

ENG 333U: History of Cinema and Narrative Media II – Winter 2015
Prof. Josh Epstein

ENGL 333U "[s]urveys the history of cinema and narrative media from the end of the Second World War through the 1970s" (*PSU Bulletin*). Addressing the studio system, the melodrama, the New Wave, and third cinemas, we will focus on post-war *auteurs* who strain the conventions of classical film, reflecting how post-war attitudes toward nation and empire, technology and modernity, psychology and sexuality, exert new kinds of pull on the art form.



Email: You are invited to email me anytime. The following is meant not to discourage you from asking questions, but to keep emails manageable and productive:

- Email is not an appropriate forum for discussing grades, seeking feedback on drafts, or negotiating special requests. I am happy to have these conversations in person.
- If you have questions about an assignment or course policy, **read the syllabus or assignment sheet** prior to emailing. I can't help you if you don't read the manual.
- Emails to explain why you were absent are unnecessary. If you miss class, please *contact a classmate* to track down class notes, assignments, etc.
- Please do not send file attachments without a message attached.
- Treat emails as **professional correspondence**. Use a subject heading and a polite salutation ("Hi Prof. Epstein" is fine) and a closing ("Sincerely, [Rick]"); write in complete and grammatical sentences; say "please" and "thank you"; etc.

TEXTBOOKS/VIEWINGS

Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 3rd ed. (ISBN 978-0073386133). This text is also on library reserve. Textbook readings are required whether you buy the book or not. All of the films will be put on library reserve; most can be viewed on Amazon.

COURSEWORK

Participation (14 points): This is a discussion-based class. I'll lecture on occasion, but my job is to guide the conversation, not to tell you what to think; you are responsible for generating the ideas in this class. Your participation will be graded A (14/14), C (11/14), F (7/14), or zero. Merely showing up does not constitute satisfactory (C) performance: you have to get involved. Excellent (A) participation requires consistent, thoughtful contributions to discussion. *Questions are as useful as answers*, so long as they are based on careful preparation and active listening. Speak up, ask questions, and try out new ideas. Bring the readings to class, and the notes you took while viewing the film.

Put your phone away, be on time, and don't leave/pack up early.

Attendance: If you miss more than two (≥ 3) classes, your final participation grade will be at best a C, likely lower. Upon your fifth absence, you will earn 0/14 for participation. *Each absence thereafter will deduct one point from your final grade.* As in the workforce, you're here or you're not; *I don't distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.* If you miss class, contact a classmate for notes. Please **be on time: if you are 10+ minutes late, do not enter the class** (you'll be marked absent regardless).

Taking Notes: Take notes on each film, and bring those notes with you for discussion. *If you haven't done this, you are not prepared for class.* Your notes might address:

- Theme/Narrative/Ideology: What themes does the film address? How does it create surprise, suspense, anger, irony, etc.? How do characters develop? How are issues such as race, class, gender, and sexuality constructed for viewers?
- Form/Style (cinematography, editing, lighting, etc.).
- Connections to other readings/films from the class.



Also identify at least **2-3 specific scenes** you'd like to discuss, and **2-3 arguments, ideas, or questions to bat around during class**. Taking good viewing notes is THE most important thing you can do to succeed in this class.

Dissection Reports (16 points total): To hone your proficiency with film analysis, you will write **five** reports, each dissecting a scene using film terms. Choose an intriguing, suggestive scene **3-4 minutes long**, and pick it apart. Format each report as follows:

