



# FIL 2400

## Film: The History and Aesthetics of Cinema

vwendy Neeld

[neeldw@cf.edu](mailto:neeldw@cf.edu)



**Course Description:** Film: the history and aesthetics of cinema is intended to serve as an introduction to the critical viewing and consideration of film. Its intent is to provide students with a vocabulary of film, an understanding of the development of cinema since its inception, and an understanding of the primary schools of film criticism.

**Course Goals:** Students will be expected to understand and to apply the vocabulary of film criticism to selected films. They will be asked to demonstrate the application of critical thinking skills both in verbal and written form as they relate historical and critical information to the viewing of film and discuss it as an artistic medium.

### Course Materials:

The course has a required text:

Dick, Bernard F. Anatomy of Film. 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. New York: Bedford St. Martin's, 2005.

Two other texts are recommended for the class to help students with particular areas in which they may struggle:

- Corrigan, Timothy J. A Short Guide to Writing about Film. New York: Pearson Longman, 2008.
- Katz, Ephraim. The Film Encyclopedia. New York: HarperCollins, 2005.

**OBTAINING FILMS:** Students will be assigned a series of films for viewing outside the classroom. These films are required elements of the course. In the college setting, it is expected that students be responsible for obtaining access to these materials; the films will not be provided for them, nor will they be shown in the classroom – both time and copyright prohibits such viewing. The required films are listed on the schedule portion of this syllabus, allowing for pre-planning. It is recommended that students consider an online rental service and/or cooperate with one another in order to obtain the films in a timely manner.

*Film is, like all art, highly subjective, and selecting a handful of movies from the millions that have been produced is a challenge. Therefore, the films selected for this course are not chosen by whim. They are not only critically reviewed and recognized, they are also honored by popular opinion (appearing on the AFI top 100 films of all time) and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (having received one or more academy awards). I, as your teacher, apologize if you do not like all of the films, but, frankly, they're not my personal favorites either. Suggestions for replacements or additional films are not welcome...save them for your critical paper.*

**Grades & Grading Policy:** Your final course grade will be based on the following assignments as described in the explanation in this syllabus and as listed in the attached schedule of assignments according to the percentages assigned below.

Assignment	% of grade
Written assignments	35%
Tests	45%
Quizzes	10%
Critical Essay	10%

**The requirements of the course are broken down in the following manner:**

**Written assignments:**

Since FIL2400 requires students to demonstrate the application of critical analysis to film, written assignments will be given on a weekly basis. Students are expected to complete these assignments within the following criteria:

- Assignments must address the question(s) asked.
- Assignments must demonstrate critical thinking, original thought, and logical argument. Summaries of film narrative or scenes will not be acceptable.
- The use of outside material should be used to support argument, not replace it, and all outside material must be cited according to MLA format.

**Tests:**

Students will take 3 tests in the course of the semester, each addressing one section of the course. The tests will address the following: (1) Film vocabulary and process (2) Cinema history (3) Critical theory and analysis of film. Each test will be composed of 2 elements. Students will take an in-class objective exam dealing with material presented in class. Students will also complete a take home exam demonstrating understanding of the concepts presented in class by responding to a critical thinking question in essay form.

**Quizzes:**

Students will occasionally be given quizzes to judge both their comprehension of material presented in class and their completion of assigned homework.

**Critical Essay: DUE 12/4/2008**

Students will be expected to complete a critical analysis paper addressing one of the three major sections of the course as it relates to a particular work of art. Both the topic and the work of art selected are the responsibility of the student.

***Thesis statements/concept proposals for these papers are due to the instructor no later than 11/06/008***

Criteria for the paper are found on the assignment sheet provided in class.

**Important Dates:** The last day to drop classes without an “F” is October 28.

**Schedule Changes:**

I, as the instructor, reserve the right to make changes to scheduling and assignments as needed.

**Equal Access:**

Students who have special physical challenges are responsible for informing the instructor of their special needs. Contrary to popular opinion, I am not psychic. I will be glad to make accommodations, but you have to tell me your needs. Also, equal access students are required to register with the Access Services office to be eligible for accommodations in the classroom. If you do not know how to contact Access Services, please speak to me privately after class, and I’ll be glad to do my best to help.

**Contact:**

Office Hours: 5-6 p.m. Thursday L2-204. Telephone: 352-746-6721 Email: [neeldw@cf.edu](mailto:neeldw@cf.edu)

I live here. I work at CFCC full time as a supervisor in the Learning Support Center as well as teaching classes. Therefore, I am available in my office in L2-204 for 37.5 hours a week. My regular work schedule is as follows:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
7:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.	7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	7:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.	7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. If an assignment, or any part of it, is plagiarized, students will receive a zero grade for that assignment.**

**Draconian assignment warning, jawohl!**

*The work assigned in this class has due dates assigned by the teacher (that would be me.) Those due dates are assigned for a reason. They are not arbitrary, and work may not be turned in at your leisure or at the end of class in the last moments of the semester.*

- 1.) Work is assigned in class. It is your responsibility to know what is assigned and when those assignments are due.
- 2.) You may submit work in written form or via email. If you submit via email, you should receive a receipt email in 24 hours. If you don’t, assume I didn’t get the work and send it again.
- 3.) You will receive a printed grade report on the day of your tests. It is your responsibility to review that printout and resolve any missing work from the current course section within 1 week. If you do not resolve missing work within that time frame, it will not be accepted.
- 4.) I am willing (and glad) to work with you if you run into snags, personal emergencies, or technical difficulties, but you *must* communicate with me. Complaints, emails, telephone calls, and whining in the last moments of the semester regarding assignments due weeks earlier will not receive sympathy or Kleenex.



# SCHEDULE OF WORK

		HOMEWORK (to be <i>COMPLETED</i> by the date on which it appears)
<b>PROCESS</b>		
8/21	What you already know – Communication Language Theme  Pixar	
8/28	Applying Language Effectiveness – creating story	Star Wars: Episode IV: A New Hope (1977)
9/4	Writing Pre-production Realizing an idea	<i>Read:</i> It Had to be Murder <i>Watch:</i> Rear Window (1954)
9/11	No Class	
9/18	Shot/Editing/ pacing	Citizen Kane (1941)
9/25	Post-production Effects Marketing	Jaws (1975)
<b>HISTORY</b>		
10/2	Silent/early film	Required: Chaplin “The Kid” (1921) Keaton “Sherlock Jr” (1924)  One of: Frankenstein (1931) Gold Diggers of 1933 (1933) Snow White (1937)
10/9	40s/ 50s	Required: Stagecoach (1939)  One of: His Girl Friday (1940) Vertigo (1958) Singin’ in the Rain (1952)
10/16	60s/70s	Required: The Godfather (1972)  One of: To Kill a Mockingbird (1962) A Clockwork Orange (1971)

10/23	80s/ Modern	Required: Fellowship of the Ring (2001)  One of: Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981) Unforgiven (1992) The Sixth Sense (1999) Toy Story (1995) The Shawshank Redemption (1994)
<b>CRITICISM</b>		
10/30	Cultural context Technical ability View of the medium	Yojimbo (1961) Pulp Fiction (1994)
11/6	Analysis – Language Psychoanalysis	Battleship Potemkin (1925) Apocalypse Now (1979)
11/13	Reflection of reality	Bicycle Thief (1948) Fight Club (1999)
11/20	Auteur/Genre	Moulin Rouge (2001) Pan's Labyrinth (2006)
12/4	Analysis, opinion, art: Film as art – the critical review	