



# Introduction to Contemporary Film

## Unit of Study Outline

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### 1. Unit of study information

This course will introduce students the one of the most creative form of art: FILM. This course is designed to demonstrate all elements of contemporary film and many classic films are suggested to view. Films are from USA, Europe, Asia and other Americas. Through course readings, students have to consider the major textual, technical and cultural elements of cinema.

### 2. Pre-requisite units and assumed knowledge

None

### 3. Learning aims and outcomes

When completing this course, students are expected to

- Develop a vocabulary and analytical skills that will allow to discuss a film within these four contexts: Historical, Cultural, Textual, and Technical.
- Develop the analytical skills through writing and talking about film as to become a better writer and a stronger analyst of all texts.

### 4. Weighting of final grade

Exams	40%
Homework	40%
Class Participation	20%

### 5. Grading

A	100-95	A-	94-90	B+	89-87
B	86-83	B-	82-80	C+	79-77
C	76-73	C-	72-70	D+	69-67
D	66-63	D-	62-60	F	59 or lower

## 6. Policies

### Attendance Policy

Attendance in class is mandatory for all students enrolled in the course. Any excused absence must be discussed directly with the teacher. Being late to class within 15 minutes will be recorded as 1 LATE and being late over 15 minutes will be recorded as 1 ABSENCE. 3 LATES equal to 1 ABSENCE. 20% absences of the total teaching hours will cause an F (a failing grade) directly. However, students are still welcome to continue to attend class. F students have no right to drop this course anymore. Each unexcused absence will result in the lowering of the attendance grade by 1 point. Each excused absence will result in the lowering of the attendance grade by 0.5 point.

### Participation Policy

Students should participate in their chosen classes actively and effectively. The Participation Grade is related to the Attendance Grade. Students' final attendance grade is the maximum of their participation grade.

Participation grade will be based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to taking part in class discussions and activities, completing assignments, being able to answer questions correctly, obeying class rules, and being prepared for class, frequent visiting your instructors and chatting in English during their office hours is highly recommended.

### Policy on Assignments and Quizzes

Students should finish their assignments completely and punctually. Assignment should be submitted on the date appointed by the instructor. If a student cannot hand in the assignment on time, the reasonable excuse will be needed. Late assignments will receive a maximum grade of 80. An assignment that is late for 3 days will be corrected but receive 0.

You are recommended print all your assignment in the uniform format with the heading of Student's Pledge of no cheating. Written assignment or printed ones without the uniform heading of pledge will receive a maximum grade of 80.

It is mandatory to have weekend assignment every week. Any weekend assignment should be submitted on first class of next week.

It is mandatory to have holiday assignment on the public holidays. Any holiday assignment should be submitted on the first day on returning to school.

Students are required to do a multitude of presentations during the course.

### **Plagiarism**

Any form of cheating is NEVER tolerated. Any student ONCE caught cheating on a quiz, assignment or examination will receive a 0 for that particular work of the whole semester. At the beginning of the semester the definition of plagiarism will be carefully explained. When any thoughts or writings of another person are used, the sources must be clearly identified (using quotes, bibliography and giving reference).

### **Classroom Policies**

1. No eating, cellular phones, electronic dictionaries, smoking, chatting or drowsing in class.
2. Please speak in English rather than Chinese in class.
3. Students are not allowed to attend class without textbooks.
4. Stand up when answering questions.
5. Respect classmates' ideas, opinions, and questions of your classmates.
6. You are welcome to visit the instructor's office in his/her office hours.
7. Take good care of the laboratory facilities. Do not splash water on the desktop.
8. When each class is over, hang the earphone on the hanger. Put the trash into the trash-bin.
9. All your classroom involvement, performance and after-class communications with instructor will affect your participation score.
10. All communications with the teacher must be in English, both inside and outside class time.

