

**CTVA 210. FILM AND TELEVISION AESTHETICS—Fall 2009. John Schultheiss, Cinema and Television Arts**

An introduction to the close analysis of international film and television texts; an examination of broad questions of their form and content, aesthetics and meaning, history and culture. **Office Hours:** Armer Theater (MZ100)—Tuesday @6:30PM; Wednesday @3:00PM and 6:30PM; Thursday @3:00PM. Please e-mail in advance for appointments. E-mail: [john.e.schultheiss@csun.edu](mailto:john.e.schultheiss@csun.edu) — Department of Cinema and Television Arts. For a schedule of all Cinematheque screenings: [www.cinematheque.csun.edu](http://www.cinematheque.csun.edu) => "Monthly Screening Schedules."

**REQUIRED READING:**

**For copy of this syllabus:** <http://www.ctva.csun.edu/AcademicsSyllabi.html>

1. CTVA 210. *Film Aesthetics: Readings*.
2. Abraham Polonsky. *You Are There Teleplays*.
3. Warren Buckland. *Teach Yourself Film Studies*.

**CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE:**

Students will be held accountable for the content and the context of all film works—features *and* film extracts—shown in class, as well as the lecture material.

**ASSIGNMENT VALUES:**

Examination One: 1/3  
Examination Two: 1/3  
Examination Three: 1/3

NOTE: Attendance at *eight* Cinematheque events will allow for the dropping of the lowest examination score. (See criteria below.) For a schedule of all Cinematheque screenings, go to [www.cinematheque.csun.edu](http://www.cinematheque.csun.edu) => "Monthly Screening Schedules."

**A SIDEBAR ON GRADING.** The final course grade (plus/minus evaluation) is based on the quantity of grade-appropriate work successfully completed. The instructor is intensely aware of the minimum "C" requirement for one's continuation in the CTVA major. Much contentious discussion usually ensues when one is awarded a "C-" in the course—including a supplication to roll the grade over into the "C" category, since surely this has been a close call and why not give the benefit of the doubt in the spirit of humanistic charity anyway? In actual fact, the granting of the "C-" has already been the result of scrupulous deliberation and humanistic charity, and has already received the benefit of the doubt in order to protect the student from an even lower grade. Please do not petition to have a "C-" grade raised to a "C".

**GUIDELINES FOR THE ARMER THEATER**

- There is ABSOLUTELY NO EATING OR DRINKING in the Armer Theater.
- DO NOT bring ANY food or drink (including water) in the theater—especially GUM!
- 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 all who occupy this holy space.
- => *No form of wheeled personal transportation (skateboard, skates, scooter, etc.) is allowed in the Armer Theater. As a courtesy, we will make a holding area available for the storage of these items should a student insist on bringing them. However, items are left in this holding area at the student's risk. The Armer Theater, CTVA, and the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication assume no responsibility for their security.*

**25 Aug 09.** Introduction — Definitions, Principles, Narrative Systems [*Film Extracts*]

*All narratives are composed to reward, modify, frustrate, or defeat the perceiver's search for coherence.*

**OVERVIEW READING for Examination ONE:** Warren Buckland, *Film Studies*, Chapters 1 ("Film Aesthetics: Formalism and Realism") and 2 ("Film Structure: Narrative and Narration").  
*Film Aesthetics Readings* – "KEY CONCEPTS & VOCABULARY" (pp. 4-7).

**1 Sep 09.** Montage/Mise-en-Scène [*Film Extracts*]

**READING:** *Film Aesthetics Readings* -- "Montage and Mise-en-Scène in the Narrative Film" (pp. 8-16). [**For all reading assignments, be careful to read the captions for all photographs—because they have been written to contain important information about the concept being illustrated.**]

**8 Sep 09.** Theories of Realism vs. Formalist Film Theories [*Film Extracts*]

*Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1985. novel Manuel Puig w Leonard Schrader d Hector Babenco)

**READING:** *Film Aesthetics Readings* – "Theories of Realism" (pp. 17-19); "Formalist Film Theories" (pp. 20-29); "Closed and Open Form" (pp. 30-32).

**15 Sep 09.** Aesthetics of Sound [*Film Extracts*]

**READING:** *Aesthetics of Sound Handout*

**22 Sep 09.** CLASSIC TELEVISION: *You Are There & Alfred Hitchcock Presents*

**READING:** *You Are There Teleplays* -- "A Season of Fear: Abraham Polonsky, *You Are There*, and the Blacklist" (Critical Commentary) & the following teleplays: "Cortes," "Galileo," "Nathan Hale," "Freud," and "Michelangelo."  
Warren Buckland, *Film Studies*, Chapter 4 ("Film Genres: Defining the Typical Film").

