

**FILM 240**  
**INTRODUCTION TO FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES**

**BULLETIN INFORMATION**

FILM 240 - Introduction to Film and Media Studies (3 credit hours)

**Course Description:**

Introduction to the critical study of film and media. Students will closely analyze moving images and develop written arguments about film and media.

**SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course introduces students to the critical study of film and related media. In the first half of the semester, we will concentrate on developing an ability to analyze—verbally and in writing—the formal elements characteristic of audio-visual media. The second half of the semester will focus on key concepts used to relate art works to one another and to describe what they do to and for audiences. Successful completion of the course will require regular, thoughtful attention to assigned viewing, reading, lecture, and class discussion.

**ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**Upon successful completion of Film 240, students will be able to:**

1. Recognize and describe the formal techniques through which various moving-image media create meaning (e.g., editing, cinematography, narrative, sound, interfaces, etc.)
2. Analyze specific examples (e.g., film sequences, web pages) to identify the meanings and/or effects these techniques produce in them
3. Synthesize such analysis to construct interpretive arguments
4. Present analysis and arguments clearly in writing

**SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS**

1. Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, *The Film Experience: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (at campus bookstores). Listed in the Schedule of Classes as “C&W.”
2. Short essays available on Bb as indicated in the Schedule of Classes. Critically important audio-visual artworks, as indicated in the Schedule of Classes.

**SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAM**

1. **Required Weekly Screenings:** *Weekly screenings are a requirement of the course.* If you cannot regularly attend the group screenings, please take the class at another time. To do well on major assignments for the course you will need to watch some materials several times. Required viewing will be made available at the Reserve Desk at Thomas Cooper Library for this purpose.

2. **Attendance:** You are allowed three absences (excused *and* unexcused). Each additional absence will result in the lowering of your “Preparation and Participation” grade by one letter, and you will automatically fail the course with 6 absences or more.
3. **Blackboard:** All assigned written work for the course must be submitted through the course website using Blackboard’s Safe Assignments feature. You must submit editable word processing documents.
4. **Preparation & Participation:** You are expected to arrive in class ready to discuss the assigned reading/viewing and then to participate in discussion of it. I care what you are thinking, and, more importantly, if you are. When I look at the class, I will be attempting to figure that out. A running tally of how I perceive your participation will be posted in Bb. I may use pop quizzes to measure your preparation.
5. **Screening Journal:** To develop your ability to analyze audio/visual artworks, you must take good notes for *each* required screening or lab. A journal derived from these notes will sharpen your perception, hone your analytical skills, and provide a foundation for other written assignments in the course. I will discuss my expectations for journal entries more fully in class. In general, you should plan to write a statement of around 500 words in which you *precisely and concretely describe* elements of the film/media object that are a) relevant to the topic under consideration that week and b) interesting to you. You will be required to submit your journal four times during the semester. Journal entries precisely describing media objects and correctly employing key terms and concepts from the class will receive full credit. Points will be deducted for entries emphasizing plot summary absent concrete details or for entries that avoid key terms and concepts under discussion. Missing entries and entries that suggest you haven’t seen the film will receive no credit.
6. **Midterm Sequence Analysis:** In 5-7 pages, you are asked to provide an in-depth analysis of a sequence you choose from one of the films assigned in Part I or Part II of the course. In addition to your prose analysis, you will be expected to include a chart outlining the sequence shot-by-shot. More detailed instructions will be provided in a handout. A first draft of this assignment, including, at a minimum, the shot chart and an outline of your analysis will be due in advance of the paper and will count for 5% of your final grade.
7. **Final Essay:** In 5-7 pages, you are asked to use your analytical skills to make an argument about one of the films from the Part III of the course, drawing on concepts and arguments we encounter in that unit. In advance of the paper, you will hand in a draft of your opening paragraph and outline. Papers will be evaluated on the clarity and persuasiveness of their arguments. More detailed instructions, including criteria for evaluation will be provided in class.

**SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS,  
EXAMS/PROJECTS**

## UNIT I: INTRODUCTION

- Week 1:** What is “Film and Media Studies”?  
Introduction
- Week 2:** Image, Medium, Mediation  
Flusser, Vilém. “Line and Surface.” *Writings*. Ed. Andreas Ströhl. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2002. 21-34; C&W 507-18.  
Screen/Lab: *A Trip to the Moon* (Fr. 1902, 15 min.); *La Jetté* (Fr. 1962 28 min.); *La Jetté* (YouTube Version); *Deviation* (US 2006 6 min.)  
C&W, 2-57

## UNIT II: AUDIO-VISUAL ANALYSIS: SHOT TO SEQUENCE

- Week 3:** Mise-en-scène  
*Group 1 Journal Due to Bb*  
C&W, 61-94 Screen: *Ali, Fear Eats the Soul [Angst essen Seele auf]* (Ger. 1973 94 min.)  
Dyer, Richard. “The Light of the World.” *White*. New York: Routledge, 1997. 82-144.
- Week 4:** Cinematography  
*Group 2 Journal Due to Bb*  
C&W, 95-134 Screen: *The Birds* (US 1963 119 min.)  
Mulvey, Laura, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” Recommended: Bellour, Raymond. “System of a Fragment.” *The Analysis of Film*. Ed. Constance Penley. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2000. 28-67.
- Week 5:** Editing  
*Group 1 Journal Due to Bb*  
C&W, 135-184  
Screen: *Suspense* (US 1913 10 min.), *Man with a Movie Camera* (USSR 1929 68 min.)  
Vertov, Dziga. “Kino-Eye” (1926). *Kino-Eye*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984. 60-79. Recommended: C&W 271-300; Eisenstein, Sergei. “A Dialectical Approach to Film Form.” *Film Form*. Ed. Jay Leyda. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977. 45-63.
- Week 6:** Sound and Image  
*Group 2 Journal Due to Bb*  
C&W, 185-223; Shingler, Martin, and Cindy Wieringa. *On Air: Methods and Meanings of Radio*. Oxford UP, 1998. (Selections)  
Listen: *War of the Worlds* (October 30, 1938) <http://www.mercurytheatre.info/9/22>  
Chion, Michel. “Projections of Sound on Image.” *Audio-Vision*. Ed. and trans. Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. 3-24.

