

**SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
COMM 1325: INTRODUCTION TO FILM STUDIES**

FALL 2015
Tuesday/Thursday
12:30 pm – 1:45 pm
BAB 304

Marjorie Scott, Assistant Professor
Office: FAB 203A
Phone: 432-837-803
E-mail: mjscott3@sulross.edu
Office hours:
MWF 9 am – 10 am & TTH 10 am – 11 am
Other hours by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class provides an introduction to the basic tools of film analysis. We will examine how elements like mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing and sound work together to create meaning in a range of films. We will also examine how these elements are put together in different types of films – narratives, documentaries and experimental cinema – and how films function in society to circulate ideas and ideologies. Intro to Film Studies is designed to provide you with the skills to analyze film aesthetics, as well as an understanding of the tremendously important role films play in our culture.

We'll view 14 films over the course of the semester, in addition to selected clips from several other films. The selection of the 14 films was made using the following criteria:

- 1) Does the film have theme beyond the entertainment value of the story?**
- 2) Is the film recognized within the canon of film criticism as defining in its particular genre?**
- 3) Does the film have a particular strength or element suited to a lecture topic in this class?**

Analyzing a film is an acquired skill and it takes time and effort to develop the ability to “see” the many layers in good cinema. This course is an attempt to broaden both the idea of what a film can be and your own personal tastes.

PREREQUISITES

None.

TEXTBOOK

Giannetti, Louis, *Understanding Movies*, Pearson; 13th edition (July 6, 2013).

ISBN-10: 0205856160

ISBN-13: 978-0205856169

Copies of the textbook are available at the Sul Ross Bookstore or may be rented through Amazon. Other readings will be in the form of handouts provided by the instructor.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course is designed to meet one or more of the program learning outcomes applied to all Communication majors. The graduating student will demonstrate:

1. Competency in public presentations, including the use of presentation technology such as presentation software, video, and audio.
2. The ability to analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claims, warrants, data, etc.
3. Competency in appropriate discipline specific written communication.
4. The ability to apply communication theory to the analysis of communication situations appropriate to each degree specialization.
5. Competency in the application of media technology including video, audio, and internet-based technology.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this class, students will:

- Demonstrate a working vocabulary of film criticism terminology.
- Articulate the formal elements of cinema.
- Evaluate and critique cinematic works from the standpoints of both art and craft.
- Recognize and define elements that belong to various cinema styles (formalist, realist, etc.).
- Synthesize the elements of cinema critique into a clear, thoughtful point-of-view in written form.

SCREENINGS

Film screenings are mandatory. That means you must attend each and every one, even if you've seen the film(s) before. Any films you've seen previously I guarantee you'll see quite differently this time around. As a class, we will determine what day and time the weekly screenings will take place. This day/time will not change during the course of the semester. All screenings will be held in BAB 304 (this room) unless otherwise noted.

RESPONSES

You are required to submit a written response to each film via email no later than 10 p.m. on Sunday. Responses must answer all questions posed by the instructor during each Thursday setup class and must be sent to me at following email address: msscott3@sulross.edu. You must be prepared to discuss the films in class on Tuesdays.

CLASS DATES: Assignments and Deadlines

Note that the dates and details of each class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

DATE	TOPIC	READING DUE/ACTIVITY
Aug 25	Introduction to the class. Review syllabus.	What's Your Favorite Movie?

Aug 27	Lecture: Defining Formal Qualities View Clips	Giannetti, Ch. 1: Photography
Sept 1	Lecture: Critique vs. Review	
Sept 3	Setup: <i>Working Girl</i>	Giannetti, Ch. 2: Mise En Scène
	SCREENING: <i>Working Girl</i> , (Dir. Mike Nichols, USA, 1988) 116 minutes	
Sept 8	Review: <i>Working Girl</i>	
Sept 10	Setup: <i>Trainspotting</i>	Corrigan & White, Ch. 3: “Framing What We See: Cinematography” (Handout)
	SCREENING: <i>Trainspotting</i> (Dir. Danny Boyle, UK 1996) 94 minutes	
Sept 15	Review: <i>Trainspotting</i>	
Sept 17	Setup: <i>The Battle of Algiers</i>	
	SCREENING: <i>The Battle of Algiers</i> (Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo, Italy 1967) 121 minutes	
Sept 22	Review: <i>The Battle of Algiers</i>	
Sept 24	Setup: <i>Hoop Dreams</i>	Corrigan & White, Ch. 7: “Representing the Real: Documentary Films” (Handout)
	SCREENING: <i>Hoop Dreams</i> (Dir. Steve James, USA 1994) 170 minutes	
Sept 29	Review: <i>Hoop Dreams</i>	
Oct 1	Setup: <i>The Conversation</i> (Watergate scandal, wire-tapping, etc.)	Giannetti: Chapter 5: Sound
	SCREENING: <i>The Conversation</i> (Dir. Francis Ford Coppola, USA 1974) 113 minutes	
Oct 6	Review: <i>The Conversation</i>	
Oct 8	Setup: <i>Raging Bull</i> View clips: <i>The Cutting Edge: the Magic of Movie Editing</i> (Dir. Wendy Apple)	QUIZ #1 Giannetti, Ch. 4: Editing
	SCREENING: <i>Raging Bull</i> (Dir. Martin Scorsese, USA 1980) 129 minutes	
Oct 13	Review: <i>Raging Bull</i>	
Oct 15	Setup: <i>Seven Samurai</i> (Films in Historical Context)	Corrigan & White, Ch. 12, “Writing a Film Essay: Observations, Arguments, Research and Analysis” (Handout)
	SCREENING: <i>Seven Samurai</i> (Dir. Akira Kurosawa, Japan 1954) 207 minutes	
Oct 20	Review: <i>Seven Samurai</i>	
Oct 22	Setup: <i>The Third Man</i> (Film Noir)	Midterm Papers Due in class
	SCREENING: <i>The Third Man</i> (Dir. Carol Reed, UK 1949) 93 minutes	
Oct 27	Review: <i>The Third Man</i>	
Oct 29	Setup: <i>Let the Right One In</i> (Horror)	Corrigan & White, Ch. 9: “Rituals, Conventions, Archetypes, and Formulas: Movie Genres” (Handout)
	SCREENING: <i>Let the Right One In</i> (Dir. Tomas Alfredson, Sweden 2009) 115 minutes	
Nov 3	Review: <i>Let the Right One In</i>	

