

ART K186
Introduction to Film
32037

Three Rivers Community College
Fall 2012

Wednesday 6:30pm – 9:15pm
Room B125

Instructor: Jason Sheldon
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Office Hours: Mondays 5:00-6:00pm (Room D205) and by appointment

Course Description

An aesthetic and critical approach to film study, this course helps students develop a cinematic vocabulary and apply analytic skills. Classroom screenings provide texts for discussion and analysis; they are supplemented by lectures, readings, and writing assignments. Representative international films from the early years of the industry to the present will be taught.

Learning Goals

At the end of the course, students will understand, articulate, analyze, and synthesize the medium of film.

Learning Objectives

Actively engage in the learning process through demonstrated success on writing assignments:

- Identify topics
- Read, assess, summarize, and synthesize material
- Articulate themes

Actively engage in the learning process through demonstrated success on a research project:

- Employ correct research skills
- Synthesize information to demonstrate knowledge of subject matter
- Select, design, and present data which demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter

Demonstrate a knowledge of twentieth-century cinema:

- Its films, directors, actors, actresses, photographers and writers, and art and culture generally.

Demonstrate an introductory knowledge of twentieth-century achievements in visual and literary form.

Via the cultural, political, social, racial, architectural, topographical and human content of the films viewed and discussed, demonstrate a new and/or enhanced knowledge of the cultures, histories, politics, and the human experience of many other countries at various times in the last century's history.

Texts

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. 1972. Penguin Books. ISBN 9780140135152.

Phillips, William H. *Film: An Introduction*. 4th edition. 2009. Bedford / St. Martin's. ISBN 9780312487256.

There may be additional readings assigned which will be announced and available on Blackboard.

Attendance

Your attendance is mandatory. Be on time. Since we only meet once a week and your grade is based on screenings and content in class, it is imperative that you be on time and attentive. I will allow for one absence, however, subsequent absences will drop your final grade. Additionally, lateness will not be tolerated and will also negatively affect your final grade.

Responsibilities

In addition to attendance, you are expected to actively participate in discussions. These will occur not only in class, but also online through Blackboard. Any student using a cell phone, laptop, or other portable device for a purpose not related to the class in progress will be asked to turn it off or leave the class.

Method of Evaluation

Participation/Discussion – Your participation in the classroom and on Blackboard is expected. There will be discussion threads on the film screenings posted on Blackboard. These discussions should reflect not only your initial reactions to the film(s), but are intended to be used as a place to think critically, analyze, or reflect on material we have discussed and that you have read in your textbooks or supplemental material. Only mindful comments should be included. Please respect your fellow classmates' opinions, thoughts, and ideas in these conversations. You must involve yourselves in these discussions every week. I will post questions or comments to initiate these dialogues. Participation in discussions, both in class and on Blackboard, will compose 20% of your final grade.

Homework Assignments – Questions and written work will be assigned weekly. These will be announced in class as well as posted on Blackboard. The majority of these questions will be drawn from the textbook, please be sure to procure a copy. All homework must be TYPED and submitted at the beginning of class. Homework assignments compose 20% of your final grade.

Tests – There will be 2 tests administered throughout the semester. These will focus on vocabulary and concepts we will be discussing throughout the course and included in the reading. They will be composed mainly of film identification, matching, multiple choice, and short answer questions. These tests will compose 30% of your final grade.

Papers – There will be 3 papers assigned throughout the semester. Papers will be a minimum of 3 typed pages and will focus on different facets of content we have covered. These papers will compose 30% of your final grade.

Grading

A /94-100
A-/90-93
B+/89-90
B / 84-88
B-/80-83
C+/78-79
C/74-77
C-/70-73
D+/68-69
D/64-67
D-/60-63
F/Below 60

Late Work

Any material handed in after the time it is due will be penalized. You may not receive credit on an assignment if recurrent.

Disabilities Statement

Students with disabilities are guaranteed reasonable accommodation under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992. Disclosure of a disability must be voluntary. In instances where students have disabilities that are not discernible, valid and reliable documentation to verify eligibility for accommodation is required and must be submitted to the Student Development offices of Student Services. Please call 860-383-5217 for more information or to schedule a confidential meeting with one of our disability service providers.

Academic Dishonesty

Any form of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the college immediately and may result in the failure of an assignment or the entire course.

N.B.

I understand other obligations (work, family, etc.) may infringe upon your ability to be present in class and to turn in assignments on time. Please contact me in advance if you anticipate problems or issues with these responsibilities (homework, tests, papers, attendance, etc.). Also, due to the nature of the course (including the screenings with lecture) we may run over our allotted time. I will try to notify you in advance of these times and I ask that you stay to finish the material we are covering. I will try to limit these occurrences to no more than 15 additional minutes of class time.

