

English 142.001: Film Analysis

Lecture: Mon, Wed 2:30-3:20 pm 1040 Peabody

Professor Gregory Flaxman

gflax@email.unc.edu

508 Greenlaw Hall

Office Hrs: Mon, Wed 2:30-3:20pm and by appt.

Graduate Instructors: Carson Watlington, Ian Sawyer, and Jonathan Albrite

Description

Film Analysis is intended to introduce students to the techniques, the vocabulary, and ultimately the “rhetoric” of cinema. The course is designed to carefully explore the formal components of filmmaking, most of which students intuitively understand, but the purpose of the class is to inquire into the *effects* that these formal components produce. Why would a given director use a wide-angle lens in a particular scene, and what does such a lens, or a long-take, or an abrupt cut accomplish? These and other similar questions determine the first half of the course. By contrast, the second half of the class shifts to considerations of narrative, rhetoric, ideology, genre, and technology. In an era dominated by newer (digital) media, how can we define the cinema?

Organization

Generally speaking, though with significant exceptions, we'll use the Monday and Wednesday lectures to talk about particular techniques, practices, and concepts related to the films and reading assigned. The Friday section will be devoted to more explicitly discussing the films in greater detail (of course, students should feel free to pose those question during the lectures as well). *Note: to be officially enrolled for the class, students must have signed up for both the general lecture as well as a specific section.*

Screenings, Reading, and Lectures

Students are responsible for (1) what takes place during lecture, (2) assigned readings, (3) assigned films, (4) and assigned multimedia documents. All readings, as well as other texts (e.g., sample exams, terms to know for the exam etc.), can be found in the google dropbox site. The films and multimedia documents are available to watch on a shared google folder (if you encounter any problems, please contact a graduate instructor or the professor).

Recitations

Attendance is not taken in lecture, but it is taken in your sections. Your instructor can explain the policy.

Assignments and Exams

The assignments in this course emerge directly from the kind of work that we will focus on in class. The first two assignments require students to engage in an extended analysis of a fairly succinct clip—to describe formal elements and to discuss their significance in light of the larger narrative. The fourth assignment, which is more creative, asks you to “story-board” a scene from a script, as if you were the director, and then to analyze your storyboard in an attached paper. In addition, students will take five very short quizzes and two exams. Both quizzes and exams are drawn directly from the readings, films, lectures. Note that the first exam will cover all materials from the first nine weeks of the class; the second exam, which is *not comprehensive*, will cover the final seven weeks of the class.

Grades

Final grades reflect the accumulation of assignments, exams, and discussion, the last of which is left to the discretion of the instructors. The percentages below translate into a point system, so that assignment #1 will be worth five points, assignment #4 will be worth fifteen points, etc. The total number of points earned by each student (out of a possible 100 points) will be graded on a curve.

Quizzes 5%

Paper #1 10%

Paper #2 15%

Midterm 20%

Storyboard 15%
Participation 15%
Final Exam 20%

Any questions about grades should be addressed to your instructor and only afterward to the professor. PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN A FAILING GRADE FOR THE COURSE.

Access to Online Lectures:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1JZ_a4CgUcDW8Nj7XRQeqq9D6sQRal-Gk?usp=drive_link

Access to Readings:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PE87feX8s2FpC6DLfSWwTF5tcLRBSC8c?usp=drive_link

Access to Films:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ou3PtCMa63T4iaB2kfh5KZgJGqAcxwb2?usp=drive_link

Please Note: you may need to cut and paste the URL's (above) into your browser.

REVISED Syllabus

Week 3: Early Cinema

Mon. Sepember 4—**Labor Day (No Class)**

Wed. Sepember 6—The “Cinema of Attractions”

Watch: more collected short films from Méliès, Porter, Griffith, etc. in Folder labelled “Early Cinema Part 2” and “Méliès’ Films.” [If you didn’t do this last week or the week before, make sure to watch as many of the short films—collected in the google drive—as you can]

Fri. September 8— Discussion in section

Read: Gunning, “The Cinema of Attractions”

Watch: *Modern Times* (dir. C. Chaplin, 1936)