- **Two full pages** long. Double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, 1" margins. Print on both sides of the page or **staple** your report. I won't accept loose pages.
- **Don't waste space**. No extra line skips; no messing with spacing, fonts, or margins.
- Top left: a single-spaced heading of three lines: (1) your name; (2) the date; (3) the scene you selected, indicated by time (e.g. 1 hr. 33'00" through 1 hr. 36'00").
- Skip **one** line. Begin the first section marked **Technique (~1 page)**. Dissect the scene's technique. *Don't summarize plot*; examine *how* the scene is put together. On the schedule, you will find film terms to use. **Boldface** these keywords.
- Skip **one** line, then begin the second section: **Analysis**. Here, *interpret* your "technique" observations: How does technique shape our understanding of theme, social commentary, etc.? Again, **boldface** the keywords, tying your analysis back to your technique observations (e.g. how does lighting, camera position, etc. develop a particular theme or attitude?). Your analysis should run around 3/4 of a page.
- Skip a line. Final section: **Further Questions**. Raise two complex *questions* about the scene's themes and techniques. Go beyond questions of plot or character motive.

Guidelines and Assessment:

- Dissections are due at the beginning of class as assigned. *I will not accept reports late (including late arrival to class), via email, or from absent students.*
- There are seven dissections assigned; you must complete five (one ungraded, plus four graded). The first (Week 2) dissection is ungraded but required for everyone. If you fail to submit this report, you'll lose two points from your total score.
- Except for the first ungraded report, each dissection will be scored out of 4 points.



Essay (20 points): Your essay will develop a focused, insightful argument about a course film. You are welcome to use one of your dissection reports as a starting point for this essay. Your essay must be 1700-2000 words, typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman, with 1" margins. It will

need a focused topic, an argumentative **thesis** that poses an insightful **interpretation** of the film; and a cohesive **development** of that thesis through **analysis** of technique. An A paper makes an original, perceptive, and thought-provoking argument, performs insightful and subtle analysis of form, and writes in precise, elegant, well-edited prose. We will have a *required* in-class **peer-review** on Wed., March 4.

Late Work: Penalized 2 points per day (including weekends). I will not accept essays more than a week late.

Storyboard (20 points) (fuller details will be distributed):



Individually or in groups, you will map out a scene of ~5 minutes that you'd like to add to a film from the first six weeks of our course. You will script and storyboard this scene as if it were to be produced. (You aren't required to produce the scene, though you may, if you really feel ambitious!) You will create: (1) a visual storyboard; (2) a written script; (3) a short essay, written individually. The storyboard will include: (a) a shot-by-shot diagram; (b) a diagram of the mise-en-scène; (c) an explanation of the soundtrack; and (d) a *synthesis* that pulls these elements together.

The project should create a scene that would fit, or powerfully change, the themes and form of the original film. **Keep it low-budget:** cheap poster board and markers are fine. Your presentation must be visually presentable, detailed, and easy to follow, but this is not an art class. Projects will be graded on their critical thinking and originality, use of film concepts, explanatory clarity, and level of insight into the original film. **You will present these storyboard projects in class on February 18.** Presentations cannot be rescheduled or made up.

TV Presentation (15 points): In groups, you will present on a TV show listed on the schedule. You don't need to watch every single episode (unless you want to!), but should watch at least 2.5-3 hours' worth. Your presentation should be ~20 minutes, and should do the following:

- Give a **brief synopsis** of what the show is about.
- **Historically contextualize** the show. When was it broadcast; what relevant historical events, trends, or attitudes does it reflect? Be specific. You are encouraged to do some research as to what made the show culturally significant.
- Discuss the show's **genre, style, and visual technique**. Characterize its cinematography, editing, narrative structure, etc. Use those film analysis skills!
- Discuss the show's **recurring themes, ideas, situations/problems, etc.** Look for ways to connect them to our course discussions.
- You may show clips, for no more than 4-5 minutes of your presentation.



We'll sign up for presentations the first week. Most of these shows can be found on library reserve, as well as on Amazon, Netflix, etc.

Final Exam (15 points): The final exam will have two parts: (1) ID/analysis, using your cinema knowledge to identify and analyze clips from our course films; (2) essay. Each student will be allowed **one page of typed notes** for the exam, submitted in advance.

