

COMM 274–201 / INTRODUCTION TO CINEMA

GENERAL INFORMATION

CLASS TIME & LOCATION: Monday / 7 pm to 9:30 pm / Corboy 306

INSTRUCTOR: Luke Strosnider / lstrosnider@luc.edu / SoC 221

OFFICE HOURS: By Appointment. (Times before & after class are often best; I'm flexible. Contact me via email to schedule.)

COURSE WEB SITE: www.lukestrosnider.com/loyola-comm274

REQUIRED TEXT & MATERIALS

TEXTBOOK: *Film Art: An Introduction* (9th or 10th edition), by David Bordwell & Kristen Thompson

FILMS: In addition to in-class screenings, you're required to watch some films outside of class.

- Available on reserve at LUC Lewis Library
- Obtained via rental (iTunes, Netflix, Hulu, etc.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will study film as both a complex medium of global communication and an art form. The objectives of this course are to provide the student with the basic terminology, observational skills, theoretical and critical background for the study of film aesthetics, history, production and cultural criticism. The format of the course will consist of lecture, screening and discussion. In order to satisfy the objectives outlined above, the work of the course will be structured so as to meet the following specific learning outcomes:

- Acquisition of the critical and technical vocabulary to describe and analyze cinema.
- Improved critical reading, writing, and thinking skills.
- Increased ability to evaluate cinematic works in light of aesthetic and historic precedents.
- Acquisition of the necessary skills in order to become informed and critical viewers of film.
- Increased ability to articulate and to defend your views both verbally and in writing.

POLICIES

ATTENDANCE & LATENESS

Attendance to class is vital, even more so because this is a shortened-term summer class. ***If you miss three classes (or more) without an authorized excuse you will automatically fail this class.*** Missed work cannot be made up or excused except in the case of severe illness, death in the family, or religious holiday. Absences must be documented if you'd like to make up missed work. Documentation of a university-authorized absence must be cleared with me in advance. Coming in late disrupts the class, and you'll likely miss important information. It is your responsibility to ask classmates for information or announcements you may have missed by arriving late.

ILLNESS

If you are ill, please do not come to class. Email me before class, contact the Wellness Center for advice, and ***get documentation!***

COMPUTERS IN THE CLASSROOM

If you would like to bring a device (laptop, smartphone, tablet, etc.) to take notes, that is acceptable. There will be times I will call upon you to use your devices to do some light, in-class research. ***A firm reminder: be respectful with your use of technology.*** No text messages, no watching wacky videos, no Facebook, etc. PLEASE, BE HERE NOW.

PARTICIPATION

In this class, you'll hear lectures, view screenings, participate in discussion and group work, and provide feedback to classmates. Your positive and substantive contribution to each of these class elements is expected – doing the bare minimum will earn you a bare minimum grade. **Your physical presence in the room is less than bare minimum participation; participation includes attendance, attention, and attitude as well as substantive contributions.** Leaving early, texting, checking Facebook, chatting, sleeping, eating meals, and doing other non-class related work are distractions to you, me, and your classmates and will significantly lessen your chances of doing well in this course. If you need to leave class early, please tell me before class starts and sit near the door.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

LATE WORK / LOST WORK

Late work will not be accepted. Extensions will not be granted. Incompletes will not be assigned. Make-up work will not be assigned unless pre-arranged, or due to an authorized documented absence. If you anticipate you will miss an assignment, please discuss it with me early in the semester to arrange an alternative. **You must give at least one week notice to arrange alternative exam/quiz locations and times.** If an assignment is lost or you discover a discrepancy later in the semester, email documentation will be required (e.g., if you are sure you handed in an assignment that I do not have a grade listed for, be prepared to show me your dated original files or dated emailed work). It is your responsibility to make sure I get your work. It is not my responsibility to tell you your file was corrupted, your email bounced, or to remind you to hand in work.

