

- Fall Semester, 2014 English 4315:1– Film as Narrative MAB 200, Tues., 6-8:30 p.m. Instructor: Nelson Sager, Prof. of English. E-mail: nsager@sulross.edu. Tele: 432/837-8153 Office: MAB 112D Office Hrs: MW 9-11, 2-3:30; Tues. 9-11; 1-2, and by appt.

TEXT: Ryan, Michael and Melissa Lenos. *Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in Narrative Film*. New York: Continuum, 2012. ISBN 9780826430021.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSED OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES: Students in this course will study film as a narrative form to learn the following skills: (1) to identify the basic film-making techniques and story components as used to tell a story visually and audibly; (2) to discern these elements in well-crafted films that effectively tell stories visually and audibly, to differentiate these films from those only mediocre; (3) to recognize the qualities of certain films which have earned their status as classics, differentiating between existence in a film of a certain technique and excellent use and application of the technique in the film; (4) identify how values of the society and culture in which these films were produced affected their final form and (5) be able to produce critically-based written film analyses of some aspect of one or more of the films studied in this class or an equivalent film, using effective evaluative and expletive criteria applied while viewing film and reading established critical opinion written about the film.

For the Purposes of Program Outcomes, the Course Objectives for this course are as follows: Students in this course will be able to

Understand the vocabulary and techniques of film-making used to create audio/visual cinematic narratives and then apply this knowledge to the analysis of these narratives, developed from adaptations of print fictional forms (short story, novel, etc.) as well as from original film-scripts

Respond to examinations on cinematic narratives screened and discussed in this course

Develop and organize essays written in expository, persuasive, and research-based modes.

Conduct online research using library databases and creditable web sites.

Understand how to interpret, analyze, evaluate and produce visual images and messages in media associated with film narrative [story boards as well as screen images]

GRADING: The final grade in the course will be determined from the following weighted assignments:

Undergraduate GRADE = .25(Exam 1) + .25(Exam 2) + .25(Crit. Anal.)+ .25(Final Exam) = numerical grade on which course letter grade is based.

Exams are objective and short answer in format, open book and open notes. The written critical analysis is to be a paper with one inch margins, double-spaced, written on one side of the page, with a text of 5-10 pages in length. It is a short documented paper showing evidence of research performed by using at least three outside sources integrated into the text of the paper through quotation and paraphrase

of material from the outside sources. These sources should be properly cited in the text using the current MLA system of documentation, and each source should be properly listed in a Works Cited list at the end of the paper. The Work Cited list is not to be counted as a page of text. Sources may be acquired from the internet WWW, but at least one source must be from a hard-copy text (i.e. off the shelf) in the Sul Ross library.

Letter Grade Equivalents:

A = 89.51-100

B = 79.51- 89.5

C = 69.51-79.5

D = 60-69.5

F = any average below 60

Attendance and Make-up Policy: Since classes meeting once a week are the equivalent of a full week of MWF classes, after 3 absences, the student is eligible to be administratively dropped from the class. An administrative drop based on absences automatically assigns a letter grade of F on the student's transcript. There is no make-up available for lecture and discussion; you are either present to take part, or not. If you know you will be absent when major tests and written assignments, or screening of films are scheduled, wherever it is possible, you should make arrangements to complete the scheduled work ahead of time, turn in assignments ahead of time, or take exams, or watch the films in advance. If you are scheduled for an authorized school trip or have a verifiable family or health emergency that precludes fulfilling requirements in advance, I will work out other arrangements with you.

Americans with disabilities Act

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartze, M. Ed., L. P. C. in Counseling and Accesibility Services in counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203. E-mail: mschwartze@sulross.edu.

Tentative Schedule of Readings and Activities:

Aug 26 Introduction to the course: discuss tentative plan and sequence of course; establish the critical apparatus upon which the viewing of films will be based; begin screening *The Graduate*. Begin reading assignment: pp. 1-34 of *An Introduction to Film Analysis*.

Sep 02 Complete screening of *The Graduate*; reading assignment: text, *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 35-51.

Sep 09 Screening of *Chinatown*; reading assignment in *An Introduction to Film Analysis*: pp. 52-74.

Sep 16 Screening of *No Country for Old Men*; reading assignment in *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 75-95 and 169-176.

Sep 23 Screening of *Atonement*; reading in *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 96-118.

Sep 30 Exam 1

Oct 06 Screening of *Grand Hotel Budapest*; reading assignment in *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 119-131.

Oct 13 Screening of *Zoot Suit*; reading assignment in *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 133-140.

Oct 20 Screening of *A Soldier's Story*; reading assignment in *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 141-152.

Oct 27 Screening of *The Searchers*; reading assignment in *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 215-223.

Nov 04 Exam 2

Nov 11 Screening of *Stranger Than Fiction*; reading assignment in *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 163-167.

Nov 18 Screening of *Apocalypse Now*; reading assignment in *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 200-206.

NOV 25 NOTE: This course will meet on this date; Thanksgiving break does not begin until Wednesday, Nov 26! Screening of "Hills Like White Elephants." Reading assignment: handouts on the short story.

Dec 02 Last Class day Review for Exam 3 with screening of film segments. **SUBMIT WRITTEN CRITICAL FILM ANALYSIS THROUGH SAFE ASSIGN IN BLACKBOARD.**

Dec 09 Final exam

↓ Critical Essay on Film

- This essay should be similar to the one that I have given you as a model (i.e. essay on the seduction sequence in *The Graduate* film). I would like for you to select a narrative film in which you discuss the elements of film (shots, cuts, lighting, musical scoring and other sound effects, etc.) that are used to present the story in film form. The essay should be 3 1/2 to 5 pages in length and have a list of works consulted (bibliography/Works Cited list). This essay must be submitted through SAFE ASSIGN Blackboard.
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