English 110: Introduction to Film Studies

Fall 2018, CRN 26426, 3 Cr. Dr. Stephen Rust

MW 12:00-12:50 in NSH 109 Office Hours MW 1-1:50 in IA 222

F 12:00-12:50 online rusts@linnbenton.edu

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 and television work as an artistic, industrial, and cultural forms
* Deploy the basic language of film and television aesthetics - including cinematography, mise en scène, editing, and sound – to closely analyze film and media texts
* Demonstrate knowledge of ideological forces at work in films and television shows based on their cultural and historical contexts
* Explain why film and television studies is a serious area of academic study and research
* Communicate ideas about film and television 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 provide detailed feedback

**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.

**Access For Students With Disabilities:** If you have a disability or medical condition which you believe may affect your performance in this course, please see or contact me the first week of the term so we can make the necessary arrangements for your fullest access to the course and its activities.

**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: **Three** 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%). Failing to post assignments on Fridays counts as an absence.

**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 see me in advance if this will be 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 30 %

Vocabulary Project 25 %

Midterm Exam 30 %

Final Exam 25 %

**Weekly Homework:** Throughout the term you will compose single-spaced, one-page responses to the readings assigned each week. Be sure to read the assigned text carefully and mark any passages that strike you as interesting or challenging. The first and second paragraphs of your response should briefly summarize the entire reading. The third and fourth paragraphs should highlight specific passages and key concepts covered in the reading. The fifth paragraph should identify visual examples from films viewed in class that highlight the importance of the concepts covered in the reading. Use formal prose – no ranting. *Your response must include at least two direct quotes from the assigned reading – including page number – and one close reading of a specific scene from one of the shows screened in class*. Late responses accepted for up to two weeks at a 50% penalty. Lowest grade will be dropped.

**Vocabulary Project:** Week 8 you will turn in an annotated worksheet of key vocabulary words. You will define the 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.

Exams: The midterm exam will be held in class and consist of multiple choice, true/false, and matching, questions and the final exam will consist of writing a 5-6 page film analysis essay.

Extra Credit: Attend a movie at a local theater with one or more classmates and write a 1-page single spaced review of the film and summary of you and your classmate’s post-film discussion. Earn a 3% boost to your final course grade. AND/OR Create flashcards for the vocabulary terms from chapters 1-5 to study for the midterm. Bring your flashcards to the midterm for a 5% bonus to your midterm grade.

Class Schedule

**Week One: Introduction to Film Studies**

M Course Welcome and overview

W Read: *Film Studies* Chapter Introduction and Chapter 1

Screenings of short films by Edison, Lumieres, Melies, Porter

F Online class – Post **HW #1 to Canvas**

**\* Note:** Dr. Rust will be available via Canvas and email from 12-12:50pm during online classes

**Week Two: Principles of Mise-en-scene and Cinematography**

M Read: *Film Studies* Chapter 2 before class

W Screen: short films by Griffith and Chaplin

F Online class – post **HW #2 to Canvas by 1pm**

**Week Three: Camera Movement and Cinematography**

M Read: *Film Studies* Chapter 3 before class

W Screen: *Disney True-Life Adventures* and *Wild Kingdom*

F Online class – post **HW #3 to Canvas by 1pm**

**Week Four: Editing**

M Read: *Film Studies* Chapter 4 before class

W Screen: *Planet Earth* episode 1

F Online class – post **HW #4 to Canvas by 1pm**

**Week Five: Sound**

M Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapter 5

W Screen: *Crocodile Hunter* episodes

F Online class- post **HW #5 to Canvas by 1pm**

**Week Six: Midterm**

M Midterm study day. Work on extra credit flashcards and/or meet with classmates to study.

W Midterm exam

F Catch up day – last day to turn an any missing assignments from Week 1-5 for ½ credit.

**Week Seven: Narrative**

M Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapters 6 and 7

W Screen: *The Simpsons* select episodes

F Online class- post **HW #6 to Canvas by 1pm**

**Week Eight: Filmmakers and Performers**

M Reading: *Film Studies*, Chapters 8 and 9

W Screen: *Parts Unknown*

F Online class- post **Vocab Project** to Canvas by 1pm

**Week Nine: Genre and Special Effects**

M Reading: *Film Studies,* Chapters 10 & 11

W Online class – post **HW #7 to Canvas by 1pm**. Choose your own show or film to screen.

F Thanksgiving Break: No Class Meeting

**Week Ten: Writing about Film and Television**

M Reading: *Film Studies*: Chapter 12

W Essay Drafts Due, Bring a copy to class for Peer Review

F Online Class - **Post your Film Analysis Essay to Canvas by 1pm**

**Finals Week: ENG 110 does not meet during finals week. The Film Analysis Essay is the final assignment.**