GRADING

The grade given to average work on all assignments is a C. So, if you just complete the bare minimum for each assignment, expect to earn a C for your work. Grades of B or A indicate impressive achievement above the average. Grades of A in particular indicate especially exceptional work. Grades below C indicate inadequacies or errors in any or all of the grading criteria. The grading scale is as follows:

A = 94% – 100%

A- = 90% – 93%

B+ = 87% – 89%

B = 84% – 86%

B- = 80% – 83%

C+ = 77% – 79%

C = 74% – 76%

C- = 70% – 73%

D+ = 67% – 69%

D = 65% – 66%

F = 64% and below

Percentage grades are not rounded up.

It is your responsibility to keep track of the grades you earn. **I will not send you updates on cumulative grades. I will not send you warnings when you drop below some point value. I will not send you prompts to participate more or to work harder. Again, it is your responsibility to keep track of the grades you earn.** The total points for the class and for the assignment are listed in the syllabus so at any point in the semester, you should be able to calculate an approximation of your grade easily. Students may arrange to meet with me at anytime throughout the term to discuss their grades.

GRADING (continued)

If you would like to discuss a grade you must make an appointment to visit me in person. Bring the assignment, my comments, and a written explanation of how your work met the requirements of the assignment, and showed impressive achievement above the average. **You have one week from the day I return the assignment to dispute my assessment of that work.** After one week, I will assume you are satisfied with my assessment, and I **will not reconsider the assessment for any reason.**

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g., failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; **being uninformed is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing your sources.** It is dishonest to:

- turn in the same work for two classes;
- turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or
- copy from another student or use a “cheat sheet” during an exam.

SPECIFIC NOTES ON GRADING: PAPERS

Papers will be graded based on clarity of ideas, clarity of language, strength of argument, structure, grammar, and degree to which they demonstrate your understanding and synthesis of concepts discussed in the course.

When you paraphrase a text without changing any of its ideas, the reference MUST be cited. Citations may be parenthetical or footnotes, but must be formatted consistently throughout the paper. All papers must include a list of works cited in the proper MLA format at the end of the paper. If you are having trouble with your writing assignments, please see me, or take advantage of the tutoring available in the Writing Center (<http://www.luc.edu/writing/home/>).

SPECIFIC NOTES ON GRADING: DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP BLOG POST GRADING RUBRIC

- A Excellent, insightful post. Digs deep into concepts. Creative and innovative approach to the course content. Thoughtful ideas, clarity of writing, and organization. Takes full advantage of the blogging medium and includes appropriate links, images, videos, etc. to illustrate points. Sophisticated, appropriate use of language. Thorough research and documentation of ideas, arguments, and comments. Free of mistakes: no typos; no misspellings; no punctuation or grammatical glitches; no errors of fact.
- B Blog post is good. It exceeds the basic requirements of the assignment, all parts are included, and the author has clearly made some attempt at connecting the assignment to the larger course themes – although a few more connections could be made. Takes some advantage of the blogging medium and includes appropriate links, images, videos, etc. to illustrate points. More details, quotes, citations, or examples needed, but overall, the posting is above average. Almost no usage/grammatical errors.
- C Posting is average and meets basic expectations of the assignment. May need work on content, clarity, and organization. May have a couple of noticeable grammar/usage errors, lack a few transitions, or tie the assignment only loosely to the course themes. Takes average advantage of the blogging medium and may include links, images, videos, etc. to illustrate points. Although basic facts most likely are there, lacks elaborating and supporting documentation or quotes.
- D Weak, unfocused work. Organization is below average, with numerous grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Major requirements of the assignment are missing or incomplete. Takes little advantage of the blogging medium and includes almost no links, images, videos, etc. to illustrate points.
- F Not completed or turned in late.

ASSIGNMENTS

1.) DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP BLOG POST (100 POINTS)

Students will be assigned a week in which they are to create a “discussion leadership” post on the class blog. Each post should be about 3–4 well-written and coherent paragraphs – around 350–500 words. To receive credit you **MUST** post before the class meeting for which you are assigned.

