

INTRODUCTION TO FILM - SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

'Introduction to Film Studies' is the study of the production, aesthetics and history of the 20th century's most important visual medium—the cinema. In a dynamic mix of lectures, excerpts, readings, screenings, class discussions and exercises (oral and written, collective and individual), students will acquire a skill-set with which to develop formal and thematic understandings of films and the ways in which cinema has evolved globally as art, technology, and social practice from the late 19th 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 rapidly changing ecosystems of cinema as an art and an industry.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are expected to take notes during lectures and screenings, carry out assigned readings and written exercises, as well as involve actively in classroom discussions and exercises.

LEARNING GOALS

Students completing this course should be able to:

1. Understand the nature and process of film production
2. Learn how to read and analyze films
3. Explore the major aesthetic trends in the history of cinema
4. Think critically about ways in which filmic narratives and forms contribute to the understanding of cultures and histories
5. Work collaboratively with their peers to produce short films in a variety of ways

COURSE HOURS

The course has 20 class sessions in total. Each class session is 120 minutes in length. The course meets

from Monday to Friday. The course has a total of 40 class hours.

REQUIRED TEXT (AVAILABLE AS PDF AT THE SCHOOL'S OFFICE)

Andrew Dix, *Beginning Film Studies*, 2nd Edition, Manchester University Press, 2016

Language: English

ISBN-13: 978-1-7849-9138-8

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Class assignments, exercises, and oral participation.
- One page-long Viewing Report Card for each of the five films screened in class.
- One in-class quiz (vocabulary definitions and short-answer questions).
- One home-paper: 1.000 word-long Film Review analyzing and evaluating a film screened in class (with detailed observation of shots, attention to production techniques and formal qualities, and use of Film Studies terminology). In Times New Roman (12 point), double-space, with a 1-inch margin on each side. Tests students' ability to understand, formulate, illustrate and discuss key-concepts examined during the course. Demonstrates students' ability to formulate ideas/opinions about a film and illustrate it with concrete examples.
- A 15 minute-long oral presentation explaining and illustrating a thematic or formal topic in a film chosen in agreement with the Professor, with a PowerPoint containing images and quotes. It may be an extended version of the Film Review.
- A Smartphone Film: 3-5 minute-long film with prep. work (script-writing, story-boarding, casting, dialogue-writing, shooting, editing, reporting, presenting).

GRADING POLICY

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

A/A- Excellent; performance demonstrates rigorous intellectual engagement, great care and extra effort, clear planning, extensive development and excellent written and oral expression. Work also shows great creativity and originality.

B+/B Very Good; performance reflects mature thought, care and effort. You have gone beyond basic minimum requirements and taken the time to think your subjects through and produce thoughtful, polished work, written and oral.

B-/C+ Good. You have performed and submitted work and assignments that are complete, well-organized and show strong potential;

C/C- Satisfactory. You correctly completed the course's basic minimum requirements;

D+/D Unsatisfactory. Work and assignment are submitted incomplete;

F Poor. Little or no evidence of effort to complete assignments 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. Oral Participation and Class Exercises	15%
2. Film Viewing Report Cards	15%
3. In-Class Quiz	15%
4. Film Review Home-Paper	20%
5. Smartphone Film	15%
6. Oral Presentation	20%

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.

Class Schedule and Assignments

7/8 Introduction – The Invention of Film Studies

- Lecture with Movie Clips

- Read Dix, 'Introduction'

→ Task : Detailed description of how specific movies changed/awed/thrilled/moved/ haunted you and Why you think they affected you so much; Group work on study questions in Dix

7/9 Story, Script, and *Mise-en-scène*

- Lecture with Movie Clips
- Read Dix, Chapter 1, pp. 12-24

→ Tasks : Synopsis write-up; Fill-in script worksheets with scene/sequence descriptions; Dialogues and voice-over write-up; Group work on study questions in Dix

7/10 What Do Images Look Like : Cinematography

- Lecture with Movie Clips
- Read Dix, Chapter 1, pp. 24-33

→ Tasks : Smartphone camera movements exercises; Text-to-Image storyboarding; Group work on study questions in Dix

