

# INTRODUCTION TO FILM STUDIES

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Office Hours by Appointment**

## **Course Description:**

This course is a general introduction to the discipline of Film Studies. Through lectures, readings, screenings, writings, and collective discussions, students will acquire a skill-set with which to develop formal and thematic understandings of films and of the ways in which cinema has evolved globally as art, technology, and social practice from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to today's digital age. Focusing both on the basic vocabulary necessary to analyze filmic forms (including narrative, *mise-en-scène*, cinematography, editing, and sound) and key-elements of film history and theory (including genre, authorship, industry, technology, and new media), the course will explain the vivid evolution of cinema as an art and an industry.

## **Course Structure and Student Responsibilities:**

Students are expected to fully participate by carrying out the assessed reading and writing, actively involve in classroom discussions and viewings, and give scheduled oral presentations.

## **Learning Goals:**

Students completing this course should:

1. be able to analyze and differentiate filmic discourses on subjects in terms of narrative structure, cinematic techniques, and cultural contexts.
2. be able to distinguish individual styles and techniques of selected directors and place the work in context with cinema history and aesthetics.
3. demonstrate a basic understanding of and ability to produce film language.
4. be able to think critically about ways in which filmic narratives and forms contribute to the understanding of cultures and histories.

## **Course Hours:**

The course has 20 class sessions in total. Each class session is 120 minutes in length. The course meets from Monday to Thursday. The course has a total of 40 class hours (4 credit hours).

## **Required Text:**

Andrew Dix, *Beginning Film Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition  
Manchester University Press

**Language:** English

## **Course Requirements:**

- Two home-papers: a 1.500 words analytic essay on a film screened in class (with detailed observation of shots, attention to production techniques and formal qualities, and use of Film Studies terminology) and a 1.500 words critical essay on a film screened in class in relation to readings and notions studied in class. Both essays should be in Times New Roman (12 point), double-space, with a 1-inch margin on each side.
- One in-class quiz (vocabulary definitions and short-answer questions).

- One final exam (essay questions; ability to identify key issues, notions, and arguments, and to explain the student's major ideas and thoughts, and to take them to task on concrete filmic examples). The two home-papers and the final exam test students' ability to understand, formulate, illustrate and discuss key-concepts examined during the course and their meanings.
- A brief oral presentation (10 minutes) by groups of 2 students explaining and illustrating a thematic or formal topic in a film studied in class and chosen in agreement with the Professor.
- Attendance and participation in all classes.

### Grading Policy:

The grades you earn in this course will depend on your performance. The following grading guidelines will be used :

A/A- Excellent; the assignment demonstrates rigorous intellectual engagement, great care and extra effort, clear planning, extensive development and excellent written and/or oral expression. You can also earn an excellent grade when your work shows great creativity and originality.

B+/B Very Good; the assignment reflects mature thought, care and effort. You have gone beyond the basic minimum requirements and have taken the time to think your subject through and to produce a thoughtful, polished piece of writing or a well-rehearsed presentation.

B-/C+ Good. You have submitted an assignment that is complete, well-organized and shows strong potential;

C/C- Satisfactory. You have correctly completed the basic minimum requirements of the assignment;

D+/D Unsatisfactory. The assignment is submitted incomplete;

F Poor. There is little or no evidence of effort to complete the assignment or to improve.

If you would like to dispute any grade in this course, you must do so within one week of receiving the grade (this includes exams).

### Assessment:

1. Attendance/Discussion/Participation	10%
2. Analytic Essay	15%
3. Quiz	15%
4. Critical Essay	15%
5. Oral Presentation	20%
6. Final Examination	25%

Cell phones, pagers, game devices, etc. must be switched off (not set to vibrate) when you are in class. Computer use should be limited to note-taking. If you will be using your laptop in class, please sit on the left side of the room to reduce distraction to other students.

## Schedule of Classes and Assignments

**7/13 Introduction – The Invention of Film Studies**

Read Dix, 'Introduction'

**7/14 What Does The Image Look Like? *Mise-en-scène* and Cinematography**

Read Dix, Chapter 1

**7/17 Screening:** Vittorio De Sica, *Bicycle Thieves* (Italy, 1948)

**7/18 Making the Film As A Whole: Film Editing**

Read Dix, Chapter 2

**7/19 Hearing Films: Sound and Music**

Read Dix, Chapter 3

**7/20 Screening:** Alfred Hitchcock, *Vertigo* (USA, 1958)

**7/21 How Do Films Tell Stories? Film and Narrative**

Read Dix, Chapter 4

**7/24 How Many Kinds Of Story Are There In Cinema? Film and Genre**

Read Dix, Chapter 5

**7/25 Screening:** Wim Wenders, *Wings of Desire* (Germany, 1987)

**7/26 Who Makes The Film? Film and Authorship**

Read Dix, Chapter 6

**7/27 Actors Brighter Than Films: Film Stars and Cinema**

Read Dix, Chapter 7

**\*\*\* Quiz \*\*\***

**7/28 Screening:** Wong Kar Waï, *In the Mood for Love* (Hong Kong, 2000)

**7/31 What Do Films Really Say? Films, Politics, and Ideology**

Read Dix, Chapter 8

**Correction of Quiz #1**

**\*\*\* Analytic Essay Due \*\*\***

**8/1 Where Are Films Made And How? Film Industries**

Read Dix, Chapter 9

**8/2 Screening:** Jean-Pierre Jeunet, *Amélie* (France, 2001)

**8/3 Who Are The Moviegoers? Film Consumption**

Read Dix, Chapter 10

**\*\*\* Oral Presentation Outline Due \*\*\* (1 page : title, abstract, corpus, bibliography)**

**8/4 Today's Filmic Reinvention: Cinema In The Digital Age**

Read Dix, 'Conclusion'

**\*\*\* Critical Essay Due \*\*\***

**8/7 Screening:** Alejandro González Iñárritu, *Babel* (Mexico/USA, 2006)

**8/8 Oral Presentations**

**8/9 Final Examination**