Week 4: Frame and Off-Frame

Mon. September 11—Framing

Read: Aumont et al, *Aesthetics of Film* (9-18, 26-31)

See: *Rashomon* (dir. Kurosawa 1950)

Wed. September 13—The Off-Frame

Lecture 3 (Shot and Frame)

Recommended: Noel Burch, chapter 2 of *Theory of Film Practice* [the film Burch discusses, Renoir's *Nana*, is also availble in our google drive]

Fri. September 15—**Quiz #1 in section**

See: *A Man Escaped* (dir. Bresson, 1956)

Week 5: Lighting

Mon. September 18—The Materials of Light

Read: Lecture 5. Cinematography—Lighting

Watch: *Visions of Light* (dir. Glassman & McCarthy, 1992) [recommended]

Wed. September 20—Light, Color, Design

Read: *Film Art* (pp. 124-131; pp. 160-169) [recommended]

Watch: *Singin' in the Rain* (dir. Donen and Kelly, 1952)

Fri. September 22—Quiz #2 in Section

Week 6: Lenses

Mon. September 25—Shaping Light

Read: Lecture 6. Cinematography—Lenses

Watch: *In the Mood for Love* (dir. Kar-Wai Wong, 2000)

Wed. September 27—Deep Focus and Deep Space

Watch: *A Day in the Country* (Renoir, 1936)

Read: *Film Art* (pp. 195-216) [recommended]

Fri. September 29—Discussion in Section

Paper #1 due in section (No more than 1000 words—roughly 2 single-spaced pages)

Week 7: Camera Movement

Mon. October 2—Describing Camera Movement

Read: Lecture 6. Cinematography—Camera Movement

Wed. October 4—Technologies of Movement

Watch: *The Thin Red Line* (Malick, 1998)

Read: *Film Art* (pp. 210-216) [recommended]

Fri. October 6—Discussion in section

Week 8: Editing

Mon. October 9—Linking Shots

Read: Lecture 8. Basic Terms and Principles of Editing

Read: *Film Art* (pp. 218-264) [recommended]

Wed. October 11—The Role of the Editor

Watch: *Jaws* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1975)

Read: Lecture 9. The Legacy of Women Editors

Fri. October 13: Discussion in Section

Week 9: Continuity Editing

Mon. October 16—The “System” of Continuity

Read: Lecture 8. Continuity Editing

Wed. October 16—Playing with Continuity

See: *Stagecoach* (dir. John Ford, 1939)

Paper #2 due (submit online)

Fri. October 20—Fall Break

Week 10: Mid-Term

Mon. October 23—Midterm Exam Part 1

Wed. October 25—Midterm Exam Part 2

Fri. October 27—No Section

Week 11: Competing Claims of Film Style

Mon. October 30—Montage

Read: Lecture 11. Montage and Realism
Eisenstein, "A Dialectical Approach to Film Form"
Bordwell, *On the History of Film Style* (pp. 46-68) [recommended]
Watch: *Battleship Potemkin* (dir. Sergei Eisenstein, 1925)

Wed. November 1—"Realism"

Read: André Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema" and "Editing Prohibited"
Watch: *The Red Balloon* (dir. Albert Lamorisse, 1956)

Fri November 3—Discussion

Watch: *Citizen Kane* (dir. Orson Welles, 1941)

Week 12: Sound

Mon. November 6—Elements of Sound

Read: Lecture 12. Talking Pictures; Michel Chion, chapters 1 and 2 of *Film: A Sound Art; Film Art* (pp. 269-307) [recommended]

Wed. November 8—Acoustic Innovations

Read: Michel Chion, chap. 3 of *Film: A Sound Art*
Watch: *All the President's Men* (dir. Alan Pakula, 1976)

Friday November 10—Quiz #3 in section

Week 13: Narrative and Focalization

Mon. November 13—Narratology and Cinema

Read Lecture 13. Narrative and Narratology--A Brief Overview
Watch: *La Jetée* (dir. Chris Marker, 1962)

Wed. November 15—Perspective and Focalization

Watch: *Chinatown* (dir. Roman Polanski, 1974)

Fri. November 17—discussion in section

Week 14: Documentary

Mon. November 20—The Genres of Documentary

Read: Bill Nichols, "What Types of Documentary Are There?" (pp. 99-137)
Read: Lecture 14. Documentary Cinema(s)

Wed. November 15—No Class (Thanksgiving Recess)

Fri. November 24—No Class (Thanksgiving Recess)

Week 15: What Is (Not) Fiction?

