English 110: Introduction to Film Studies

Summer 2019 Dr. Stephen Rust

Tuesdays 6-8:50pm in LC 222 Office Hours 5-6pm in LC 222

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People respond to movies in different ways, and there are many reasons for this. We have all stood in the lobby of a theater and heard conflicting opinions from people who have just seen the same film. Some loved it, some hated it, some found it just OK. Disagreements, however, can reveal a great deal about the assumptions underlying these various responses. In this course we will see that there are many ways of thinking about movies and approaches that we can use to analyze them. We will cover key aspects of film theory and history as well in the spirit of intellectual investigation of the most exciting aspects of contemporary visual culture. Overall, the goal of this course is to introduce you to the basic skills necessary for a critical knowledge of the movies as art, culture, and industry. We will also consider the relationship between movies and other forms of media such as tv, radio, and the internet.

**Required Text:** *Film Studies: An Introduction* by Ed Sikov. Available for free through the LBCC Library website – click on the Ebook Central button and type in the book title to access the textbook.

\*Access to LBCC email and Canvas Learning Platform required (information in class)

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students who complete all required readings and assignments will be able to:

* Understand how film works as an artistic, industrial, and cultural form
* Deploy the basic language of film aesthetics - including cinematography, mise en scène, editing, and sound – to closely analyze film texts
* Demonstrate knowledge of ideological forces at work in films based on their cultural and historical contexts
* Communicate ideas about film culture through spoken and written analysis

**What I Expect From You:** I expect you to succeed in this class. To do that you will need to complete all reading, homework, and assignments and exams on time and to the very best of your ability. I expect you to come to class prepared, awake, sober, and fully-engaged. Do your homework, study for exams, and bring your books to class. Turn off your phone before class or sit by the door if you are waiting for an emergency call/text and need to step outside to answer. Ask questions, engage in discussion, and be prepared to work in groups with any and all class members, embracing diversity.

**What You Can Expect From Me:** I will respond to your questions and concerns as clearly and sincerely as possible and am always happy to talk about any aspect of the class. I will be on-time to class and office hours and respond to emails and phone calls within 48 hours. I will provide you with the same level of instruction as students I have taught at Oregon State University and the University of Oregon. I will listen to you and treat you with the utmost respect. I will grade fairly and inclusively.

**Academic Honesty & Plagiarism:** Linn-Benton Community College values academic integrity. You are responsible for understanding and adhering to the standards of academic honesty outlined in the student handbook. Document ALL sources consulted in preparing your work. At a minimum, documented plagiarism will result in course failure. See the Library website for resources and information on citation styles and practices.

**Request for Special Needs or Accommodations**

Direct questions about or requests for special needs or accommodations to the LBCC Disability Coordinator, RCH-105, 6500 Pacific Blvd. SW, Albany, Oregon 97321, Phone 541-917-4789 or via Oregon Telecommunications Relay TTD at 1-800-735-2900 or 1-800-735-1232. Make sign language interpreting or real-time transcribing requests 2-4 weeks in advance. Make all other requests at least 72 hours prior to the event. LBCC will make every effort to honor requests. LBCC is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

**LBCC Comprehensive Statement of Nondiscrimination**

LBCC prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, use of native language, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, disability, veteran status, age, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local laws. For further information see Board Policy P1015 in our [Board Policies and Administrative Rules](http://linnbenton.edu/42145BA0-3DCC-11E3-AA36782BCB47BBE7). Title II, IX, & Section 504: Scott Rolen, CC-108, 541-917-4425; Lynne Cox, T-107B, 541-917-4806, LBCC, Albany, Oregon.  To report:  [linnbenton-advocate.symplicity.com/public\_report](http://linnbenton-advocate.symplicity.com/public_report)

**Class Meetings & Attendance Procedures:** You are expected to attend all class meetings and participate in all discussions We only have ten class meetings so attendance is required and checked daily. Screening and discussing films in a group setting is vital to critical learning. If you plan to be absent on a given day you must contact me *in advance* to arrange make-up work/exams. The following attendance policy is straightforward and non-negotiable: **Two** absences excused, no questions asked. However, you are still responsible for any missed screenings, notes, or assignments due that day. Each additionalabsence, except in cases of emergency, will result in the automatic deduction of 3% from your final grade (e.g., from a 91%-88%).

