

Introduction to Film Studies

FILM 20A, Summer 2018

Instructor: Laimir Fano
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Office Hours: T 10:00AM – 12:00PM
Amazon Café (McHenry Library)

Class: M/W 9:00AM–12:30PM
Screenings: M 12:30–3:00pm
Location: Soc Sci 2 075

Section A: W 01:00PM-02:00PM
TA: Alessia Cecchet
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Section B: W 02:00PM-03:00PM
TA: Laimir Fano
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Course Description

This course is an introduction to the formal elements of cinema (mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, sound) as well as to principles of categorization and organization including narrative, documentary, experimental film, and several generic conventions. You will learn how to use the appropriate terminology to perform critical analyses that connect movies to broader cultural, social, and ideological issues. Information about important technological innovations and relevant moments in film history such as early cinema, classical Hollywood, German expressionism, and Italian Neorealism will also be presented in order to contextualize the concepts.

Required Text

Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, *The Film Experience*. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2017.

Assignments

Participation and Attendance (15%): All lectures, discussion sections, and screenings are mandatory. No more than one absence from discussion sections and one absence from lectures will be permitted. Three or more absences will result in a failing grade for the course.

Sequence Analysis Essay (25%): This assignment consists of two parts. First, you will create a *shot log* describing each shot in a given film sequence. Then, you will write an 800-word essay analyzing the ways in which cinematic techniques generate meaning in the sequence. **Due in class Wednesday, August 15th**

Final Exam (30%): You will be asked to define and provide examples of some of the concepts studied in class. You will also write a short essay analyzing a film sequence screened during the exam. **Held in class on Wednesday, August 29th**

Film Analysis Essay (30%): You will choose a film (that was not discussed in class or sections) and write a 1,200-word essay analyzing how cinematic techniques work together to produce meaning. **Due in class Wednesday, August 29th**

Class Policies

Laptop / Cell Phones Policy: Cell phones must be set to mute or turned off upon entering class. It is strictly prohibited to access your phone during a class lecture or screening. Laptop computers are *not* to be used in lectures or screenings. Exceptions will be granted for use of a computer to those with a documented need.

Lateness Policy: All papers are due in hard copy at the beginning of class on the dates indicated. Extensions can only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Grade Disputes: If you have questions about the grading of your work, please make arrangements to meet with your teaching assistant (TA). If your questions are not resolved, please see me in office hours. If the matter still remains unresolved, I will advise you on further options.

Academic Misconduct Policy: Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty. Acts of academic misconduct during the course, including plagiarism, can and usually do result in failure of the course, at the sole discretion of the instructor of record. Your case will be reported to the College Provost as per the Academic Integrity guidelines found on the web at:
https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct

Information on subject specific research guidelines is available at:
<http://guides.library.ucsc.edu/>

Classroom Civility: Speaking to your peers, your instructor, your TA and administrative staff with respect is essential for creating a positive learning environment. Issues surrounding gender, race and class are integral to film analysis and appreciating that each of us maintains a different subject position in relation to these social elements is important. Respectfully engaging diverse ideas will create a sense of inclusion for all of us participating in the course.

Graphic/Explicit Materials: In Film and Digital Media courses you will often be assigned films or other material that could contain difficult ideas, uncomfortable language, or graphic depictions of sex or violence. You will be asked to treat these portrayals critically, to consider what is being expressed by the maker, or to examine the potential social impact, and to evaluate the works in a given context. Instructors are always happy to speak with you about your work, and might direct you to CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services) at 831-459-2628 or the Disability

Resource Center (drc@ucsc.edu or 831-459-2089) should you need additional support in order to do your best work.

Disability Resources: UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At this time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Mise-en-Scène / Cinematography

July 30 – Introduction to the Course. Elements of the Mise-en-Scène

Topics: Sets and settings, props, costumes, make-up and hair, performance, blocking, lighting, styles of mise-en-scène.

Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 3, “Mise-en-Scène: Exploring the Material World” p.97-127

Screenings: *Hotel Chevalier*, dir. Wes Anderson, US/France, 2007. (13 mins)
The Diving Bell and the Butterfly, dir. Julian Schnabel, France, 2007. (112 mins)

August 1st – Fundamentals of Cinematography

Topics: Framing, aspect ratio, camera distance, camera angles, depth of field, camera movements, point of view.

Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 4, “Cinematography: Framing What We See” p. 129-165

Week 2 Editing & Narrative

August 6th – Hollywood’s Editing System

Topics: Transitions, devices and rules of continuity editing, classical film narrative.

Readings: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 5, “Editing: Relating Images” p. 167-202
The Film Experience, Chapter 7 [excerpt], “Classical Film Narrative” p. 276-277

Screening: *Memories of Underdevelopment*, dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, Cuba, 1968. (104 mins)

August 8th – Alternatives to Hollywood’s Editing System

Topics: Disjunctive editing practices, alternative film narrative.

Readings: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 5 “Editing: Relating Images” p. 202-207
The Film Experience, Chapter 7 [excerpt], “Alternative Film Narrative” p. 277-281

Week 3 Sound / Documentary

August 13th – Film Sound

Topics: Synchronization, diegetic/non-diegetic sound, voice, music, sound effects, sound bridge, the expressive use of silence.

Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 6, “Film Sound: Listening to the Cinema” p. 209-239

Screening: *Nostalgia for the Light*, dir. Patricio Guzmán, Chile, 2010. (107 mins)

August 15th – Documentary

Topics: Documentary organizations, rhetorical positions, documentary genres.

Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 8, “Documentary Films: Representing the Real” p. 283-309

In Class Screening: *Island of Flowers*, dir. Jorge Furtado, Brazil, 1989. (13 mins)

*****Sequence Analysis and Shot Log due in class: Wednesday, August 15th*****

Week 4 Experimental Cinema / Movie Genres

August 20th – Experimental Cinema

Topics: Formal strategies, experimental organizations, themes and styles.

Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 9, “Experimental Film and New Media: Challenging Form” p. 311-337

In Class Screening: *Meshes of the Afternoon*, dir. Maya Deren, US, 1943. (14 mins)

A Movie, dir. Bruce Conner, US, 1958. (12 mins)

Mothlight, dir. Stan Brakhage, US, 1963. (3 mins)

Kustom Kar Kommandos, dir. Kenneth Anger, US, 1970. (3mins)

Removed, dir. Naomi Uman, US, 1999. (6 mins)

The Kiss, Jaco Van Dormael, Belgium/France, 1995. (1 min)

Walking Under the Sun, dir. Diana Fonseca, Cuba, 2007. (3 mins)

Screening: *Dancer in the Dark*, dir. Lars von Trier, Denmark/US, 2000. (140 mins)

August 22th – Movie Genres

Topics: Generic conventions, iconography, main functions of a genre, hybrid genres, subgenres, generic reflexivity, revisionist genre traditions, the musical (case study).

Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 10, "Movie Genres: Conventions, Formulas, and Audience Expectations" p. 339-373

Week 5 Film History / Final Exam

August 27th – Film Historiography

Topics: Historiography, periodization, canon, auteur theory, orphan films.

Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 2, "History and Historiography: Hollywood and Beyond" p. 55-93

Screening: *Within our Gates*, dir. Oscar Micheaux, US, 1920. (80 mins)

August 29th – Final Exam

Final Exam held in class

*****Film Analysis Essay also due on Wednesday, August 29th*****