

ENGL/MDST 1118: Introduction to Film Studies

Course Location: Zoom!

Class Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 4:00-5:30

Prerequisites: None

To our Student: Should you require information or documents from our office in another format, please let us know. We are happy to help you. Contact me or our Department of English Administrative Assistant.

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Instructor Information

Instructor: Kathryn Walton

Office: Zoom Personal Meeting Room

Email: kw Walton@lakeheadu.ca

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30-3:30

Or by appointment

Course Description/Overview

Film is one of the most powerful and popular mediums through which story is conveyed. This course teaches students how to read, analyze, and write about film. Each week we focus on a different genre or style of film and a different aspect of film form. Our genres include everything from comedies, to musicals, to westerns, to thrillers. We look at how directors use aspects of film form such as cinematography, mise-en-scène, acting, and editing to shape these genres and craft a compelling narrative. In so doing we gain deeper insight into the diverse methods directors employ to tell stories. We learn how to read the nuances of a film and consider the deeper theoretical and ideological implications that underlie this prominent means of conveying narrative. Our texts range from classics of cinema – *Citizen Kane*, *Singin' in the Rain*, and *The Godfather* – to contemporary popular forms – *Clueless*, *Grand Budapest Hotel*, and *The Black Panther*. Each of these films provides a different path into the nuances of film form, and each will expand the student's understanding of what makes film such a compelling mode of storytelling.

Course Objectives and/or Learner Outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to...

- Define and identify key aspects of film form, including but not limited to, mise-en-scène, cinematography, narrative styles, editing, and sound.
- Analyze and think critically about how film form shapes a film's narrative.
- Define and identify the main genres of film and discuss in detail an example of that genre.
- Understand the history of film and the role technology has played in its development.
- Be able to situate course texts within the historical trajectory of film and identify their importance or place therein.
- Analyze critically how films produce and are produced by their historical moment.
- Consider how films engage with and address issues of identity (race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.).
- Think, write, and speak critically about film, including course texts and films encountered outside of the course.
- Identify and use secondary source material in the scholarly field of film studies.
- Produce an academic essay on film that displays an ability to critically analyze a variety of films.
- Write in a clear, coherent, and correct fashion about film and film form.

Course Resources

Required Course Text

Barsam, Richard and Dave Monahan. *Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film*. 6th ed. W. W. Norton and Company, 2016.

*In addition to the textbook, students are required to view a film each week. The films are listed in the course schedule and are available online either through the library or for rent.

Course Website

- [Desire2Learn \(or myCourseLink\)ⁱ](#)
- [Zoomⁱⁱ](#)

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction January 11 & 13

- **Reading:** *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 11: How the Movies are Made,” pages 409-442.
- **Film:** *Hail, Caesar!* Directed by Joel and Ethan Coen, Universal Pictures 2016. (available to rent online)

Week 2: Reading Films and Superheroes..... January 18 & 20

- **Reading:** *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 1: Looking at Movies,” pages 1-29.
- **Film:** *Black Panther*, Directed by Ryan Coogler, Marvel Studios, 2018. (available to rent online)

Week 3: Film Form and Sci-Fi January 25 & 27

Quiz 1: January 27

- **Reading:** *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 2: Principles of Film Form,” pages 31-62.
- **Film:** *The Matrix*, Directed by Lana and Lilly Wachowski, Warner Bros., 1999 (available on D2L)

Week 4: Genre and the Western February 1 & 3

***SCENE ANALYSIS DUE FEBRUARY 3 ***

- **Reading:** *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 3: Types of Movies,” pages 63-114.
- **Film:** *Stagecoach*, directed by John Ford, Walter Wanger Productions, 1939 (available on YouTube just be sure it’s the one from 1939)

Week 5: Film History and Drama..... February 8 & 10

- **Reading:** *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 10: Film History,” pages 357-407.
- **Film:** *Citizen Kane*, Directed by Orson Welles, RKO, 1941. (available to rent online).

Reading Week: No Class

Week 6: Narrative and Rom-ComFebruary 22 & 24

- **Reading:** *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 4: Elements of Narrative,” pages 115-152.
- **Film:** *Clueless*, Directed by Amy Heckerling, Paramount Pictures, 1995. (available on D2L).

