

Course Outline for HUMN 2
INTRODUCTION TO FILM STUDIES
Effective: Fall 2020

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

HUMN 2 — INTRODUCTION TO FILM STUDIES — 3.00 units

Introduction to film aesthetics, styles, and devices, as well as film theory and critical approaches to film analysis. Overview of film history, in addition to film production, technology, and distribution. Emphasis on diverse responses to the art form of cinema and its impact on contemporary culture.

3.00 Units Lecture

Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

Discipline:

- Humanities

	MIN
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Expected Outside of Class Hours:	108.00
Total Hours:	162.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. Describe Film Studies as an academic discipline and a distinct approach to the Humanities
- B. Distinguish between various types of films (narrative, documentary, and experimental), as well as major film genres
- C. Differentiate between various theoretical approaches to film, and use some of those approaches to compose brief analyses of films
- D. Identify the common elements of narrative films, such as the 3-act structure, plot vs. story, and types of duration
- E. Describe and analyze the function of mise-en-scene in film, in terms of various elements of design and composition
- F. Identify and analyze the function of the basic elements of cinematography, e.g. shots, lighting, camera angles and movement, framing, and special effects
- G. Describe the evolution of screen acting and distinguish between various aspects of performance and acting styles
- H. Identify and analyze the effects of major editing techniques in terms of continuity and discontinuity
 - I. Describe and evaluate the qualities, sources, types, and functions of film sound
- J. Discuss developments in film history from pre-cinema to the present, and describe major trends in global traditions that influenced film history
- K. Identify the various phases in movie making (pre-production, production, and post-production), and distinguish between the studio system and independent filmmaking
- L. Explain the basic aspects of the financing, marketing, and distribution of movies

V. CONTENT:

- A. Overview of Film Studies as a distinct discipline and introduction to Film Studies as part of the Humanities.
- B. Overview of terminology and methods necessary for Film Studies:
 1. Basics of film form
 2. Cinematic language
 3. Historical and cultural interpretations
 4. Film genres
 5. Narrative structure
 6. Editing techniques
 7. Sound and music
 8. Ways of seeing/looking at movies.
- C. Overview of common approaches to speaking and writing about films, including an introduction to common approaches in Film Theory and Criticism:
 1. Formalism, Realism, Auteur Theory, Genre Theory, Structuralism, Ideology, Marxism, Poststructuralism and Psychoanalysis, Postcolonialism, Feminism and Queer Theory, Reception Theory, Race/Ethnicity and Representation.
- D. Narrative, documentary, and experimental film types.
- E. Narrative film genres and conventions for each major genre.
- F. Mise-en-Scene in film design and composition.

- G. Introduction to major aspects of cinematography:
 - 1. Shots
 - 2. Lighting
 - 3. Camera angles and movement
 - 4. Framing
 - 5. Special effects.
- H. Overview of the evolution of screen acting and aspects of performance.
- I. Major editing techniques in terms of continuity and discontinuity editing.
- J. Film Sound:
 - 1. Qualities
 - 2. Sources
 - 3. Types
 - 4. Functions of film sound.
- K. Film History:
 - 1. Basic approaches to film history
 - 2. Overview of developments in cinema
 - 3. Introduction to selected global traditions that influenced film history.
- L. Studio system vs. independent filmmaking.
- M. Overview of the basics of financing, marketing, and distribution of movies.

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Audio-visual Activity** - Frequent screenings of film clips and/or whole films.
- B. **Discussion** - Frequent discussions class-wide and/or in small groups on the course readings and lecture content, as well as the films/film clips screened during class.
- C. **Lecture** - Lectures complement readings that students are required to do outside of class through review and clarification, as well as provide new information and stimulate discussion.
- D. **Research** - Students conduct research on various topics covered in the textbook, films screened for homework analysis, and on the director/topic chosen for their final project presentation.
- E. **Student Presentations** - In small groups, students will present on selected topics covered in the textbook, and/or on selected films, directors, and/or film genres.
- F. **Classroom Activity** - Frequent in-class group activities, such as lightning review rounds with whole class, small groups outline chapter sections then present back to class, discussing and then responding in small groups to instructor questions on films/clips screened in class. More specifically, storyboarding for narrative film structure in small groups, or redesigning scenes from film clips to work with different cinematic styles and design elements.

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Short answer quiz on assigned reading: after reading a chapter on Elements of Film Narrative, students are asked to describe the difference between a narrative film, film narration, and types of narrators, or after reading about Film Theory (Feminist, Structuralist, Psychoanalytical, Marxist, etc.), students are asked to offer a brief analysis of a short film using one of those approaches.
- B. Group project and presentation: as a final project, students are asked to work in small groups to research and prepare both an oral presentation and an individual short essay on the work of an important film director.
- C. Short film-analysis essay: to demonstrate knowledge and put into practice film analysis skills, students are asked to watch "Citizen Kane" (for example) and analyze it for its use of innovative cinematographic devices and editing techniques.
- D. Notes: students are required to take notes on class lectures, discussions, and clips/films viewed in class, as well as on homework readings; instructor reviews students' notebooks during the semester for a component of the final grade.

VIII. EVALUATION:

Methods/Frequency

- A. Exams/Tests
 - At least 2 exams.
- B. Quizzes
 - At least 2 quizzes.
- C. Research Projects
 - At least 1 research project.
- D. Oral Presentation
 - At least one group or individual oral presentation.
- E. Projects
 - At least one project (creative and/or research-based).
- F. Group Projects
 - At least one group project (creative and/or research-based).
- G. Class Participation
 - Frequent class participation through attendance, discussion, small-group work, etc.
- H. Class Work
 - Frequent class work through short in-class writing assignments, note-taking, discussion and film analysis.
- I. Home Work
 - Weekly home work, including reading and taking notes on textbook chapters, screening films and/or film clips, analyzing films, practicing cinematic techniques and devices in creative home work assignments, etc.

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. Barsam, Richard, and Dave Monahan. *Looking at Movies*. 6th ed., Norton, 2018.
- 2. Davis, Glyn, Kay Dickinson, Lisa Patti, and Amy Villarejo. *Film Studies: A Global Introduction*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2015.
- 3. Corrigan, Timothy, and Patricia White. *The Film Experience*. 5th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: