

Fall Semester, 2015 English 4315:1– Film as Narrative MAB 200, Tues., 6-8:30 p.m.

This syllabus will also serve as a general description of the course under the course number of English 5304, for graduate students, with some additional assignments.

Instructor: Nelson Sager, Prof. of English. E-mail: nsager@sulross.edu Tele: 432/837-8153 Office: MAB 112D Office Hrs: MW 9-11, 3-4; 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.

Graduating students in English major and Education Generalist programs will demonstrate that they can

1. Construct essays that demonstrate unity, organization, coherence, and development
2. Analyze literary works by applying principles of literary criticism or theory
3. Produce research papers that demonstrate the ability to locate a variety of acceptable sources, employ them effectively through quotations or paraphrases, integrate them smoothly into the writer's own prose, and document them correctly using MLA format
4. Demonstrate creativity or originality of thought in written or multimedia projects

5. Compare/contrast and analyze major works and periods of literature assigned in this course..
6. Understand how to interpret, analyse, evaluate and produce visual images and messages in various media and to provide students with opportunities to develop skills in this area.

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 Schwartz](#) 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

Tentative Schedule of Screening Assignments and Class Activities

Aug 25 [first class meeting] 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 discussing reading assignment: pp. 1-34 of *An Introduction to Film Analysis*. Selective screening of shots and sequences from *The Graduate* illustrating film narrative techniques.

Sep 08 Reading Assignment: *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 35-51. Discussion of film genre; discussion of the detective film. Begin to screen *Chinatown*.

Sep 15 Reading Assignment: *An Introduction to Film Analysis*: pp. 52-74. Continue screening *Chinatown*.

Sep 22 Screen *No Country for Old Men*. Reading assignment in *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 75-95 and 169-176

Sep 29 Continue to screen of *No Country for Old Men*; screening of film clips from various films illustrating film editing techniques.

Oct 06 **Exam 1 will cover reading assignments and films and film clips screened in class so far)**

Oct 13 Reading Assignment: *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 96-132. Begin screening *Atonement*.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atonement_%28film%29

<http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/atonement/>

Oct 20 Continue to screen *Atonement*;

Oct 27 Screen *Zoot Suit*; Reading Assignment: *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 133-162.

Nov 03 Screen *A Soldier's Story*; Review Reading Assignment *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 141-152.

Nov 10 Exam 2 (over reading assignments since last exam, films: *Atonement*, *Zoot Suit*, and *A Soldier's Story*.)

Nov 17 Screen *Stranger Than Fiction*; reading assignment in *An Introduction to Film Analysis*, pp. 163-167

Nov 24 [**There will be a class meeting on this date: Thanksgiving break does not begin until the next day, Nov. 25**] Screen "The Sign of the Three" from the *Sherlock* television series (tentative)

Dec 02 Screened film, TBA

Dec 08 Final Exam will cover comprehensive references to all reading assignments and last three films screened in class)