Mon. November 27—The Genres of Documentary

Read: Bill Nichols, "What Types of Documentary Are There?" (pp. 99-137)
Read: Lecture 14. Documentary Cinema(s)

See: *Waltz with Bashir* (2008, dir. Ari Folman)

Wed. November 29—The Limits (and Ethics) of Documentary

See: *The Act of Killing* (dir. Joshua Oppenheimer et al.)

Fri. December 1—**Storyboard Assignment Due**

Week 16: Cinema in the Digital Age

Mon. December 24— Shooting without Location

Read: A. Gaudreault, P. Marion, *The End of Cinema: A Medium in Crisis in the Digital Age* (1-10)

See: *Edge of Time* (dir. Lyman, 2013)

Wed. December 6—Final Review

Fri. December 8: Final Exam 4:00pm (1040 Peabody)

Attendance Policy

University Policy: No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class

meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities

2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)

3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).

Class Policy: Instructors may work with students to meet attendance needs that do not fall within University approved absences. For situations when an absence is not University approved (e.g., a job interview or club activity), instructors determine their own approach to missed classes and make-up assessment and assignments.

Honor Code

All students are expected to follow the guidelines of the UNC honor code. In particular, students are expected to refrain from "lying, cheating, or stealing" in the academic context. If you are unsure about which actions violate the honor code, please see me or consult honor.unc.edu.

Mask Use (In-Person Instruction Modes)

This semester, while we are in the midst of a global pandemic, all enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom.

This requirement is to protect our educational community—your classmates and me—as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the Office of Student Conduct. At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see Carolina Together.

Acceptable Use Policy

By enrolling as a student in this course, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of IT systems and services. You may be asked to participate in online discussions or other online activities that may include personal information about you or other students in the course. The rights and protection of other participants are protected under the UNC- Chapel Hill Information

Technology Acceptable Use Policy, which covers topics related to using digital resources, such as privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property.

Consult the University website "Safe Computing at UNC" for information about the data security policies, updates, and tips on keeping your identity, information, and devices safe.

pg. 1 Office of Undergraduate Curricula | Created August 2021 Accessibility Resources and Services

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Title IX Resources

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim-titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

Policy on Non-Discrimination

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic

information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

Diversity Statement

I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this pg. 2 Office of Undergraduate Curricula | Created August 2021

classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve. I appreciate suggestions.

Undergraduate Testing Center

The College of Arts and Sciences provides a secure, proctored environment in which exams can be taken. The center works with instructors to proctor exams for their undergraduate students who are not registered with ARS and who do not need testing accommodations as provided by ARS. In other words, the Center provides a proctored testing environment for students who are unable to take an exam at the normally scheduled time (with pre-arrangement by your instructor). For more information, visit <http://testingcenter.web.unc.edu/>.

Learning Center

The UNC Learning Center is a great resource both for students who are struggling in their courses and for those who want to be proactive and develop sound study practices to prevent failing behind. They offer individual consultations, peer tutoring, academic coaching, test prep programming, study skills workshops, and peer study groups. If you think you might benefit from their services, please visit them in SASB North or visit their website to set up an appointment: <http://learningcenter.unc.edu>.

Writing Center

The Writing Center is located in the Student and Academic Services Building and offers personalized writing consultations as well as a variety of other resources. This could be a wonderful resource to help with your writing assignments in this course (and any assignments in your other courses). You do not need a complete draft of your assignment to visit; they can help you at any stage! You can chat with someone in the writing center or set up an appointment on their website: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu>.

Grade Appeal Process

If you feel you have been awarded an incorrect grade, please discuss with me. If we cannot resolve the issue, you may talk to our departmental director of undergraduate studies or appeal the grade through a formal university process based on arithmetic/clerical error, arbitrariness, discrimination, harassment, or personal malice. To learn more, go to the Academic Advising Program website.