

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Department of Cinema and Television Arts

Fall Semester, 2009

Instructor: Tim Halloran

CTVA 210—Film and Television Aesthetics

Class # 11146

Fridays, 2—4:45 pm. Manzanita Hall 100

Office Hours: Room MZ 305, F 12-1 pm, or by appointment.

E-mail: etimh@csun.edu

GUIDELINES FOR THE ARMER THEATER

- There is **ABSOLUTELY NO EATING OR DRINKING** in the Armer Theater.
- **DO NOT** bring ANY food or drink in the theater—especially **GUM!**
- No form of wheeled personal transportation (skateboard, skates, scooter, etc.) is allowed in the Armer Theater.
- **DO NOT** put your feet on the backs or armrests of the seats.
- Please refrain from any talking or conversations during the screenings.
- Turn off ALL cell phones and electronic devices—**NO text messaging during class.**
- Violators of any of the above guidelines will be asked to leave the theater.
- Please be considerate of your professor and fellow students.

Course Description:

CTVA 210 is an introduction to the close analysis of film and television texts. The course will explore broad questions of form and content, aesthetics and meaning, and history and culture. We will survey a wide variety of films, filmmakers, and film movements to explore the diverse possibilities presented by the cinematic art form. Specific topics to be examined will include narrative, visual design, editing, sound design, genre and authorship, ideology, and film culture.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a familiarity with the nature of film and television as a technology, business, cultural product, entertainment medium and art form.
- demonstrate a knowledge of the formal aesthetic elements of motion pictures and how they are used to create cinematic art.
- demonstrate a knowledge of the various categories, models, theories and ideologies used as analytical tools in understanding works of cinema.
- demonstrate an enhanced visual literacy through an increased awareness of film's complex role and function in society.
- demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, interpret, and write about films and electronic media using film-specific language.

Department of Cinema and Television Arts Student Learning Outcome:

At the end of the program of study, students should be able understand and articulate the history, theories and critical models of cinema and electronic media.

Grading Breakdown (detailed guidelines to follow):

Attendance/Participation/Cinematheques	20%
Quizzes/IC Assignment	20%
Midterm Exam	20% Friday, October 23 rd
Film Analysis Paper (7-10 pages)	20% Friday, December 11 th
Final Exam	20% Friday, December 11 th

All assignments must be completed satisfactorily to pass the class. Also, I will not assign “Incomplete” grades for any reason other than extreme or unavoidable circumstances.

Required Course Readings (all available at Matador bookstore or online):

Film Art: An Introduction (8th edition), David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson.

A Short Guide to Writing about Film, Timothy Corrigan

Supplemental handouts.

NOTE: To do well in the course it is absolutely essential that you do all of the assigned reading for the week. Reading assignments listed under a specific week’s heading should be completed prior to that week’s meeting. I will address “pop” questions to specific students each week that relate to the assigned reading material—your informed responses will count towards your participation grade. BE PREPARED.

Arts and Humanities GE Subject Course Goal and Student Learning Outcomes:

Goal: Students will understand the rich history and diversity of human knowledge, discourse and achievements of their own and other cultures as they are expressed in the arts, literatures, religions, and philosophy.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Explain and reflect critically upon the human search for meaning, values, discourse and expression in one or more eras/stylistic periods or cultures.
- Analyze, interpret, and reflect critically upon ideas of value, meaning, discourse and expression from a variety of perspectives from the arts and/or humanities.
- Demonstrate ability to engage and reflect upon their intellectual and creative development within the arts and humanities.
- Use appropriate critical vocabulary to describe and analyze works of artistic expression, literature, philosophy, or religion and a comprehension of the historical context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged.
- Describe and explain the historical and/or cultural context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged.

Information Competence Course Goal and Student Learning Outcomes:

Goal: Students will progressively develop information competence skills throughout their undergraduate careers by developing a basic understanding of information retrieval tools and practices as well as improving their ability to evaluate and synthesize information ethically.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Determine the nature and extent of information needed.
- Demonstrate effective search strategies for finding information using a variety of sources and methods.
- Locate, retrieve and evaluate a variety of relevant information including print and electronic formats.
- Organize and synthesize information in order to communicate effectively.
- Explain the legal and ethical dimensions of the use of information.

Course Assignments and Activities:

The following assignments and related activities contribute to the satisfaction of CTVA Department, Arts and Humanities GE Course, and Information Competence Course requirements and Student Learning Outcomes

Attendance and Participation: *READ VERY CAREFULLY!*

Class attendance and participation comprise 20% of your course grade. You are required to be ON TIME and IN CLASS for each meeting and ALL film screenings. Because of the nature and requirements of the material under study in this course, we may occasionally go over the official scheduled class time. Please prepare for this and make plans and arrangements accordingly. In regards to in-class participation, I do encourage questions and dialog during the lecture and discussion portion of the class. Your focused attention and enthusiastic involvement will be generously considered in your final course grade.

Sometimes attendance is taken at the beginning of class, sometimes at the break, and sometimes at the end. Prompt return after the scheduled breaks is essential. **If you are not there when roll is taken, you will not get credit for that day.** And if roll has already been taken, please do not approach me to tell me that you were late or, if I intend to take roll at the end, do not request to be counted present if you are leaving early. Also, keep in mind that signing any name other than your own on distributed rolls sheets is considered ACADEMIC DISHONESTY and will be handled accordingly.

Excused absences are only those that are OFFICIAL and DOCUMENTED medical or family emergencies. You will NOT be excused for personal commitments, job requirements, or production assignments of any kind. Again, please do not approach me with special requests or explanations regarding potential absences—if you choose to be absent without a legitimate excuse as outlined above, take the absence and its consequences without attempting to negotiate it away.

