

Instructor: Jason Palmeri

Class: Denney Hall 214 (Monday 8:30-11:30; Wednesday 8:30-10:30)

Office: Denney 324

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Office Hours: Monday: 11:30-12:30 / Wednesday 10:30-12:30 (other times by appointment)

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>> English 263: Introduction To Film <<

This course will introduce you to the history of film, technical aspects of film making, and the spectrum of approaches to film criticism prevalent in the academy. By the end of the quarter, you should be able to discuss the major elements of cinema (mise-en-scene, cinematography, narrative, editing, sound, acting, genre) as well as the social and material effects of cinematic production and reception.

>> Assignments / Evaluation<<

Reading Quizzes: 15%

At three points during the term (TBA), I will give a quiz on 2-3 chapters of reading from Barsam. The quizzes will ask you to define and apply critical vocabulary. I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

On-Line and In-Class Discussion: 20%

During the course of the term, you will be required to *post 4 responses* to film on the Carmen discussion board. (The class will be divided into two groups and each group will have differing due dates). Each response should be at least 150 words. Your responses should *not* include plot summary or evaluation (thumbs up / thumbs down). Rather, you should point out a specific interesting element of the film (cinematography, editing, mise-en-scene, narrative, sound etc.) and make an argument about how that cinematic technique contributes to the film's meaning. You also might consider how cinematic techniques reinforce and/or subvert hierarchies of race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability.

In addition to posting responses, you also must post *at least 6 comments* (at least 50 words) throughout term. You must post at least one comment every two weeks. A comment should respond to one of your peer's posts. Your comment should cite additional evidence from the film that either supports or refutes your peer's argument.

In addition to completing the on-line responses and comments, you should also participate actively in in-class discussions.

Analytic Dialogue Paper: 35%

In your final paper, I will ask you to closely analyze a scene from a film using a variety of perspectives. The paper will take the form of a dialogue with multiple speakers, and it will be at least 1,250 words in length. I will give you a list of films you can choose to discuss (including but not limited to those we screen in class). I will distribute a detailed prompt for this assignment by the second week of class.

Final Exam: 30%

The final exam will consist of a series of short and long essay questions, testing your ability to discuss the films we screened in class using the terminology / theory from readings and lecture. Toward the end of class, I will distribute a study guide that will contain most of the questions on the exam.

>> Materials <<

1. Barsam, Richard. *Looking At Movies: An Introduction to Film*. (Available at SBX)
2. Films screened in class or available on reserve at OSU library.
3. Course Website: carmen.osu.edu

>> Policies <<

1. *Attendance*: Your successful completion of this course and development as a film scholar is dependent on your active and continual attendance. Thus, each unexcused absence (after two) will result in the lowering of your final grade by one-third. Excused absences with documentation (i.e. illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or inter-collegiate athletics) will not affect your grade. **If you are sleeping in class, I will count you absent!**

2. *Plagiarism*: When you use another person's words or ideas, you must acknowledge that you have done so. At no point in the writing process should words or ideas that are not your own be represented as such. In accordance with university rules, all cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

3. *Student Work*: I expect that all assignments will be handed in on time. Papers are due at the beginning of class (or by the time and date specified). Any late assignments will be lowered by one letter grade each day they are late.

>> Access / Accommodations / Abilities <<

We all have varying abilities; we all carry various strengths and weaknesses. Some of these might even be “documented” with a place like the OSU Office for Disability Services (ODS). If so, please let me know. With or without documentation, it is my intent to make our learning experience as accessible as possible. With documentation, I am especially interested in providing any student accommodations that have probably been best determined by the student and an ODS counselor in advance. Please let me know NOW what we can do to maximize *your* learning potential, participation, and general access in this course. I am available to meet with you in person or to discuss such things on email. The Office for Disability Services is located at 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue, phone 292-3307 (TDD 292-0901). See: <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>

>> Weekly Schedule <<

Week 1: What is Film?

M: *Screen:* Dryer, "The Passion of Joan of Arc" and Eisenstein, "Battleship Potemkin" (selection)

W: Basic Film Terms, Film and "Reality," Montage, Ideology
Read: Barsam 1-51

Week 2: Cinematography and Film Noir

M: *Screen:* Wilder, "Double Indemnity"
Read: Barsam, 178-275

W: Lighting, Camera Distance, Camera Angle, Noir as Genre, Feminist Analysis, Historical Context
Due: Group 1 Web Response

Week 3: Narrative and Cinematography

M: *Screen:* Welles, "Citizen Kane"
Read: Barsam, 57-107, 344, 394-399

W: Technical Innovations in *Kane*, Visual Storytelling, Point of View, Plot vs. Story, Characters
Due: Group 2 Web Response

Week 4: Experimental Narrative, Epistemology, and Mise-en-Scene

M: *Screen:* Kurosawa, "Rashomon"
Read: Barsam, 122-170

W: Framing, Kinesis, Design, Film and Epistemology
Due: Group 1 Web Response

Week 5: Editing, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism

M: *Screen:* Hitchcock, "Vertigo"
Read: Barsam 295-349

W: Editing Techniques, Psychoanalytic Theory (Freudian and Feminist)
Due: Group 2 Web Response

Week 6: Editing, Sound, and Critical Race Theory

M: *Screen:* Lee, "Do the Right Thing"
Read: Barsam, 351-394

W: Diegetic and Nondiegetic Sound, Montage, Critical Race Theory
Due: Group 1 Web Response

Week 7: Acting, Sound, and Queer Theory

M: *Screen:* Wilder, "Some Like It Hot"
Read: Barsam, 248-290

W: Star theory, Queer theory, Hollywood Musical, Comedy
Due: Group 2 Web Response

Week 8: Documentary, Disability, and the Ethics of Representation

M: *Screen:* Rubin and Shapiro, "Murderball" and Barrett, "Stranger With A Camera"
Read: Linton, "Claiming Disability" and Nichols, "Representing Reality" (PDFs available on Carmen)
Due: Draft of Analytic Dialogue Paper (*optional*)

W: Disability Studies Theory, Modes of Documentary Representation, Ethics
Due: Group 1 Web Response

Week 9: Independent Cinema and The Politics of Film History

M: *Screen:* Dunye, "Watermelon Woman"

W: Independent Film, Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Film History, Epistemology, Mockumentary
Due: Group 2 Web Response

Week 10: Digital / New Media

M: Class cancelled for Memorial Day / screen web-based media (TBA) at home

W: New Media, Exam Review

Due: Analytic dialogue paper

Final Exam: Monday June 5th 7:30-9:18