

ENG 2300: Film Analysis—Metacinema

Section 7308
MWF, 7; W, E1-E3
ROL 115

Instructor: Caleb Milligan
Email: camilligan@ufl.edu
Office Hours: TUR 4412;
MWF, 2-3 (or by appointment)

Course Description

In this course, we will question what film has done, is doing, and will do as a historically established, yet still vibrantly evolving form of expression. To best reflect upon the nature of film, we will turn our attention to the long tradition of films that do just that and reflect upon themselves. By partaking in a representative sample of “film about film,” “meta-movies,” we will see the wide variety of facets there is to appreciate about film as film.

In this course you will more accurately learn to analyze film. This course will teach you how to see and hear film more effectively, how to use terminology for describing what you see, and to engage in film history and theoretical contexts that inform the making of film. Assignments will include discussion posts, short essays, and a final research paper. These writing assignments urge you to think about film argumentatively: rather than “reviewing” these films, you will construct contestable arguments that examine how film form develops concepts. You should thus gain appreciation for the analysis and composition of film as an artistic medium.

Required Texts

All required print texts for this course will be available through the UF Bookstore in the Reitz Union, or online via www.uf.bkstr.com.

Corrigan, Timothy & Patricia White. *The Film Experience: An Introduction*.
Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2014. ISBN: 1457663546.

Other assigned readings will be made available via Canvas

Assignments (see below for Assessment Rubric)

(1000 total points possible)

200 Sequence Analysis

You will analyze a short filmic sequence from one of the films we view in class, paying particular attention to editing, cinematography, and mise-en-scène. Your paper should

demonstrate your individual understanding of how to apply specific film terminology in a short, focused discussion of a scene. It must be at least **1000** and no more than **1250** words.

250 Film Analysis

You will analyze a film in its entirety, paying particular attention to its overall narrative structure and how it achieves its effects through filmic language. It is not a plot summary: you will not be discussing *what* happens, but *how* it happens. Your paper should utilize one theoretical essay assigned in class to nuance your discussion. It must be at least **1500** and no more than **1750** words.

300 Research Paper

You will compose a research paper that takes up an issue discussed in our critical texts and demonstrated in our filmic texts. Your paper should present an original argument that engages larger critical conversations by citing at least *three* theoretical essays assigned in class and at least *three* other scholarly sources found through your own research in its discussion of one or more of our assigned films. It must be at least **2000** and no more than **2500** words.

150 Discussion Posts

You will contribute a post based on your screening notes due each Friday to our weekly discussion board on Canvas. In these discussion posts, you should write about an aspect from the film you found interesting and assert why it deserves critical attention. Each must be at least **100** words.

100 Participation

You must be an active and engaged part of the course to not only receive participation credit but to ensure that our course will be an academically fruitful experience. This grade will be gauged by not only your attendance, but your contribution to in class group activities and larger discussions. **To guarantee receipt of a full grade, you must contribute within class meaningfully at least once a class period.**

Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

Introduction:

1/2 (Holiday Break)

1/4 Course Introduction

(screening) *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), USA: directed by Stanley Donen & Gene Kelly

1/6 *Singin' in the Rain*; *The Film Experience*, "Studying Film: Culture and Experience," 5-18

Mise-en-scène:

1/9 *The Film Experience*, "Mise-en-scène: Exploring a Material World," 63-94

1/11 "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," André Bazin

(screening) *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), Germany: Directed by Robert Wiene

1/13 *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*; "Suggestion, Hypnosis, and Crime: Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*," Stefan Andriopoulos

Mise-en-scène, II:

1/16 (Martin Luther King Day)

1/18 "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962," Andrew Sarris

(screening) *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), USA: Directed by Quentin Tarantino

1/20 *Inglourious Basterds*; "Hyperreality in *Inglourious Basterds*: Tarantino's Interwoven Cinematic World in 1940s France," Kristen Coates

Cinematography, I:

1/23 *The Film Experience*, "Cinematography: Framing What We See," 95-132

1/25 "Cinematography: The Creative Use of Reality," Maya Deren

(screening) *The Red Shoes* (1948), United Kingdom: Directed by Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger

1/27 *The Red Shoes*; "*The Red Shoes*: Dancing for Your Life," David Ehrenstein

Cinematography, II:

1/30 "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Laura Mulvey

2/1 "Toward a General Theory of Film Spectatorship," Todd Oakley

(screening) *Videodrome* (1983), Canada: Directed by David Cronenberg

2/3 *Videodrome*; “Excess and Resistance in Feminized Bodies: David Cronenberg’s *Videodrome* and Jean Baudrillard’s *Seduction*,” Martin Ham