**Week 7:** Narrative  
FIRST DRAFT OF SEQUENCE ANALYSIS DUE, INCL. SEQUENCE CHART, TO Bb  
C&W, 227-270.  
Screen: *The Wire*, "The Target" (Season 1, Ep. 1), HBO, 2002 ~ 60 Butler, Jeremy.  
"Television's Ebb and Flow" and "Narrative Structure." *Television: Critical  
Methods and Applications*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, 2007.  
3-18, 21-49. Recommended: Gunning, Tom. "Theory and History: Narrative  
Discourse and the Narrator System." *D.W. Griffith and the Origins of the  
American Narrative Film*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1994. 10-30.

### **UNIT III: CRITIQUE: NARRATIVE, CULTURE, AND POWER**

**Week 8:** Ideology  
FINAL DRAFT OF SEQUENCE ANALYSIS DUE TO Bb 10/4 Marx, Karl and Friedrich  
Engels, *The German Ideology* (selections)  
Screen: *Paradise Now* (Palestine 2005 90 min.)  
Recommended: Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses."

**Week 9:** Genre and the Culture Industry  
*Group 1 Journal Due to Bb*  
Williams, Raymond. "Culture." *Keywords*. New York: Oxford UP, 1985. C&W,  
331-367.  
Screen: *Kick-Ass* (US 2010 117 min.)  
Altman, Rick. "Where Do Genre's Come From?" *Film/Genre*. London: BFI, 1999.  
30-48.

**Week 10:** The Author Function  
*Group 2 Journal Due to Bb*  
Foucault, Michel. "What Is an Author?" *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*.  
Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977. 113-38.  
Screen: *Vérités et mensonges [F is for Fake]* (d. Wells, US 1973 89 min.)

**Week 11:** The Politics of Technoculture  
Chun, Wendy. "Introduction." *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the  
Age of Fibre Optics*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1-30.  
Screen: *Images of the World and the Inscription of War* (d. Farocki 1989, 75 min.)  
Daniel, Sharon.  
"The Database: An Aesthetics of Dignity." *Database Aesthetics: Art in the Age  
of Information Overflow*. Ed. Victoria Vesna. Univ. of Minnesota P, 2007. 142-82.

**Week 12:** Experimental Film and Video Art: Challenging the Apparatus  
C&W 301-329; Jean-Luc Baudry "Ideological Effects of Basic Cinematic  
Apparatus" *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*. Ed. Philip  
Rosen. New York: Columbia UP, 1986. 286-298

Screen: *Snowblind* (d. Frampton, 1968, 5 min.); *La Chambre* (d. Akerman, 1971, 10 min.); *Sweet Light* (d. Viola 1977, 9 min.); *Soundings* (d. Hill, 1979, 17 min.); *Turbulent* (d. Neshat 1998, 9 min.); *588 Project* (d. Ratman, 2009, 9 min.), *K-Corea INC.K* (Section a) excerpt (d. Trecartin, 2009, 5 min.)

Catherine Elwes, "Introduction: From Margins to Mainstream." *Video Art: A Guided Tour* London: I B Taurus, 2005. 1-20.

Recommended: Kate Mondloch, "Be Here (and There) Now: Spatial Dynamics of Screen-Reliant Installation Art" *Art Journal* 66 (2007): 21-33 Giorgio Agamben "What is an Apparatus?" *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2009. 1-24.

- Week 13:** The Work of Video Games  
Frasca, Gonzalo. "Simulation versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology." *The Video Game Theory Reader*. Ed. Mark J. P. Wolf and Bernard Perron. New York: Routledge, 2003. 221-35.  
Lab: Selected Games Online  
Bogost, Ian. "Procedural Rhetoric"; Ludica, "The Hegemony of Play" @ <http://www.ludica.org.uk/Publications.htm>
- Week 14:** Mobile Media Practices  
*M 11/14 Group 1 Journal Due to Bb 11/15* Grusin, Ricard. "Affect, Mediality, and Abu Ghraib." *Premediation: Affect and Mediality after 9/11*. Palgrave/McMillan, 2010. 62-89. Reingold, Howard. "Introduction." *Smart Mobs*. Cambridge: Perseus Publishing, 2002. xi-28. Screening: Mobile Imaging Exercise  
Workshop
- Week 15:** Summary of the Course—Begin Final Paper  
*Group 2 Journal Due to Bb*  
C&W, 474-80; 492-502
- Week 16:** Final Paper Workshops  
DRAFT OF FIRST PARAGRAPH AND OUTLINE OF FINAL PAPER DUE BY 5:00 PM  
Small group paper workshops

**Final according to university exam schedule: final paper**