Cinematèque Attendance:

Cinematèque screenings take place on various evenings during the week in MZ100 (Alan Armer Theater). You are required to attend *at least three* cinematèque throughout the semester. These assignments will count towards your Attendance and Participation grade. Be sure to sign the attendance sheet legibly. A complete schedule of the screenings can be found at www.cinematheque.csun.edu/html/events.html.

Film Screenings:

All feature films screened in class will be shown in DVD format. **IMPORTANT: You are required to attend ALL screenings and stay for the entire period—from the beginning to the film's conclusion. NO EXCEPTIONS.** It doesn't matter that you may have already seen the film being screened in any class session—these are important movies that deserve to be viewed multiple times and it will only benefit you to have a fresh recollection of the film. ALL electronic devices, including cell phones, MP3 players, and laptops will be turned off during class screenings. All film titles are tentative and subject to change.

Information Competence (IC) Assignment:

CTVA 210 has been approved by the University as a G.E. "Information Competence" (IC) course. All students must take such a course in order to graduate. The assignment in this class is intended to help you develop your ability to use various information sources for research purposes. You will be required to watch one film outside of class and do research on it in relation to the assigned analytical tool. Further details on this assignment will follow.

Quizzes, Midterm and Final Exam:

There will be five short objective question quizzes during the session that will cover specific topics from the text, films and lectures. The midterm will be held in class week 9, October 23rd, and the final will be held Friday, December 11th, at the time determined by the University's final exam schedule. Please be prompt with the required exam materials. Both the midterm and final exam will include objective questions, short answers and essays. NO "early" re-schedules or make-up exams. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Film Analysis Paper:

You will be required to complete a 7-10 page film analysis paper due at the final class session. Specific assignment and details to follow. Papers will be evaluated based on the quality of your argumentation, logic, style, mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation), organization, clarity, and level of analysis. Please refer to the MLA Handbook (available at the bookstore and an indispensable reference for college papers), the Corrigan text, and/or the CTVA Writing Handbook for acceptable formats. Papers will be graded down one step EACH DAY that they are late (i.e. an A becomes an A-, an A- becomes a B+, etc.). More detailed information on the requirements for the film analysis paper will be handed out later in the semester.

NOTE: I DO NOT ACCEPT ANY WRITING ASSIGNMENTS VIA E-MAIL. Any late assignments not turned in at the required time must be hand delivered to the CTVA office and TIME-STAMPED for credit.

Note on Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is more than simply taking the *words* of others and presenting them as your own; it is also taking the *ideas* of others and presenting them as your own. If you use another author's words or ideas, you must cite them in proper MLA format. I will not tolerate plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form. All suspected cases are automatically turned over to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities must register with the Center on Disabilities and complete a services agreement each semester. Staff within the Center will verify the existence of a disability based on the documentation provided and approve accommodations. Students who are approved for test taking accommodations must provide a proctor form to their faculty member signed by the counselor in the Center on Disabilities prior to making testing arrangements. The Center on Disabilities is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110. Staff can be reached at (818) 677-2684.

Course Schedule

Note: Class schedule and all assignment dates subject to change or revision.

Week 1	8/28	<u>Introduction to Course: Technology, Business, and Art</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 1.
Films:		<i>La Jetée</i> (Marker, 1962) and <i>Timecode</i> (Figgis, 2000)
Week 2	9/4	<u>Film Form: Structure and Meaning</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 2.
Film:		<i>Vertigo</i> (Hitchcock, 1958) Quiz One
Week 3	9/11	<u>Narrative Systems: Categories, Models, Movements, Theories</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 3.
Film:		<i>Citizen Kane</i> (Welles, 1941)
Week 4	9/18	<u>Film Language: Mise-en-scene</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 4.
Film:		<i>Daughters of the Dust</i> (Dash, 1991)
Week 5	9/25	<u>Film Language: Cinematography</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 5.
Film:		<i>The Conformist</i> (Bertolucci, 1970) Quiz Two

Week 6	10/2	<u>Film Language: Editing</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 6.
Film:		<i>The Limey</i> (Soderbergh, 1999)
Week 7	10/9	<u>Film Language: Sound Design</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 7
Film:		<i>The Conversation</i> (Coppola, 1974)
Week 8	10/16	<u>Style as a Formal System</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 8
Film:		<i>2046</i> (Wong, 2004) Quiz Three
Week 9	10/23	<u>Midterm Examination</u>
		Requirements: Scantron and LARGE greenbook. Prompt arrival.
Week 10	10/30	<u>Film Genres/Genre Transformation</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 9
Film:		<i>The Searchers</i> (Ford, 1956)
Week 11	11/6	<u>Documentary, Experimental, and Animated Film</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 10
Film:		Various; <i>Waltz with Bashir</i> (Folman, 2008) Quiz Four
Week 12	11/13	<u>Art Cinema and Modernism</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 12
Film:		<i>Blowup</i> (Antonioni, 1966)
Week 13	11/20	<u>World Cinemas and Globalization</u>
Reading:		Selected supplemental readings
Film:		<i>Salaam Bombay</i> (Nair, 1988)
Week 14	11/27	<u>Thanksgiving Recess</u>
Week 15	12/4	<u>Critical Analysis of Electronic Media</u>
Reading:		Bordwell and Thompson, chapter 11
Film:		<i>Velvet Goldmine</i> (Haynes, 1998) Quiz Five
Week 16	12/11	<u>Final Examination</u>
		Requirements: Scantron and LARGE greenbook. Prompt arrival. Final Papers Due