ENGL 202: Introduction to Cinema  

2007

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor: Dr. Thomas Cohen</th>
<th>Office: Palmer 308A</th>
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<tr>
<td>Time: MWF 12:00 – 12:50</td>
<td>Office hours: W 1:00 – 2:00 (Or by appointment)</td>
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<td>Screening: W 7:30 – 10 p.m.</td>
<td>Messages: ext. 3399</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room: Barret 34</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:cohent@rhodes.edu">cohent@rhodes.edu</a></td>
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Goals
This course introduces students to the critical tools involved in analyzing moving-image media such as film, video, and television. Students will compose essays that demonstrate a historically informed grasp of cinema's formal techniques and how these produce meaning for spectators. Prerequisite: ENGL 151 or equivalent.

Required Texts
- *Looking at Movies*—Richard Barsam
- *The Way Hollywood Tells It*—David Bordwell
- Texts online and on reserve

Course requirements
- Argumentative essay 8-10 pages
- Scene analysis paper 4 pages
- Four one-page, single-paragraph assignments
- Quizzes
- Class participation

Paper Assignments
- **Scene Analysis**: Write a close analysis of a single scene from a film we have seen. Your “reading” should demonstrate how meaning emerges from the film’s formal elements.
- **Essay Two**: Compose an argumentative essay with a clear thesis on a film or films we have seen.

Paragraphs
- Plot synopsis
- Description
- Comparison/contrast
- Introductory paragraphs and quoting sources

Grading
- Argumentative Essay = 45%
- Scene Analysis = 20%
- Paragraphs = 20% (5% each)
- Quizzes = 5%
- Participation =10%

Grading Criteria for Papers

- A Excellent work. The essay states a clear thesis or objective. Ideas are logically developed. The essay is organized as a whole and on the paragraph level. Points are supported with examples. Quotations are introduced appropriately. The writer has engaged assigned readings and film(s) and has demonstrated command of tone and word choice. Free of serious mechanical errors.
- A- Very fine work. Shares many qualities with A work but lacks the sophistication and polish of the latter.
- B+ Very good work. Contains a clearly stated thesis that is logically developed. Demonstrates engagement with assigned readings and films. May contain some awkward expressions. Style shows competence if not polish. No serious mechanical errors.
- B Good work. Fulfills the assignment requirements. Demonstrates the writer has read the assignments, seen the films, and attended class. Free of serious, chronic mechanical errors but may need improvement on grammar and style.
- B- Fair work. Shares most of the qualities of B paper but may contain more mechanical errors, awkward expressions, or flaws in logical development.
- C (+) Satisfactory but needs improvement.
- F Unsatisfactory work.

Quizzes

Online quizzes can be found at www.wwnorton.com/web/movies. Check the schedule for due dates. Students will take these and email me the results. Quizzes are due before class begins. I cannot accept late quizzes.

Participation

The grade depends on the student’s contributions to class discussion. Quality rather than quantity counts. While participation depends on attendance, merely showing up for class will not suffice. Be prepared to discuss the material. The Oxford English Dictionary defines participation as follows: “the process or fact of sharing in an action, sentiment, etc.; active involvement in a matter or event, esp. one in which the outcome directly affects those taking part.” Would you describe your participation as “active involvement”?

Screenings

8/29: Stagecoach – John Ford (USA 1939)
9/5: Rashomon – Akira Kurosawa (Japan 1950)
9/12: Rear Window – Alfred Hitchcock (USA 1954)
9/19: Time Code – Mike Figgis (UK 2000)
9/26: Battleship Potemkin – Sergei Eisenstein (Soviet Union 1926)
10/3: documentary film TBA
10/10: No screening
10/17: M – Fritz Lang (Germany 1932)
10/24: Lost in Translation – Sophia Coppola (USA 2003)
10/31: Dracula: Pages from a Virgin’s Diary – Guy Maddin (Canada 2002)
11/7: *Buffalo 66* – Vincent Gallo (USA 1998)
11/14: *The Divorcee* – Hal Leonard (USA 1932)
11/21: No screening
12/5: No screening

8/22: Introduction to course
8/24: Barsam, 1-28, 48-49; Bordwell, 1-18 [Introduction]
8/27: Adorno and Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry,”
http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/adorno/1944/culture-industry.htm
8/29: Barsam, 58-71 [Narrative]; Barsam, 350-371 [Studio System and beyond]
8/31: Barsam, 72-89 [Narrative]; Bordwell, 104-114 [A Certain Amount of Plot]
9/3: Labor Day; off
9/5: Bordwell, 21-50 [Continuing Tradition]
9/7: Bordwell, 72-103 [Subjective Stories]; Discussion of Rashomon.
9/10: **Plot synopsis due**
9/12: No class.
9/14: Barsam, 92-122 [Mise-en-scène]
9/17: Barsam, 140-175 [Cinematography]
9/19: Barsam, 176-193 [Camera movement, Framing and POv, Speed and length of shot, CGI] Barsam, 296-329 [Editing]
9/21: Discussion of Time Code
9/24: **Description paragraph due**
9/26: Barsam, 237-271 [Editing and post]
9/28: Discussion of *Potemkin*
10/1: **Scene analysis/interpretation due**
10/3: Barsam, 29-48 [Types of Movies]
10/5: Bordwell, 117-138 [Intensified Continuity]
10/8: Bordwell, 139-157 [Some Likely Sources]
10/10: Bordwell, 158-179 [Style]
10/12: Off; Fall break
10/15: off
10/17: Introduction to part 2 of course
10/19: Discussion of *M.*
10/22: Barsam, 274-288 [Sound]
10/24: Barsam, 288-313 [Sound]
10/26: Discussion of *Lost in Translation*
10/29: Bordwell, 180-189 [What’s Missing]
10/31: Discussion of genre
11/2: Lecture on comparison/contrast paragraph due
11/5: **Comparison/contrast paragraph due**
11/7: Barsam [Theory and Meaning] (316-328)
11/9: Discussion of *Buffalo 66*
11/12: Barsam, 336-341
11/14: Lecture on the production code and MPAA ratings system
11/16: Discussion of *The Divorcee*
11/21: Off; Thanksgiving
11/23: Thanksgiving
11/26: Barsam, 425-433 [Critical approaches];
11/28: Barsam [Making an Argument] (Online)
11/30: Discussion of *Chronicle*
12/3: **Intro paragraph due**
12/5: Final class
12/11: Final essay due in my office by noon