our construction and our culture as well.

Course Requirements and Grading

Attendance: Chronic tardiness will count toward absenteeism. Two absences will result in a deduction of five points from your final grade, and three absences will result in a deduction of ten points from your final grade; and four or more absences will result in a failing grade. If, however, in spite of these caveats, you MUST miss class, it is YOUR responsibility to: (1) let me know--in advance, if possible; (2) complete any assignments; and (3) **ask a classmate** to take notes, obtain copies of any handouts, etc., so that you will not miss out on crucial information that will enable you to complete your work for this course.

Class Participation--15%: Don't remain mute. Engage with the material and your colleagues. SPEAK!

Quizzes--15%: There will be a total of three quizzes. Passing them will pose no problem if you attentively read all plays and take thoughtful notes on them and on the related class discussions.

Midterm Exam--20%: Scheduled for the end of October.

Presentation--25%: Each of you will show and discuss a film excerpt that you deem worthy of a presentation that should last approx. 15-20 min. and should address the form, content, and, if possible, the ideology of the film and its excerpt. I will also entertain requests from any of you who might like to present as a group of two or more. Presentations are scheduled for 9/28, 10/26, 11/30, and 12/7. I urge you to be one of the brave and happy people who schedule their presentations sooner rather than later!

Final Exam--25%. Scheduled for the last day of class, 12/13.

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity will be required to participate in the procedural process outlined in that policy. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz or exam will be imposed.

Note: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me and Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890/412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

CLASS SCHEDULE

ICDS = In-class screening/discussion, RA = Reading Assignment, WA = Written Assignment

- 08/31:** ICSD One Day in September (MacDonald, 2000), 90 min.
RA for 9/7: Chpts. 1 "Photography" (1-46) & 2 "Mise-en-Scene" (47-97)
- 09/07:** ICSD The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (Ford, 1962), 119 min.
RA for 9/14: Chpt. 3 "Movement" (99-139) & Chpt. 10 "Ideology" (427-472)
- 09/14:** ICSD The Mummy Returns (Sommers, 2002), 130 min.
RA for 9/21: Chpt. 4 "Editing" (142-216); WA for 9/21: Quiz #1
- 09/21:** ICSD Rear Window (Hitchcock, 1954), 112 min.
RA for 10/5: Chpt. 5 "Sound" (217-254)
- 09/28:** In class: Presentations
- 10/05:** ICSD Diva (Beineix, 1982), 123 min.
RA for 10/12: Chpt. 6 "Acting" (255-305); WA for 10/12: Quiz #2
- 10/12:** ICSD Waiting for Guffman (Guest, 1998), 84 min.
RA for 10/19: Chpts. 7 "Drama" (307-348) & 11 "Critique" (473-510)
- 10/19:** ICSD The Cradle Will Rock (Robbins, 1999), 132 min.
RA for 11/2: Chpt. 8 "Story" (349-388)
- 10/26:** In class: Presentations
WA for 11/2: Midterm
- 11/02:** ICSD: Psycho (Hitchcock, 1960), 109 min.
RA for 11/9: Chpt. 9 "Writing" (389-426)
- 11/09:** ICSD: Room with a View (Ivory, 1985), 115 min.
WA for 11/16: Quiz #3
- 11/16:** In-class screening Gladiator (Scott, 2000), 160 min.
- 11/23:** No class. Happy Thanksgiving!
- 11/30:** In class: Gladiator discussion; Presentations
- 12/07:** In class: Presentations
- 12/14:** In class: Final Exam

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY!