

English 1118 WAO: Introduction to Film

Course Location: OA 1022

Class Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 10:00-11:30

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 your instructor or our Department of English Administrative Assistant.

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Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Kathryn Walton

Office: Simcoe Hall, Third Floor, Desk Area A, Desk 1

Email: kwalton@lakeheadu.ca

Office Hours: Thursday 10:00-11:00
or by appointment

Course Description

Film is one of the most powerful and popular mediums through which story is conveyed. It creates heartbreaking or hilarious narrative through complex imagery, script, and characterization. This course teaches students how to read, analyze and write about films. Our study of film focuses on narrative films mostly from Hollywood. Through an exploration of a variety of genres we consider the ways in which directors shape narrative through the use of film form. Each week we focus on a different genre 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 underly 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.

Learning Objectives

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 either available online or on reserve at the library.

Course Website

[Desire2Learn \(or myCourseLink\)](https://mycourselink.lakeheadu.ca/d2l/home)¹

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction January 6 & 8

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 on reserve at the library)

Week 2: The Western and Reading Films..... January 13 & 15

Reading: *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 1: Looking at Movies,” pages 1-29 and the first half of “Chapter 10: Film History,” pages 357-385.

Film: *Stagecoach*, directed by John Ford, Walter Wanger Productions, 1939 (available on reserve at the library)

Week 3: Film Form and Sci-Fi January 20 & 22

¹ <https://mycourselink.lakeheadu.ca/d2l/home>

Reading: *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 2: Principles of Film Form,” pages 31-62.

Film: *The Matrix*, Directed by The Wachowskis, Warner Bros., 1999 (available on D2L)

Week 4: Genre and the Gangster FilmJanuary 27 & 29

*****SCENE ANALYSIS DUE JANUARY 29*****

Reading: *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 3: Types of Movies,” pages 63- 114.

Film: *The Godfather*, Directed by Francis Ford Coppola, Paramount Pictures, 1972.
(available on D2L)

Week 5: Narrative and Rom-ComFebruary 3 & 5

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 6: Mise-en-Scène and Adventure..... February 10 & 12

*****QUIZ 1 FEBRUARY 12*****

Reading: *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 5: Mise-en-Scène,” pages 153-186.

Film: *Life of Pi*, Directed by Ang Lee, Fox 2000 Pictures, 2012. (available on D2L)

Reading Week: No Class

Week 7: The Thriller and Cinematography February 24 & 26

*****FILM ANALYSIS ESSAY DUE FEBRUARY 26*****

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 8: Acting and Comedy March 2 & 4

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 9: Editing and Drama March 9 & 11

Reading: *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 8: Editing,” Pages 281-318.

Film: *Citizen Kane*, Directed by Orson Welles, RKO, 1941. (available on reserve at the library).

Week 10: Sound and the Musical..... March 16 & 18

*****QUIZ 2 MARCH 18*****

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 11: International Cinema and Fantasy March 23 & 25

Reading: *Looking at Movies*, “Chapter 10: Film History,” pages 385-407.

Film: *Pan’s Labyrinth*, Directed by Guillermo del Toro, Telecinco Cinema, 2006 (available on D2L)

Week 12: Superheroes and Exam Review..... March 30 & April 1

*****RESEARCH PAPER DUE MARCH 30*****

Reading: None

Film: *Black Panther*, Directed by Ryan Coogler, Marvel Studios, 2018. (available on reserve at the library)

Assignments and Evaluation

Table of Assignments

Assignment	Due date	Value	Length
Participation	Throughout term	10%	N/A
Quizzes	February 12 th March 18 th	10% (5% each)	20 Minutes
Scene Analysis	January 29 th	10%	2 pages
Film Analysis Essay	February 26 th	20%	4 pages
Research Paper	March 30 th	25%	6 pages
Final Exam	TBA	25%	2 hours

Assignment Policies

- **Submission of Assignments:** Hard copies of the assignments should be submitted at the start of class on the day they are due. Late assignments can be emailed to me as an attachment. You will still need to submit a hard copy in the next class or on my desk.
- **Late Policy:** Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized 2% a day (the weekend counts as one 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 week prior to the due date except in the case of documented illness or absence.
- **Missed Quizzes:** the same rules that govern missed exams govern missed quizzes. Attendance is mandatory, and makeups will only be granted in the case of documented illness or absence.
- **Format:** All assignments must be in MLA format, double spaced, with 1" margins, and in 12-point font.
- **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. Opportunities will be given to participate in a variety of forms including but not limited to class discussion, small group work, and writing activities. If you do not attend class, you will not be able to receive participation marks. You must be present and contribute.

Quizzes

Due Dates: February 12th, March 18th

Value: 10% (5% each)

Description: Over the course of the term students will write two 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.

Scene Analysis

Due Date: January 29th

Value: 10%

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: February 26th

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 Essay

Due Date: March 30th

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 (Determined by the Registrar)

Value: 25%

Description: During the exam period, students will write a two-hour exam to demonstrate their knowledge of course material. The exam will be comprised of short answer questions, definitions, 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.

Marking Standards

All assignments will be marked in accordance with the English Department Marking Standards².

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

² <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/english/marking-standards>

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 [Code of Student Behaviour](#)³.

Course Policies

Students in the course will come to class having completed the readings and viewings and ready to engage with the material.

Academic discussion and debate are highly encouraged in class, but students will treat each other and the instructor with politeness and respect.

Cellphones are to be kept out of sight during class (in pockets or bag) and not to be used during class except in the case of an emergency.

Only those students who attend class regularly will be successful in the course.

The exam date is set by the registrar and cannot be changed. Do not make travel plans prior to determining the date and time of the exam.

University Policies

- Students in this course are expected to conform to the [Code of Student Behaviour - Academic Integrity](#)⁴.
- **Accommodations:** Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)⁵. 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 \(SAS\)](#)⁶ and register as early as possible.
- This course outline is available online through the [English Department homepage](#)⁷ and/or the [Desire2Learn or My Courselink](#)¹ site for the course.

³ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-conduct/academic-integrity/node/51239>

⁴ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/policies/student-related/code-of-student-behaviour-and-disciplinary-procedures>

⁵ <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>

⁶ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas>

⁷ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/english>