**29 Sep 09.**            **Screening & EXAMINATION**  
EXAMINATION on all of the above syllabus material.  
**SCREENING:** *Simon of the Desert* (1965. w d Luis Buñuel)

**6 Oct 09.**            Classical Narrative Model v. The Art Film Model—Orson Welles  
*Citizen Kane* (1941, Orson Welles)  
**READING:** *Film Aesthetics Readings* – “Notes and Readings on Art Cinema” (pp. 33-48); note particularly for this type of film: “Existentialism and CHART” (pp. 38-39); “Paradise Lost: The Cinema of Orson Welles (pp. 49-60).

**13 Oct 09.**            Classical Narrative Model v. The Art Film Model  
*Grand Illusion* (1937. w Charles Spaak, Jean Renoir d Jean Renoir)  
**READING:** Buckland, *Film Studies*, Chapters 3 and 4

**20 Oct 09.**            Classical Narrative Model v. The Art Film Model  
*Europa* (1991. w Lars von Trier, Niels Vørsel d Lars von Trier)  
**READING:** *You Are There Teleplays:* “Savonarola,” “Mt. Everest,” “Jazz,” “Beethoven,” “Milton.”

**27 Oct 09.**            **Screening & EXAMINATION**  
EXAMINATION is on all of the above syllabus material since the first examination  
**SCREENING:** *The Third Man* (1949. w Graham Greene d Carol Reed)

**3 Nov 09.**            Theories of Realism: Italian Neorealism -- The Documentary Film  
*Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust* [Documentary] (2004. d Daniel Anker)  
**READING:** Buckland, *Film Studies* 5 (“The Non-Fiction Film: Five Types of Documentaries);”  
*Film Aesthetics Readings* – “Neorealism” (pp. 61-63); “Hitler Did Not Dance that Jig” (pp. 64-65).

**10 Nov 09.**            Auteurist Cinema  
*8 1/2* (1963. story Federico Fellini, Ennio Flaiano w Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pinelli, Federico Fellini, Brunello Rondi d Federico Fellini)  
**READING:** *Film Aesthetics Readings*—“Auteur Theory” (pp. 97-98).  
Warren Buckland, *Film Studies*, Chapter 3 (“Film Authorship: the Director as *Auteur*”).

**17 Nov 09.**            Social Criticism -- Ideology -- The Blacklist [Film Extracts]  
**READING:** *Film Aesthetics Readings* – “Ideology” (pp. 66-86); “Marxist Film Theories” (pp. 87-90); “The Method School of Acting” (p. 96); “The Social Problem Film” (pp. 91-92); “Again They Drink from the Cup of Suspicion” (pp. 93-95); “The Little Fellow: The Cinema of Charles Chaplin” (pp. 99-111).

**24 Nov 09.**            British "New Wave" ("Free Cinema") - The Angry Young Man ["Woman"]  
*49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (1941. w d Emeric Pressburger, Michael Powell)  
**READING:** *Film Aesthetics Readings* – “British New Wave” (pp. 112-115).

**1 Dec 09.**            French "New Wave" -- Influence on the "New American Cinema"  
*Pierrot le fou* (1965. w d Jean-Luc Godard)  
**READING:** *Film Aesthetics Readings* – “French New Wave.” (pp. 116-119).

**8 Dec 09.**            Japanese Cinema -- Influence on the "New American Cinema"  
*The Magnificent Seven* (1960. w William Roberts d John Sturges)  
**READING:** Warren Buckland, *Film Studies*, Chapters 6 (“The Reception of Film: the Art and Profession of Film Reviewing”).

**15 Dec 09.**            **FINAL EXAMINATION [8PM]**  
EXAMINATION on all of the above syllabus material since the second examination; plus Buckland, *Film Studies*, Chapters 3, 5, and 6

### GRADING POLICY

The final course grade will be determined by selecting the best scores achieved from the following assignments:

1. **Three examinations**, graded with the following scale: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, 59-below = F.
2. **Attendance at the Cinematheque Events.** Attendance at **eight additional** events or screenings at the Cinematheque (at the Alan and Elaine Armer Theater, Manzanita Hall 100) during the current season has an extra-credit or make-up examination benefit. For a schedule of all Cinematheque screenings: [www.cinematheque.csun.edu](http://www.cinematheque.csun.edu) => “Monthly Screening Schedules”

**\*EXTRA-CREDIT POLICY:** attending these events will result in the dropping of the lowest score of the three examinations. **There are NO make-up examinations.** Therefore, if an examination is missed, the additional eight Cinematheque screenings *necessarily* become the essential mechanism to compensate for that missed examination; otherwise, a “zero” for the missed examination will be calculated into the final course grade. (Attendance will be scrupulously taken on these occasions. Be sure to sign the attendance sheet.) **\*IN ADDITION:** all students availing themselves of the extra-credit option must submit—on the date of the final examination—a listing of the eight screenings attended; so carefully keep a log of these screenings throughout the semester.

