

English 110: Introduction to Film Studies

Spring 2018
Tuesdays 6-8:50pm in BC 209
CRN 40619, 3 Cr.

Dr. Stephen Rust
Office Hours in the classroom 5:30-6pm
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People respond to movies in different ways, and there are many reasons for this. We have all stood in the lobby of a theater and heard conflicting opinions from people who have just seen the same film. Some loved it, some hated it, some found it just OK. Disagreements, however, can reveal a great deal about the assumptions underlying these various responses. In this course we will see that there are many ways of thinking about movies and approaches that we can use to analyze them. We will cover key aspects of film theory and history as well in the spirit of intellectual investigation of the most exciting aspects of contemporary visual culture. Overall, the goal of this course is to introduce you to the basic skills necessary for a critical knowledge of the movies as art, culture, and industry. We will also consider the relationship between movies and other forms of media such as tv, radio, and the internet.

Required Text: *Film Studies: An Introduction* by Ed Sikov. Available for free through the LBCC Library website – click on the Ebook Central button and type in the book title to access the textbook.

*Access to LBCC email and Canvas Learning Platform required (information in class)

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students who complete all required readings and assignments will be able to:

- Understand how film works as an artistic, industrial, and cultural form
- Deploy the basic language of film aesthetics - including cinematography, mise en scène, editing, and sound – to closely analyze film texts
- Demonstrate knowledge of ideological forces at work in films based on their cultural and historical contexts
- Explain why film studies is a serious area of academic study and research
- Communicate ideas about film culture through spoken and written analysis

What I Expect From You: I expect you to succeed in this class. To do that you will need to complete all reading, homework, and assignments and exams on time and to the very best of your ability. I expect you to come to class prepared, awake, sober, and fully-engaged. Do your homework, study for exams, and bring your books to class. Turn off your phone before class or sit by the door if you are waiting for an emergency call/text and need to step outside to answer. Ask questions, engage in discussion, and be prepared to work in groups with any and all class members, embracing diversity.

What You Can Expect From Me: I will respond to your questions and concerns as clearly and sincerely as possible and am always happy to talk about any aspect of the class. I will be on-time to class and office hours and respond to emails and phone calls within 48 hours. I will provide you with the same level of instruction as students I have taught at Oregon State University and the University of Oregon. I will listen to you and treat you with the utmost respect. I will grade fairly and provide detailed feedback

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism: Linn-Benton Community College values academic integrity. You are responsible for understanding and adhering to the standards of academic honesty outlined in the student handbook. Document ALL sources consulted in preparing your work. At a minimum, documented plagiarism will result in course failure. See the Library website for resources and information on citation styles and practices.

Access For Students With Disabilities: If you have a disability or medical condition which you believe may affect your performance in this course, please see or contact me the first week of the term so we can make the necessary arrangements for your fullest access to the course and its activities.

Class Meetings & Attendance Procedures: You are expected to attend all class meetings and participate in all discussions. We only have ten class meetings so attendance is required and checked daily.. Screening and discussing films in a group setting is vital to critical learning. If you plan to be absent on a given day you must contact me *in advance* to arrange make-up work/exams. The following attendance policy is straightforward and non-negotiable: **Two** absences excused, no questions asked. However, you are still responsible for any missed screenings, notes, or assignments due that day. Each additional absence, except in cases of emergency, will result in the automatic deduction of 3% from your final grade (e.g., from a 91%-88%).

Screenings: The screening of complete film texts is a vital component of this class. You are required to attend the screenings each week and take notes on the films. If you are absent during a screening day you will need to make arrangements to see the movie at home. Watching films in a classroom requires different ways of seeing (and note-taking), as you will need to pay close attention to *how* the events unfold on screen and *why* each film takes its own specific form. A few films are R rated as this course was developed with a mature viewing audience in mind. Please see me in advance if this will be an issue.

Evaluation: LBCC does not offer +/- grades: A= 90% and above, B=80% and above, etc.). Course grades will be based on:

Weekly Homework	30 %
Vocabulary Project	25 %
Midterm Exam	15 %
Final Exam	30 %

Weekly Homework: Throughout the term you will compose single-spaced, one-page responses to the readings assigned each week. Be sure to read the assigned text carefully and mark any passages that strike you as interesting or challenging. The first and second paragraphs of your response should briefly summarize the entire reading. The third and fourth paragraphs should highlight specific passages and key concepts covered in the reading. The fifth paragraph should identify visual examples from films discussed in the text or viewed in class that highlight the importance of the concepts covered in the reading. Use formal prose – no ranting. Use the internet to watch the online tutorials that accompany the readings. *Your response must include at least two direct quotes from the assigned reading – including page number – and one close reading of a specific scene from one of the films highlighted in the reading.* Late responses accepted for up to two weeks at a 50% penalty. **Keys to success:** Strive to write fun but thought-provoking, engaging and even controversial responses, as any good media scholar would. The goal here is not only to produce insightful comments, but also to provoke discussion and generate interest. Uninspired or irrelevant responses will be graded accordingly.

Vocabulary Project: Week 9 you will turn in an annotated worksheet of key vocabulary words. You will define the terms using your course text and online sources, provide visual examples from film texts of your choice, and annotate your examples with brief description and analysis. Examples will be available.

Exams: The midterm exam will be held in class and consist of multiple choice, true/false, and matching, questions and the final exam will consist of comprehensive take-home essays.

Class Schedule

Week One: Introduction to Film Studies

Course Welcome and overview

Film Screening: *Stranger Things* (episode 1)

Week Two: Principles of Mise-en-scene

Reading: *Film Studies*, Introduction and Chapter 1. **Always do the reading before class.**

Film Screening: *Citizen Kane* (1941)

Due: Homework 1 due in class.

Week Three: Camera Movement and Cinematography

Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapters 2 and 3

Film Screening: *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015)

Due: Homework 2 due in class.

Week Four: Editing

Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapter 4

Film Screening: *The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing* (2004)

Due: Homework 3 due in class.

Week Five: Sound

Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapter 5

Film Screening: *Happy Feet* (2006)

Due: Homework 4 due in class

Week Six: Midterm

Midterm exam in class

Week Seven: Narrative

Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapters 6 and 7

Film Screening: *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)

Due: Homework 5 due in class

Week Eight: Filmmakers and Performers

Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapters 8 and 9

Screening: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004)

Due: Homework 6 due in class

Week Nine: Genre and Special Effects

Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapters 10 and 11

Screening: *Vertigo* (1958)

Due: Vocabulary Project

Week Ten: Finishing the Term

Take Home Final Due by email no later than 8:50pm on Tuesday of Week 10