**Screenings:** The screening of complete film texts is a vital component of this class. You are required to attend the screenings each week and take notes on the films. If you are absent during a screening day you will need to make arrangements to see the movie at home. Watching films in a classroom requires different ways of seeing (and note-taking), as you will need to pay close attention to *how* the events unfold on screen and *why* each film takes its own specific form. A few films are R rated as this course was developed with a mature viewing audience in mind. Please do some basic research on each film and see me in advance you have an issue.

**Evaluation:** LBCC does not offer +/- grades: A= 90% and above, B=80% and above, etc.).

Course grades will be based on:

Weekly Homework 25 %

Vocabulary Project 25 %

Midterm Exam 20 %

Shot List and Analysis Essay 30 %

**Weekly Homework:** For the assigned weeks, compose a single-spaced, one-page response to the readings. The first paragraph of your response should briefly summarize the assigned chapter or chapters. The second paragraph should quote and analyze two or three specific passages or concepts covered in the reading. The third paragraph must connect examples of ideas raised in the reading to specific and detailed examples from the films viewed in class. *Your response must include at least two properly cited quotations (with page number) from the assigned reading – including page number – and two specific examples from the most recent film screened in class in order to receive full credit*. Late responses are accepted for ½ credit.

**Vocabulary Project:** You will work in teams of 2-4 people to define a set of vocabulary terms using your course text and online sources, provide visual examples from film texts of your choice, and annotate your examples with brief description and analysis. Examples will be available.

Exam and Essay: The midterm exam will be held in class and consist of multiple choice, true/false, and matching, and short answer questions and the final essay will be a 2000-word essay examining a specific scene from a film of your choice on which you will take detailed notes. There is a student essay in Chapter 12 of the textbook that will provide a guide and model for how to write this paper well.

Extra Credit: Attend a movie that is playing at your local movie theater and write a one-page single spaced review and analysis that demonstrates your ability to apply knowledge from the course to real world film viewing contexts. 3% bonus to course grade (4% if you attend the movie with a classmate). Students must have zero missing assignments to be eligible for this opportunity. Due by Week 9.

Extra Credit: Submit a homework assignment or your final paper to the Linn Benton Online Writing Lab or meet in person with a writing tutor in the Writing Center on the main campus in Albany to earn a 5% bonus to your assignment grade. Due by Week 10.

Class Schedule

**Week One: Introduction to Film Studies and Principles of Mise en scene**

1 Oct. Course Welcome and overview

Film Screening: Early films and filmmakers 1890s-1910s

**Week Two: Principles of Mise-en-scéne**

8 Oct. Reading: *Film Studies*, Introduction and Chapter 1; **Always do the reading before class.**

Film Screening: *The General* (Buster Keaton, 1931)

**Due: Post Homework 1 to Canvas by Sunday at 11:59p**

**Week Two: Cinematography: The Dance of Light and Shadow**

15 Oct. Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapters 2 and 3

Film Screening: *Kingdom of Heaven* (Ridley Scott, 2005)

**Due: Post Homework 2 to Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm**

**Week Four: Sound & Editing: Making it Work**

22 Oct. Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapters 4 and 5

Film Screening: finish *Kingdom of Heaven*

**Due: Post Homework 3 to Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm**

**Week Five: Midterm**

29 Oct. Midterm exam

**Week Six: Narrative Development: Humor and Ideology in Comedy**

5 Nov. Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapters 6 and 7

Film Screening: *Animal House* (John Landis, 1978)

**Due: Post Homework 4 to Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm**

**Week Seven: The Question of Film Authorship**

12 Nov. Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapters 8 and 9

Screening: *Animal House of Blues* (Katherine Wilson, 2015)

**Due: Post Homework 5 to Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm**

**Week Eight: Genres and Effects: New Voices/Traditional Forms**

19 Nov. Reading: *Film Studies,* Chapters 10 and 11

Screening: *Persepolis* (Marjane Satrapi, 2007)

**Due: Vocabulary Project – post to Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm**

**Week Nine: Scene Analysis: Putting it all Together**

26 Nov. Reading: *Film Studies,* Chapter 12

Screening: *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954)

**Week Ten: Scene Analysis: Finishing Up Strong**

3 Dec. **Due:** **Post final draft of Scene Analysis Essay and Shot List to Canvas by 11:59pm.**