2.) IN-CLASS EXERCISES (50 POINTS)

In-class writing or group research assignments. These will be graded as “Completed” or “Not Completed” and will be assigned at random. Ten points each, five times during the term.

3.) QUIZZES ON READINGS (50 POINTS)

Brief quizzes on the readings. *These will be given randomly as pop quizzes!* Ten points each, five times during the term.

IMPORTANT: QUIZZES & IN-CLASS EXERCISES CANNOT BE MADE UP UNLESS PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE.

4.) MIDTERM EXAM (100 POINTS)

An multiple choice exam covering the readings from the first half of the term.

4.) GROUP PROJECT: FILM ANALYSIS PAPER & PRESENTATION (100 POINTS)

Students will be divided into groups. Your group will choose a film from the AFI 100 *that has not been screened as a part of this course* (in or out-of-class). You will seek out the film (LUC library, Netflix, iTunes, etc.), watch it, and conduct research on the film. Your group will write a paper (8-10 pages) and do a presentation to the class. Further details on this assignment will be distributed and discussed at a later date.

5.) FINAL EXAM (100 POINTS)

An multiple choice exam covering the readings from the second half of the term.

TOTAL POINTS: 500

COURSE SCHEDULE

Schedule subject to change to fit the pace and needs of the course. If so, you'll be notified as soon as possible.

- 8/24 WEEK 1 – COURSE INTRODUCTION + ORIGINS OF CINEMA**
Read this Week: *Film Art*, Chapter 12
Screening: Various examples of early cinema
- 8/31 WEEK 2 – MISE-EN-SCENE**
Read for Today: *Film Art*, Chapter 4
Screening: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), dir. Robert Wiene
- 9/7 WEEK 3 – NO CLASS MEETING – LABOR DAY**
- 9/14 WEEK 4 – CINEMATOGRAPHY**
Read for Today: *Film Art*, Chapter 5
Screening: *Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography* (1992), dir. Arnold Glassman
- 9/21 WEEK 5 – EDITING + SOUND**
Read for Today: *Film Art*, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7
Watch Prior to Today: *The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing* (2004), dir. Wendy Apple + *Star Wars* (1977), dir. George Lucas
Screening: *Rope* (1948), dir. Alfred Hitchcock
- 9/28 WEEK 6 – MIDTERM EXAM**
- 10/5 WEEK 7 – NO CLASS MEETING – MID-SEMESTER BREAK**
- 10/12 WEEK 8 – MAKING A FILM**
Read for Today: *Film Art*, Chapter 1
Watch Prior to Today: *Apocalypse Now* (1979), dir. Frances Ford Coppola
Screening: *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (1991), dirs. E. Coppola, G. Hickenlooper, F. Bahr
- 10/19 WEEK 9 – FILM FORM & NARRATIVE**
Read for Today: *Film Art*, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3
Screening: *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), dir. Victor Fleming
- 10/26 WEEK 10 – CINEMA STYLE AS FORMAL SYSTEM**
Read for Today: *Film Art*, Chapter 8
Watch Prior to Today: *Citizen Kane* (1941), dir. Orson Welles
Screening: TBD
- 11/2 WEEK 11 – FILM GENRES: HORROR**
Read for Today: *Film Art*, Chapter 9
Screening: *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), dir. George Romero
- 11/9 WEEK 12 – DOCUMENTARY, EXPERIMENTAL, & ANIMATED CINEMA**
Read for Today: *Film Art*, Chapter 10
Screening: Various Experimental Films
- 11/16 WEEK 13 – FILM CRITICISM & ANALYSIS**
Read for Today: *Film Art*, Chapter 11
Watch Prior to Today: *The Shining* (1980), dir. Stanley Kubrick
Screening: *Room 237* (2012), dir. Rodney Asch
- 11/23 WEEK 14 – STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**
- 11/30 WEEK 15 – STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**