The final exam will be held on **Wed., March 18** from **12:30-2:20 p.m.** If you require alternate testing arrangements (e.g. for disability accommodations), please contact DRC and Testing Services *at least two weeks before the exam—preferably sooner*. Testing Services information can be found at www.pdx.edu/shac/testing-services. *I do not give make-up exams* except for severe, *documented* emergencies. Employment duties, social obligations, and personal travel plans are not emergencies.

POLICIES AND RESOURCES:

Office Hours: I'm here to help. If you can't meet during my office hours, *please email me to set up an appointment*.

I can't reverse time: once a deadline has passed, it's passed; once the course is over, it's over. Plan ahead, and ask for help beforehand, not after the fact.

Cell Phones: No.

Civility: I do not permit personal attacks or hate speech on any basis, including race or ethnicity, sex or gender, sexual/affectional orientation, socioeconomics, religion, age, or disability. Students are expected to speak to each other (and me) with respect.

Writing Center: You are encouraged to use PSU's Writing Center (www.writingcenter.pdx.edu) for help with any assignment in this class.

Academic Integrity: When you submit an assignment, you affirm that it represents your own work, done specifically for this class. You are permitted to exchange papers with a 333U classmate for feedback, and to consult with PSU's Writing Center. Beyond that, *everything that you submit in this course must represent your own work. Any use of another person's words or ideas must be fully acknowledged.* Any instance of academic misconduct—no matter how "minor" or incidental—will result in a **zero for the assignment and a referral to the Student Conduct office**.

Review the Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>). This code outlines several forms of academic misconduct, including *but not limited to* the following: cheating; plagiarism; resubmitting the same work in multiple classes; doing work for other students (or vice-versa) or misrepresenting who has done the work (this includes attendance sign-ins); buying or selling papers or exams; falsifying sources; altering records (e.g. forging graded material); etc. Plagiarism is the most common of these offenses. The basic principle is simple: if you use someone else's words or ideas, you have to acknowledge the source. *No exceptions.* **Tip:** If you find yourself looking at a source (or notes on a source) while writing, **look away from the source, write the sentence in your own voice, then cite where you got the ideas.** When using someone's phrasing, cite the source and enclose the phrase in "quotation marks."

I am happy to help if you have questions. If you're ever unsure about what you're doing, ask me *before* handing in the assignment. *Uncertainty about the rules is not an excuse for violating them.*



Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability that may affect your academic performance, please speak with me and the Disability Resource Center (503.725.4150; www.drc.pdx.edu);). Accommodations must be arranged *in advance*.

GRADING

I grade the work, not the student. Grades are earned, not "deserved." Your grade will be based on the *quality of your work*—not on personal hopes and dreams, schedule commitments, the GPA you need for [whatever]. Everyone is held to the same standards. If you need help meeting those standards, I am more than happy to help.

Each assignment starts at zero and *works up to* the grade it earns. You do not start with an A and then "lose points" for doing something wrong:

A = Excellent B = Good C = Satisfactory D = Inferior F = Failure

An A signifies *excellent* work of outstanding analytical insight and expressive clarity; a B represents work that satisfies expectations with work of merit; a C represents work that satisfies expectations. *A grade of C is not an indictment of your abilities or effort.* It reflects competent work.

The Digits: Your final point total will be assigned a grade as follows:

	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+	0-59 = F
≥ 93 = A	83-86 = B	73-76 = C	63-66 = D	
90-92 = A-	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-	60-62 = D-	

There is no flexibility on these numbers. If you're one point short, you're one point short.

Finally, please note that I will not give Incompletes or X ("No Basis") grades in this class. If you think you may be unable to complete the coursework, please speak with your academic adviser, and me, as soon as possible.

Please take down the info of a few classmates whom you can contact if you miss class.

Name	Phone	Email/Facebook/whatever
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(1)

(2)

(3)

SCHEDULE:

READINGS/VIEWINGS/ASSIGNMENTS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON THE DAYS INDICATED. T&B = Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, 3rd ed.

Week One: Nobody's Perfect

M 1/5 How to watch movies.