Schedule

This schedule is tentative. The readings, screenings, papers, and test dates are subject to change. Any amendments will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.

8/29 – Class Overview; Introduction to Film

READING:

None

SCREENING:

Camera (Canada, 2000), Dir. David Cronenberg, 6 min.

This Film Is Not Yet Rated (USA, 2006), Dir. Kirby Dick, 97 min.

9/5 – Mise-en-scène

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 1 (Mise-en-scène), pgs. 11-60

Berger, Chapter 1, pgs. 7-34

SCREENING:

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Germany, 1920), Dir. Robert Wiene, 78 min.

9/10 – Last Day to Add/Drop

9/12 – Cinematography

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 2 (Cinematography), pgs. 61-112

Berger, Chapter 2 & 3, pgs. 35-64

SCREENING:

Vertigo (USA, 1958), Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 119 min.

9/19 – Editing

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 3 (Editing), pgs. 113-156

SCREENING:

Man with the Movie Camera (Russia, 1929), Dir. Dziga Vertov, 68 min.

Battleship Potemkin (Russia, 1925), Dir. Sergei Eisenstein, Clips

Requiem for a Dream (USA, 2000), Dir. Darren Aronofsky, Clips

Films of the Lumière brothers, Georges Méliès, Thomas Edison, Charles Pathé, and Edwin Porter

9/26 – Sound

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 4 (Sound), pgs. 157-199

SCREENING:

The Conversation (USA, 1974), Dir. Francis Ford Coppola, 113 min.

10/3 – The Creative Process

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 5 (Sources for Fictional Films), pgs. 200-253

Berger, Chapters 4 & 5, pgs. 65-112

Plato, “The Allegory of the Cave”

SCREENING:

Mulholland Dr. (USA, 2001), Dir. David Lynch, 147 min.

10/10 – Narrative

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 6 (Components of Fictional Films), pgs. 254-306

Berger, Chapters 6 & 7, pgs. 113-155

SCREENING:

The Tree of Life (USA, 2011), Dir. Terrence Malick, 139 min.

10/17 – Genre (Film Noir)

Test 1

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 7 (Types of Fictional Films), pgs. 307-360

SCREENING:

The Third Man (UK, 1949), Dir. Carol Reed, 104 min.

10/24 – Genre (Musicals)

Paper 1 Due

READING:

Altman, “The American Film Musical” – Handout

SCREENING:

Once (Ireland, 2006), Dir. John Carney, 85 min.

10/31 – Documentary

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 8 (Documentary Films), pgs. 361-398

SCREENING:

The Fog of War (USA, 2003), Dir. Errol Morris, 95 min.

11/7 – Alternative Forms: Avant-garde

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 9 (Experimental, Hybrid, and Animated Films), pgs. 399-436

SCREENING:

Manhatta (USA, 1921), Dir. Paul Strand; 11 min.

Ballet Mécanique (France, 1924), Dir. Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy; 19 min.

Un Chien Andalou (France, 1929), Dir. Luis Buñuel; 16 min.

The Seashell and the Clergyman (France, 1928), Dir. Germaine Dulac; Clips

Meshe of the Afternoon (USA, 1943), Dir. Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid; 14 min

Window Water Baby Moving (USA, 1962), Dir. Stan Brakhage; 13 min.

Kindering (USA, 1987), Dir. Stan Brakhage; 3 min.

Night Music (USA, 1986), Dir. Stan Brakhage; 1 min.

The Alphabet (USA, 1968), Dir. David Lynch; 4 min.

The Cremaster Cycle (USA, 1995-2002), Dir. Matthew Barney; Clips

Decasia (UK, 2002), Dir. Bill Morris; Clips

11/14 – Representing Race

Paper 2 Due

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 10 (Understanding Films through Contexts), pgs. 437-502

SCREENING:

Bamboozled (USA, 2000), Dir. Spike Lee, 135 min.

11/21 – Gender and Sexuality

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 11 (Thinking about Films), pgs. 503-552

SCREENING:

Paris Is Burning (USA, 1990), Dir. Jennie Livingston, 71 min.

11/28 – International Cinema (Japanese Cinema)

Test 2

READING:

TBD - Handout

SCREENING:

Pitfall (Japan, 1962), Dir. Hiroshi Teshigahara, 97 min.

12/5 – Postmodernism

READING:

TBD - Handout

SCREENING:

Funny Games (Austria, 1997), Dir. Michael Haneke, 108 min.

12/10 – Last Day to Withdraw

12/12 – Film Analysis / Conclusion

Paper 3 Due

READING:

Phillips, Chapter 13 (A Sample Description and Analysis: *The Player*), pgs. 579-603

SCREENING:

The Player (USA, 1992), Dir. Robert Altman, 124 min.