Week 7: Mise-en-Scène and Fantasy..... March 1 & 3

*****QUIZ 2: March 3*****

- **Reading:** *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 5: Mise-en-Scène,” pages 153-186.
- **Film:** *Pan’s Labyrinth*, Directed by Guillermo del Toro, Telecinco Cinema, 2006 (available on D2L)

Week 8: The Thriller and Cinematography March 8 & 10

*****FILM ANALYSIS ESSAY DUE MARCH 10*****

- **Reading:** *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 6: Cinematography,” pages 187- 234.
- **Film:** *Rear Window*, Directed by Alfred Hitchcock, Patron Inc, 1954. (available on reserve at the library).

Week 9: Acting and Comedy March 15 & 17

- **Reading:** *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 7: Acting,” pages 235-279.
- **Film:** *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, Directed by Wes Anderson, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. (available on D2L)

Week 10: Editing and Documentary March 22 & 24

- **Reading:** *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 8: Editing,” Pages 281-318.
- **Film:** *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*. Directed by Alanis Obomsawin, National Film Board of Canada, 1993. (available on D2L)

Week 11: Sound and the Musical..... March 29 & 31

*****QUIZ 3: MARCH 31*****

- **Reading:** *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 9: Sound,” pages 319-356.
- **Film:** *Singin’ in the Rain*, Directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, MGM, 1952. (available on D2L)

Week 12: Wuxia and Exam Review April 5 & 7

*****RESEARCH PAPER DUE APRIL 7th*****

- **Reading:** None
- **Film:** *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Directed by Ang Lee, Sony Pictures Classics, 2000. (available for rent online)

Assignments and Evaluation

Table of Assignments

Assignment	Due date	Value	Length
Participation	Throughout term	10%	N/A
Quizzes	January 27 th , March 3 rd , and March 31 st	15% (5% each)	20 Minutes
Scene Analysis	February 3 rd	15%	2 pages
Film Analysis Essay	March 10 th	20%	4 pages
Research and Analysis Essay	April 7 th	25%	6 pages
Final Exam	TBA	15%	3 hours

Assignment Policies

- **Submission of Assignments:** Assignments should be submitted on D2L. They must be submitted by 11:59 on the day that they are due. Be sure to submit well before the cut-off so as to leave yourself enough time to deal with any technical issues.
- **Late Policy:** Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized 2% a day to a maximum of 20%.
- **Extensions:** Students are welcome to request an extension on an assignment. Extensions must be requested at least **one week before** the assignment is due. Extensions will not be granted in the day prior to the due date except in the case of documented illness. No extension can be granted for the take-home exam.
- **Forum Discussion Deadlines:** Because of the nature of the forums, no extensions can be granted for forum discussions. All forum posts are due by 11:59pm Sunday in the week of the discussion. Once the forum is closed there

will be no further opportunity to contribute. Remember that if you participate in class you do not need to contribute to the forums.

- **Format:** All assignments must be in MLA format, double spaced, with 1" margins, and in 12-point font.
- **File Format:** Please submit all major assignments as .docx or pdf files to ensure they can be read by the D2L software.
- **Collaboration:** All assignments are individual assignments and cannot be completed collaboratively. Assignments that are the same or highly similar will receive a mark of zero.

Details of Assignments

Participation

Due Date: Throughout Term

Value: 10%

Description: Every class, students will be expected to participate in discussions, group work, and other collaborative activities. Participation will be graded according to the frequency and quality of students' participation in class. You may contribute in the chat or in real time but live contributions will be more highly weighted. Turning your camera is also much appreciated. If you miss a class, you will be given the opportunity to make up participation marks in the discussion forums. You do not need to complete forums discussions these if you participated in class.

Quizzes

Due Dates: January 27th, March 3rd, and March 31st

Value: 15% (5% each)

Description: Over the course of the term students will write three quizzes, each worth 5%. These quizzes are intended to ensure students are keeping up with the readings and films and prepare them for the final exam. Quizzes will consist of short answer questions (that test student's knowledge of the films, film forms, and genres discussed in class) and analysis questions. They will be available for 24 hours starting during the designated class time (roughly 5:00pm on the day of the quiz). I will give you time in class to complete the quizzes, but you may also complete them at another time during those 24 hours if you so chose.

Scene Analysis

Due Date: February 3rd

Value: 15%

Description: For the first written assignment of the year, students will perform a close analysis of a scene from one of our course texts. Students will pick a scene from a film and consider how the scene reflects an overall theme/idea of the film. Analyses must present a coherent reading of the scene with reference to specific details. These analyses will be 1-2 pages long and must include a works cited list with the name of the film. No secondary research is required.