W 1/7 Watch *Some Like it Hot* before class (<http://bit.ly/SLIH-amz>). Sign up for TV presentations. Discuss first "dissection" assignment.

Week Two: New Melodramas

M 1/12 Sirk, *Written on the Wind* (watch before class). Discuss storyboards.

Dissection #1 (on *Some Like it Hot*) due, beginning of class on 1/12.

Required of all students. Use **at least four** of the following terms: mise-en-scène, framing, shot, cut, close-up, long shot. **Boldface** the terms that you use.

W 1/14 Sirk and Wilder, compare/contrast. **TV presentation: *The Honeyymooners*.**

Dissection #2, on Sirk, due at beginning of class on 1/14. Use **at least one** term from last week, plus **at least three** of the following: establishing shot; motivated or unmotivated track/zoom; diegetic or non-diegetic; montage.

Week Three: New Psyches

M 1/19 No class; Martin Luther King, Jr day.

W 1/21 *Persona* (bit.ly/Persona-amz). Read T&B 381-388; Jones, "Bergman's *Persona*" (x).

Dissection #3 (*Persona*) due, beginning of class, 1/21. Use **at least one** term from last week and **at least three** of the following: lighting; POV shot; intercut; reverse shot.

Week Four: New Waves

M 1/26 Watch *Breathless* (<http://bit.ly/Breathless-amz>). Read T&B ch. 20 (all).

Dissection #4, on *Breathless*, due 1/26. Use **either** of the following keywords—jump cut, iris wipe—and **at least two** from previous weeks.

W 1/28 Bergman and Godard, cont. Reading TBA. **TV presentation: *The Twilight Zone*.**

Week Five: New Sexualities

M 2/2 Watch *La Dolce Vita* (D2L). Read T&B 390-392.

Dissection #5 due, beginning of class on 2/2. Use **at least four** film terms from previous weeks. **(Only two dissection opportunities left after today!)**

W 2/4 Fellini, cont. Bondanella, "*La Dolce Vita*" (x). Discuss final exam in class. **TV presentation: *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In*** (on reserve)

Week Six: New Narratives

M 2/9 *Rear Window* (bit.ly/RearWindow-amz). Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (x).

Dissection #6, on *Rear Window*, due on 2/9. Use **at least four** of the film terms we've introduced thus far.

W 2/11 Hitchcock, cont. **TV presentation: *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*** (on reserve).

Week Seven: Storyboards!

M 2/16 **Day to work on storyboard projects in class.**

W 2/18 **STORYBOARD PRESENTATIONS IN CLASS.**

Week Eight: New Spaces

M 2/23 Watch *2001* (bit.ly/2001-amz). Read T&B 478-489; Freedman, "Kubrick's *2001*" (x).

W 2/25 *2001*, cont. **TV Presentation: *Star Trek (original)***. (We don't have this on reserve, alas. Episodes can be watched on Amazon, starting with season one, at <http://www.amazon.com/The-Man-Trap/dp/B005HED08/> . Remember, you don't have to watch all of them!)

Week Nine: New Developments

M 3/2 Watch Alea, *Memories of Underdevelopment* (on reserve). Read T&B 494-503; Alea, "The Viewer's Dialectic" (x). **TV Presentation: *M.A.S.H.***

W 3/4 Alea, cont. **Peer-review paper in class.**

Paper due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 6, via D2L dropbox.

Week Ten: New Noirs

M 3/9 Watch *Eraserhead* (<http://bit.ly/Eraserhead-amz>); Dalí/Buñuel, *Un chien andalou* (<http://bit.ly/UnChien-YouTube>). **TV Presentation: *Twin Peaks (Seasons 1-2)***.

W 3/11 Wrap-ups, Evaluations, and Exam Reviews.

Final Dissection (*Eraserhead*) due 3/11. Use four or more keywords.

Final Exam: Wed., Mar 18, 12:30 p.m. – 2:20 p.m. Bring a *blank* bluebook and 2 or 3 PENS.