7/11 The Film As a Whole: *Montage* and Editing

- Lecture with Movie Clips
- Read Dix, Chapter 2

→ Tasks : Various editing styles identification exercises; Group work on study questions in Dix

7/12 Screening: Woody Allen, *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (USA, 1985)

→ Task : Fill in Film Viewing Report Card

7/15 Hearing Films: Sound and Music

- Lecture with Movie Clips

- Read Dix, Chapter 3

→ Tasks : Find sounds/music to images and scripts; Storyboard after sounds/music; Find/Record sound-effects; Group work on study questions in Dix

7/16 How Do Films Tell Stories? Film and Narrative

- Lecture with Movie Clips

- Read Dix, Chapter 4

→ Tasks : Complete storyboarding (story, cinematography, sound/music); Group work on study questions in Dix

7/17 How Many Kinds of Stories Are There in Cinema? Film and Genres

- Lecture with Movie Clips

- Read Dix, Chapter 5

→ Tasks : Genre identifications exercises (recognition, scripting, dialogue-writing, music finding); Group work on study questions in Dix

7/18 Who Really Makes the Film: Its Author, the Industry, the Public ?

- Lecture with Movie Clips

- Read Dix, Chapters 6, 9, and 10

→ Task : Group work on study questions in Dix; In-Class Quiz (1 hour-long)

7/19 Screening: Peter Weir, *The Truman Show* (U.S.A., 1998)

→ Task : Fill in Film Viewing Report Card

7/22 Actors Brighter Than Films: Movie Stars

- Lecture with Movie Clips

- Read Dix, Chapter 7

→ Tasks : Correction of In-Class Quiz; Film Review Writing Prep.; Stars identification exercises in contemporary visual culture; Group work on study questions in Dix

7/23 **What Do Films Really Say? Cinema, Values, and Ideas**

- Lecture with Movie Clips

- Read Dix, Chapter 8

→ Tasks : Image analysis exercises in contemporary visual culture; Group work on study questions in Dix; Oral Presentation Outline Due (1 page : title, summary, corpus)

7/24 **Cinema in the Digital Age**

- Lecture with Movie Clips

- Read Dix, 'Conclusion'

→ Tasks : Digital image analysis/composition; Group work on study questions in Dix

7/25 **Beyond the Movie Screen: From Cinema to TV Series to Video Games**

- Lecture with Movie Clips

→ Tasks : Film Review Home-Paper Due (1.500 word-long paper analysing and evaluating a film screened in class (with detailed observation of shots, attention to production techniques and formal qualities, and use of Film Studies terminology); Formal analysis of TV series and video games with Film Studies notions (script, cinematography, sound-music); Series and games scripting and storyboarding

7/26 **Screening: Jean-Pierre Jeunet, *Amélie* (France, 2001)**

→ Task : Fill in Film Viewing Report Card

7/29 **Making a Film With a Smartphone, Part I : Production**

→ Tasks : Write a script; Create a storyboard including camera angle, distance, and movement; Assemble crew and cast; Estimate how much time you need for filming; Review availability of locations

7/30 Making a Film With a Smartphone, Part II : Public Screening

→ Tasks : Learn dialogues; Film; View video raw footage; Adjust/re-shoot if necessary; Transfer rush on computers; Edit rushes; Complete director's report; Present film to class; Take questions/comments

7/31 Oral Presentations, Part I

→ Tasks : 15 minute-long oral presentation explaining and illustrating a thematic and/or formal topic in a film chosen in agreement with the Professor, with a PowerPoint containing images and quotes, followed by questions and discussion. (May be an extended version of the Film Review.)

8/1 Oral Presentations, Part II

→ Tasks : 15 minute-long oral presentation explaining and illustrating a thematic and/or formal topic in a film chosen in agreement with the Professor, with a PowerPoint containing images and quotes, followed by questions and discussion. (May be an extended version of the Film Review.)

8/2 Screening: John Madden, *Shakespeare in Love* (U.K., 1998)

→ Task : Fill in Film Viewing Report Card

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