

# Film Studies 349: Film Theory SAMPLE SYLLABUS

## English 349: Film Theory and Criticism

Spring 2013 | 12:00-2:45 | Welles 119

Professor Okada

Office: Welles 224C

Office Hours: WF 2-3:30 p.m. and by appointment

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### Course Description:

This course develops an advanced understanding of film as a complex cultural medium through the discussion of key theoretical and critical approaches. Theoretical and critical approaches discussed may include: realist theory, genre criticism, auteur theory, structuralism, feminist theory, and journalistic criticism. The course combines weekly feature-length viewings with lectures, group discussions, and written assignments.

### Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- build upon their basic knowledge of film as an art form to reach a more complex and sophisticated theoretical and critical perspectives on the film texts studied in classes;
- demonstrate mastery over key historical and theoretical positions in film theory;
- demonstrate effective critical thinking and writing ability as assessed through class discussion and writing critical papers.

### Required Texts:

Brady, Leo and Marshall Cohen, ed. Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings, 5th Edition. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.

Other readings available online and on reserve.

### Guidelines and Policies:

**ACCOMODATIONS:** SUNY-Geneseo will make reasonable accommodations for persons of documented physical, emotional or learning disabilities. Students should notify the Director of the Office of Disability Services (Tabitha Buggie -Hunt, 105D Erwin, [tbuggieh@geneseo.edu](mailto:tbuggieh@geneseo.edu)) and their faculty of any needed accommodations as early as possible in the semester. Information on services and campus polices can be found at: <http://www.geneseo.edu/~doc/otheareas/disability.shtml>

**CLASS POLICIES:** Required Work: To pass this course, students must attempt all assignments. Incompletes will be granted ONLY if the following three conditions are met: documented extenuating circumstances (e.g. severe illness or family crisis); a specific request from the student; AND a plan of action to make up the missing work, including due dates.

Late Paper Policy: No late papers unless you have specifically arranged with me an alternate due date IN WRITING AT LEAST A FULL WEEK IN ADVANCE OF DUE DATE. I will not accept email submissions of any assignment unless you have been given explicit permission to do so. If you turn in a paper late, penalties begin to accrue at 5 p.m. the paper is due; up to one day (24 hours) late, penalty is 1/3 letter grade (e.g. A becomes an A-); up to two days late, 2/3; three days, 1 full grade; four days, 1 1/3; five days, 1 2/3; six days, 2 full grades; seven days, 2 2/3; more than seven days late, not accepted for credit without excuse certified by the Dean of Students' office (this includes Counseling center). Weekends count in calculating lateness – if you need to hand in a paper late, either have a secretary in Welles 226 initial, on the paper, the date/time it was finally handed in or send a duplicate copy to me by email (hard copy still should be handed in to my box in the English office in Welles) to get credit for the time you turned it in. Documenting the time a paper was handed in is YOUR responsibility; given a lack of documentation, the penalty will be calculated based on when I receive the paper.

Please note that I will not accept verbal explanations of illness or other problem as an excuse for lateness. Without documentation from a doctor or other official documentation that excuses your late work, your work will be penalized for lateness.

### Evaluation Procedures:

Class Participation	20 %
Midterm Paper	25 %
Weekly response papers*	10 %
Presentations	20 %

\*Every Monday, I will collect a ½ page response paper on the film that has been assigned for viewing for the week. Response papers should connect the film with the readings due for that week.

\*\*Students will do group presentations (please see attached sheet on rules for presentations) which require you to orally present a summary of the reading and film for the week.

\*\*\* Students are required to attend a weekly outside film screening. Depending on the needs of the students, I will reserve a screening room on campus for a film lab. However I will also leave the films on reserve at Milne Library Reserves Desk for you to view independently.

**Class Schedule:** (Subject to change. I will not answer emails that ask "what did I miss?") The following is a schedule of topics we will cover in the class and the corresponding reading assignments. Additional materials will be supplied in-class or online. You must complete the reading and viewing prior to class.

DATE	TOPIC	READING & ASSIGNMENTS	
Jan 21	Introduction		
Jan 28	Realist Theory	Kracauer "Basic Concepts" 171-182 Bazin "De Sica: Metteur-En-Scène" 203-211 **Umberto D (DeSica, 1952)	
Feb 4	Formalist Theory	Arnheim "The Complete Film" 212-215 Munsterberg "The Means of the Photoplay" 401- Deren "Cinematography: The Creative Use of 227. **GoodFellas (Scorsese, 1990)	407 Reality" 216-
Feb 11	Auteur Theory	Sarris "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 518 Wollen "The Auteur Theory" 519- 562- 566, 571-575 **Bringing Up Baby (Hawks,	1962) 515- 1938)
Feb 18	Genre Criticism	Altman "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film. 641. Schatz "Film Genre and the Genre, Doubt Auteur" 668-678. **Shadow of a (Hitchcock, 1943)	Genre" 630-
Feb 25	Ideological Criticism	Comolli and Narboni "Cinema/Ideology/ Criticism" 752-759. Bordwell "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice." **Election (Payne, 1999)	
March 3	Narrative	Gunning "Narrative Discourse and the Narrator 472. Chatman "The Cinematic of Cinematic Excess" 487-498 **24 Hour Party People (Winterbottom, 2002)	System" 461-

#### FIRST PAPER DUE

March 6-March 21

#### SPRING BREAK

March 24	Structuralism	Metz "Some Points in the Semiotics of the 75. Metz "Problems of Denotation in and the Cinema" 90-98. **Annie Hall (Allen, 1977)	Cinema" 68-
March 31	Spectatorship	Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and the Narrative 844. Metz "Identification, Mirror" Text: 163. The Rhetoric of Stagecoach" 148- **Stagecoach (Ford, 1939)	Cinema" 833-

April 7 272. Williams Pierce	Feminist Theory "Film Bodies:"	Gledhill "Recent Developments in Feminist Gender, Genre, and Excess". **Mildred (Curtiz, 1945)	Criticism" 251-
April 14	Group Presentations	**TBD	
April 21	MONDAY SCHEDULE – NO CLASS—Professor gone on conference.		
April 28 250. Diawara	Race "Black	Stam and Spence "Colonialism, Racism and Spectatorship" 845-854.  ** Fitzcarraldo (Herzog, 1982)	Representation" 235-
May 5	Individual Presentations. <b>Final Paper Due.</b>		