**Term Paper Option.** For those who have compelling reasons for not being able to satisfy the above Cinematheque option, the following term paper assignment may be substituted for the extra-credit benefit. (Do not proceed with the term paper assignment without approval. If approved, the term project will be due on the date of the final examination.)

### TERM PAPER GUIDELINES

The essay needs to draw on several titles from the syllabus screenings for discussion (a *representative number of film texts* selected from those screened from the current Cinematheque's programming), in order to provide a reasonable overview of the course's scope of study. An essay should never be based on a single title only.

### THE FOLLOWING TOPIC OR CONTEXT MUST BE EMPLOYED AS THE BASIS FOR THE TERM PAPER DISCUSSIONS OF THE PRESCRIBED TITLES:

"Tracing the history of the emergence of art cinema after World War II, David Bordwell ["The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice"] gives a cogent account of the ways in which art cinema differs from classic narrative cinema. He sees the loose narrative structure of art cinema as motivated by a desire for realism, i.e., an attempt to represent "real" problems in "real" locations, using psychologically complex characters to validate the drive towards verisimilitude: social, emotional, and sexual problems are reflected in individual characters, and only become significant in so far as they impinge upon the sensitive individual.

"This drive towards realism seems incompatible with the idea of a creative artist as source of meaning in art cinema: the artist's voice is intrusive and disrupts verisimilitude. YET, Bordwell argues, art cinema specifically uses authorship to unify the film text, to organize it for the audience's comprehension in the absence of clearly identifiable stars and genres. The author becomes a kind of protagonist in the drama, and knowledgeable viewers will recognize the characteristic stylistic touches of the author's oeuvre (the marks of authorship)."

**DIRECTIONS:** Discuss the application to and the manifestation of this "mode of film practice" in specific films and their creators, selected from the above listed titles.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES.

The term paper should draw on several titles for discussion (a *representative number of film texts* selected from those screened during the semester from the current Cinematheque's programming), in order to provide a reasonable overview of the course's scope of study. An essay should never be based on a single title only.

—The paper will be a minimum of 10-12 double-spaced typed pages.

—The paper must be executed with careful attention to literary and research principles. It will be evaluated on the basis of the clarity, logic, and organization of the discussion of the films and any secondary sources utilized.

—Great emphasis must be given to writing fundamentals: spelling accuracy, grammatical exactitude, and stylistic felicity. Research material may be employed—and is encouraged! (The papers earning the highest grades probably will have combined independent analysis with outside research.) But these external sources must be acknowledged in notes. Verbatim wording from such material must be enclosed in quotation marks.

### **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. Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated—review the appropriate admonition in the University *Catalog*. All suspected cases are automatically turned over to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

### GRADING CRITERIA FOR THE TAKE-HOME ESSAY QUESTIONS AND CRITICAL PAPERS

The felicities of individual writing style will always influence the final, subjective judgment, but the following are general CRITERIA relevant to an evaluation of the essays:

### "A" & "B" PAPERS

Substantially exceeds minimum standards: it is clear from the structure and development of the essay that the ultimate number of pages produced is the result of a logical pursuit of an explicit thesis that has been defended and supported by documented evidence, and not the result of a literal observance of the barest specified requirements.

*Characteristics:* copious quotations from the reading, complete and lucid definition of terms, extended and logical development of themes and ideas under scrutiny, consistent use of detailed examples from the films or works under discussion, abundant evidence that the reading is being integrated and supplementary research sources are being employed—a rich, extended, textured, and nuanced presentation.

### "C" PAPER

Meets minimum standards: a passing, acceptably competent fulfillment of the assignment.

*Characteristics:* exiguous quotations, limited employment of the reading assignment, abbreviated definition of terms, superficial development of themes or concepts, skeletal discussion of allied topics or implications, little documentation or support of generalities or assertions through the use of examples from the films or works under discussion, no indication that additional reading was accomplished or research sources were consulted, a generally thin and barren presentation.

**"N/A" [not acceptable]**

Does not satisfy minimum class standards: a paper clearly incompatible with literate communication.

*Characteristics:* extensive and pervasive mechanical, grammatical, spelling, syntactical, structural errors; sloppiness, clearly no attempt at proofreading or revision; non-responsiveness to the content, directions, or guideline requirements of the assignment.

*All narratives are composed to  
reward, modify, frustrate, or defeat  
the perceiver's search for coherence.*

NOTES: 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 a 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 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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.