Nov 5	Setup: <i>Chan is Missing</i>	Giannetti, Ch. 10: Ideology QUIZ #2
	SCREENING: <i>Chan is Missing</i> (Dir. Wayne Wang, USA 1982) 80 minutes	
Nov 10	Review: <i>Chan is Missing</i>	
Nov 12	Setup: <i>The Godfather</i>	
	SCREENING: <i>The Godfather</i> (Dir. Francis Ford Coppola, USA 1972) 175 minutes	
Nov 17	Review: <i>The Godfather</i>	
Nov 19	Setup: <i>Vagabond</i>	Giannetti, Ch. 8: Story
	SCREENING: <i>Vagabond</i> (Dir. Agnès Varda, France 1985) 105 minutes	
Nov 24	Review: <i>Vagabond</i>	
Nov 26	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING	
Dec 1	Setup: <i>Lawrence of Arabia</i> (Dir. David Lean, UK 1962) 216 minutes	
Dec 3	NO CLASS – DEAD DAY	
Dec 10	FINAL PAPERS DUE – Thursday, Dec. 10th at 10:15 a.m.	

GRADING

Assignments are valued as follows:

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| 1) Attendance and Participation | 20% |
| 2) Quizzes (2) | 10% |
| 3) Weekly Written Responses | 30% |
| 4) Midterm Paper | 20% |
| 5) Final Paper | 20% |

Grading Criteria:

A = Exceptional. Demonstrates mastery of material beyond expectation. Professional quality of work. Highest level of scholarship.

B = Above average. Demonstrates mastery of material. Work is of better-than-expected quality, but not quite professional. High level of scholarship.

C = Average. Demonstrates proficiency with material. Work is of amateur quality. Ordinary level of scholarship.

D = Below Average. Less than proficient with material. Work shows errors, careless mistakes, or is just plain wrong. Poor scholarship

F – Failure. Material incomplete. Work grossly negligent or incomplete. No evidence of scholarship present.

LATE WORK

Deadlines are an inescapable part of responsible, professional, adult life. Late papers will lose a letter grade for *each* day that the paper is late. I will no longer accept papers one

week after the deadline. Final papers will not be accepted after the due date.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Combined, attendance and participation make up 20% of your overall grade. Keep in mind that you can't participate if you don't attend.

Class will start promptly at 12:30 p.m. Lateness will not be tolerated. Each tardy is equal to one-half of one absence. Being on time means arriving early!

NOTE: As this class is one hour and fifteen minutes, each absence counts as one and one half absence. This means that after six (6) unexcused absences, I will drop you from the course with an "F."

For your perusal, the following is the Absence Policy, from the Sul Ross State University Course Catalogue:

Regular class attendance is important to the attainment of the educational objectives of the University. Each instructor will keep class attendance records, and the instructor's policy on class attendance will be explained at the beginning of the semester or term.

The instructors will drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine absences. A student will be dropped for excessive absences in remedial courses after nine absences.

An absence is defined as non-attendance in fifty minutes of class; for example, non-attendance in a one and one-half hour class will constitute one and one-half absences and non-attendance in a three-hour class will constitute three absences. An absence because of participation in an official University activity is considered to be an authorized absence.

ELETRONIC DEVICES

Please turn off all cell phones upon entering class. If you ignore this rule, you will be asked to leave the class. Or, you can give me your cell phone. Your choice.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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 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](tel:432-837-8203).