Editing, I:

2/6 *The Film Experience*, “Editing: Relating Images,” 133-174

2/8 “The Illusion of Continuity: Active Perception and the Classical Editing System,” Todd Berliner & Dale J. Cohen

(screening) *Sullivan’s Travels* (1941), USA: Directed by Preston Sturges

2/10 *Sullivan’s Travels*; “What’s the Matter with Capra?’: *Sullivan’s Travels* and the Popular Front,” Kathleen Moran & Michael Rogin

Editing, II:

2/13 “On Editing,” Vsevolod Pudovkin

2/15 “A Dialectic Approach to Film Form,” Sergei Eisenstein

(screening) *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), Russia: Directed by Dziga Vertov

2/17 *Man with a Movie Camera*; “Can the Camera See? Mimesis in *Man with a Movie Camera*,” Malcolm Turvey

- **Sequence Analysis DUE**

Sound:

2/20 *The Film Experience*, “Film Sound: Listening to the Cinema,” 175-209

2/22 “Ideology and the Practice of Sound Editing and Mixing,” Mary Ann Doane

(screening) *Persona* (1966), Sweden: Directed by Ingmar Bergman

2/24 *Persona*; “Consequences of a Silent World,” Adam Scovell

Narrative, I:

2/27 *The Film Experience*, “Narrative Films: Telling Stories,” 213-252

3/1 “Some Points in the Semiotics of the Cinema,” Christian Metz

(screening) *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973), Spain: Directed by Victor Erice

3/3 *The Spirit of the Beehive*; “‘Les Enfants et les Cinéphiles’: The Moment of Epiphany in *The Spirit of the Beehive*,” Chris Darke

Spring Break:

3/6 (Spring Break)

3/8 (Spring Break)

(no screening)

3/10 (Spring Break)

Narrative, II:

3/13 “Film-Thinking and Narrative Indeterminacy,” Jimmy Billingham

3/15 “Focalization in Film Narrative,” Celestine Deleyto

(screening) *One Wonderful Sunday* (1947), Japan: Directed by Akira Kurosawa

3/17 *One Wonderful Sunday*; “Kurosawa Akira’s *One Wonderful Sunday*: Censorship, Context, and ‘Counter-Discursive’ Film,” Rachael Hutchinson

- **Film Analysis DUE**

Genre, I:

3/20 *The Film Experience*, “Movie Genres: Conventions, Formulas, and Audience Expectations,” 311-349

3/22 “Notes on Film Noir,” Paul Schrader

(screening) *Mulholland Drive* (2001), USA: Directed by David Lynch

3/24 *Mulholland Drive*; “‘No Hay Banda, and yet We Hear a Band’: David Lynch’s Reversal of Coherence in *Mulholland Drive*,” Jennifer A. Hudson

Genre, II:

3/27 “Hybrid or Inbred: The Purity Hypothesis and Hollywood Genre History,” Janet Staiger

3/29 “Film Parody and the Resuscitation of Genre,” Dan Harries

(screening) *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (2014), Iran: Directed by Ana Lily Amirpour

3/31 *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*; “Genre is a Woman and She Has Fangs—On *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*,” Angelica Jade Bastién

Animation:

4/3 “The Transforming Image: The Roots of Animation in Metamorphosis and Motion,” Tom Gunning

4/5 “Notes Toward a Theory of Animation,” Paul Wells

(screening) *Perfect Blue* (1998); *Millennium Actress* (2002), Japan: Directed by Satoshi Kon

4/7 *Perfect Blue*; *Millennium Actress*; “Satoshi Kon’s Otaku: The Dangers of Technological Fantasy,” Mary Beth McAndrews

Documentary:

4/10 *The Film Experience*, “Documentary Films: Representing the Real,” 253-282

4/12 “The Mockumentary,” Craig Hight

(screening) *The Watermelon Woman* (1996), USA: Directed by Cheryl Dunye

4/14 *The Watermelon Woman*; “Histories of *The Watermelon Woman*: Reflexivity Between Race and Gender,” Catherine Zimmer

Conclusion:

4/17 *The Film Experience*, “Writing a Film Essay: Observations, Arguments, Research, and Analysis,” 429-461

4/19 Course Conclusion

(screening) *Cinema Paradiso* (1988), Italy: Directed by Giuseppe Tornatore

4/21 (Reading Day)

Research Papers DUE 4/24