Film Analysis Essay

Due Date: March 10th

Value: 20%

Description: For the first essay of the year, students will write a short essay analysing one or two of the films discussed in class. Topics will be given out ahead of time that will ask students to identify how an aspect of film form works in one or more of the movies that we have viewed. The essay will be 3-4 pages long and must have a coherent argument and organizational structure. It must provide quotations and/or details from the source material (the movie(s)) and a clear application of ideas discussed in the textbook and/or in class. Secondary research is not required.

Research and Analysis Essay

Due Date: April 7th

Value: 25%

Description: For the final essay, students will prepare a 5-6-page research essay on a topic given ahead of time. The topics will ask students to produce an argument using two primary sources from the course material and two secondary sources. All secondary sources must be scholarly and relevant. The essay should exhibit a strong argument supported with evidence from both primary and secondary sources, a clear and compelling structure, and display grammatically correct and coherent writing.

Final Exam

Due Date: TBA

Value: 15%

Description: During the exam period, students will write a three-hour exam to demonstrate their knowledge of course material. You will be given a 24-hour time frame in which to write the exam. The exam will be comprised of short and long answer questions and an essay question. It will test students' knowledge of the film form, film history, any critical theories discussed in class, as well as students'

ability to apply those theories to course texts. More details will be released closer to the time.

Marking Standards

All assignments will be marked in accordance with the [English Department Marking Standardsⁱⁱⁱ](#).

Collaboration/Plagiarism Rules

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student's work, or working together on an individual assignment, all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you've submitted to another course is also academic dishonesty. All plagiarized work (in whole or in part) and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean, who is responsible for judging academic misconduct and imposing penalties. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a 0 on the assignment in question. It might also be subject to more severe academic penalties. See the [Student Code of Conduct^{iv}](#).

Course Policies

- **Success:** Only those students who complete the content and participate actively online will be successful in the course.
- **Be prepared:** Students in the course will come to class having completed the readings and viewings and ready to engage with the material.
- **Respect:** Academic discussion and debate are highly encouraged in class, but students will treat each other and the instructor with politeness and respect.
- **Zoom:** Zoom has its challenges, but we are going to make the best of it in this course! I encourage you to turn on your camera, but you are by no means required to. Whatever you chose to do, active participation will be required whether in live discussion, chat, or breakout groups.
- **Our Circumstances:** This course is taking place in the midst of a pandemic. If fall ill, are quarantined, have a family member who falls ill or find yourself otherwise impacted by the pandemic in a way that will affect your course work please let me know. Such impacts are to be expected and understandable. All I ask is that you let me know so that I am aware of the circumstances and can help you complete the course in the best way possible.
- **Stay in Touch:** I encourage you to stay in touch with me as much as possible throughout the course. If you are struggling, let me know. If you have questions, let me know. If you want help, let me know. I am here to help you succeed and am always happy to help, answer questions, and address concerns.
- **Recordings:** If you cannot attend the live lecture, audio from our classes as well as the slides that accompanied the lecture will be recorded and posted on D2L. You can make up for missed participation in class in the discussion forums.
- **Recording Disclaimer:** Instruction in the classroom will be recorded for confidential access by students registered in the course but who are unable to

attend class due to the pandemic or other necessity. Audio only will be recorded. To the greatest extent possible only the image and voice of the instructor will be recorded for this purpose but, due to class interaction, the images and voices of students present in the classroom may be incidentally recorded and, thus, be available for access by course students in remote locations. These recordings, however, are strictly confidential and may be used only by the instructor and students registered in the course and only for purposes related to the course. They may otherwise not be used or disclosed. Students in the classroom who are concerned about being recorded in this fashion may request the instructor to exclude them from the recording to the greatest degree possible on the understanding that total exclusion cannot be guaranteed. The recordings are made under the authority of sections 3 and 14 of The Lakehead University Act, 1965, Questions about the collection of the images and sounds in the recordings may be directed to Douglas Ivison of the Department of English, Thunder Bay Campus, Ryan Building 3038, (807) 346-7825, douglas.ivison@lakeheadu.ca.

University Policies

- Students in this course are expected to conform to the Student Code of Conduct - Academic Integrity^v.
- **Accommodations:** Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code^{vi}. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS)^{vii} and register as early as possible.

This course outline is available online through the English Department homepage^{viii} and/or the Desire2Learn or My Courselinkⁱ site for the course.

ⁱ <https://mycourselink.lakeheadu.ca/d2l/home>

ⁱⁱ <https://zoom.us/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/english/marking-standards>

^{iv} <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct>

^v <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct/academic-integrity/node/51239>

^{vi} <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>

^{vii} <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-services/accessibility>

^{viii} <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/english>