## **7. Texts and other recourses**

Giannetti, Louis (2011) Understanding Movies, 12th ed., International Book Press

## **8. Teaching methods**

Lectures, Discussions and Homework

## 9. Week by week topic and study guide

<b>Week 1</b>	Realism and Formalism	Viewing: The Godfather (USA 1972)
	The Shots	
	The Angles	
	Light and Dark	
	Color	
<b>Week 2</b>	Lenses, Filters and Stocks	Viewing: Four Weddings and a Funeral (Britain, 1994)
	Special Effects	
	Cinematographer	
<b>Week 3</b>	The Frame	Viewing: The Graduate (USA, 1967)
	Composition and Design	
	Territorial Space	
<b>Week 4</b>	Proxemic Patterns	Viewing: Jules and Jim (France, 1961) or Superman (USA/Britain, 1978)
	Open and Closed Forms	
<b>Week 5</b>	Kinetics	Viewing: Shall We Dance? (Japan, 1997) or Iron Man (USA, 2008)
	The Moving Camera	
	Mechanical Distortions of Movement	
<b>Week 6</b>	Continuity	Viewing: Gladiator (USA,2000) or L'avventura (Italy, 1960) or Rocky Balboa (USA, 2006)
	D.W.Griffith and Classical Cutting	
	Soviet Montage and the Formalist Tradition	
	Andre Bazin and the Tradition of Realism	
	Hichcock's North by Northwest: Storyboard Version	
<b>Week 7</b>	Historical Background	Viewing: The Jazz Singer (USA, 1927), or The Sum of All Fears (USA, 2002), or The Pianist (Poland/France/Britain/Germany, 2002), or Ray (USA, 2004), or Troy (USA, 2004), or Million Dollar Baby
	Sound Effects	
	Music	
	Musicals	
	Spoken Language	
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Exam I</b>	
<b>Week 9</b>	Stage and Screen Acting	Viewing: The Golden Rush (USA, 1925), or Taxi Driver (USA, 1976)
	The American Star System	
	Styles of Acting	

	Casting	
<b>Week 10</b>	Time, Space, and Language	Viewing: The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (USA, 2001), or Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands (Brazil, 1977), or Singin' in the Rain (USA, 1952), or Edward Scissorhands (USA, 1990), or Black Hawk Down (USA, 2001) or No Man's Land (Bosnia, 2001), or Curse of the Golden Flower (China/Hong Kong, 2006) or The Dark Knight (USA, 2008)
	The Director	
	Settings and Décor	
	Costumes and Makeup	
<b>Week 11</b>	Narratology	Viewing: Sunshine (Hungary/ Britain/Germany/ Canada, 2000), Speed (USA, 1994) or The Home and the World (India, 1984), Intolerable Cruelty (USA, 2003),
	The Spectator	
	The Classical Paradigm	
	Realistic Narratives	
<b>Week 12</b>	Formalistic Narratives	Viewing: The Lion King (USA, 1994), March of the Penguins (France, 2005), or Night Watch (Russia, 2006), ET (USA, 1982)
	Nonfictional Narratives	
	Genre and Myth	
<b>Week 13</b>	The Screenwriter	Viewing: Shoeshine (Italy, 1946), or Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit (Britain, 2005), Best in Show (USA, 2000), or Day for Night (France, 1973) or Strawberry and Chocolate (Cuba, 1994)
	The Screenplay	
	Figurative Comparisons	
	Literary Adaptations	
<b>Week 14</b>	The Left-Center-Right Model	Viewing: Tallabega Nights: The Ballad of Rick Bobby (USA, 2006), or Rendition (USA, 2007), October (Soviet Union, 1928), Cinema Paradiso (Italy, 1988), Chicago (USA, 2002), Seven Beauties (Italy, 1976), Raise the Red Lantern (China/Hong Kong, 1991), or Brokeback Mountain (USA, 2005)
	Culture, Religion and Ethnicity	
	Feminism	
	Queer Cinema	
	Tone	
<b>Week 15</b>	Theories of Realism	Viewing: Narc (USA, 2002), or Taste of Cherry (Iran, 1998), Alien (USA, 1979), Primary Colors (USA, 1998), Independence Day (USA, 1996), An Autumn Afternoon (Japan, 1962), The
	Formalist Film Theories	
	The Auteur Theory	
	Ecletric and Synthesizing Approaches	

	Structuralism and Semiology	Godfather Part II (USA, 1974)
	Historiography	
<b>Week 16</b>	Synthesis	Viewing: Citizen Kane (USA 1941)
<b>Week 17</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	