

# INTRODUCTION TO FILM

CST 130: Sections 70/80  
Cedar Crest College  
Fall 2008  
3 Credits  
WED, 07:00PM - 10:00PM  
Miller Family Building, Room 33



**CST 130 Catalog Description:** This course introduces students to the study of film forms and film contents. It provides an historical overview of the development of film from its international premiere in 1906 by the Lumiere Brothers to the diversity of today's cinema.

**Instructor:** Michael Wagner, MFA  
**Office/Hours:** Miller Family Building, Room 33  
Wednesdays, 10:00PM - 10:30PM  
**Contact:** [mjwagner@cedarcrest.edu](mailto:mjwagner@cedarcrest.edu) (preferred)  
610-606-4666 [ext.6482]

**Required Textbook:** The Film Experience. Corrigan/White. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition

**Recommended Texts:** A Short Guide to Writing About Film. Corrigan. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition  
Film Art: An Introduction. Bordwell/Thompson. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition

\*Textbooks can be found in the college bookstore and through online book sellers.

**Process:** discussions, lectures, viewing films, presentations, written assignments, and quizzes.

**Course Objectives:** Motion pictures are carefully prepared constructions of sights and sounds. This course is about learning to get more meaning from them. Watching visual media is the chief way our society comes to recognize itself. This course is about what is meant in the moving visual arts and how that meaning is stated. Basic concepts and techniques in constructing and interrelating visual and aural images will be discussed in light of the historical development of film and video technology and techniques.

**Course Outcomes:** The primary goal is to introduce the student to the art of motion pictures.

- The course is designed to allow the student to better understand how films are constructed. With successful completion of the course, the student will have the foundations of film language, grammar, and visual storytelling techniques upon which to build a deeper study of the theories of cinematic art.
- The student will become a more educated and analytical viewer of movies, learning to go beyond the mere passive reception of the stories, images and sounds.
- The student will be better able to relate the ideas communicated in films to the broader contexts of art, society and culture.

**General Course Structure:** This is primarily a "learn by discussion" class. The good news is that there are no scheduled exams. You are required to attend, participate, take notes, ask questions, make presentations, keep up with your assignments, and present a portfolio of your work with a grade application essay to me for grading, at the end of the semester.

**Course Assessment:** Since the best way to gain a deeper understanding of film is to view and analyze various examples of techniques and styles, we'll spend much of our semester screening and discussing feature films, short films, and clips (segments) from feature films.

- Three substantial TAKE-HOME ESSAY assignments will allow you to synthesize these analyses and demonstrate your knowledge of related film terminology in answers to essay questions, as well as require you to do some further research into subjects relevant to the course material.
- Five QUIZZES will cover material from the lectures and required readings.
- Each student will have the opportunity to introduce to the class one of the scheduled feature films through an oral presentation that is supplemented by a written assignment.

The syllabus details these assessments, as well as the other criteria for grading, in the section titled "Requirements For Grading" on page 4.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is mandatory. One absence may be accepted without impact on your grade. Each successive absence will result in the lowering of your grade. Additionally, students are expected to be on time and prepared for class at the scheduled meeting time. Unexcused lateness may be counted as an absence at the discretion of the professor. Since we'll be screening a range of films and film clips each night, missing class will make it difficult for you to make up lost class time. If you miss a class for any reason, it is solely your responsibility to obtain and view the *feature film* screened in class that night.

**School Closings:** If Cedar Crest's campus is open, you should expect that our class will be held. If troublesome weather threatens to close the campus and thus cancel class, you should refer to the following sources:

- Cedar Crest's Inclement Weather Hotline 610-606-4629
- TV stations: WFMZ Channel 69, WNEP Channel 16
- Radio stations: WODE FM 99.9, WCTO FM 96.1, WLEV FM 100.7, WAEB FM 104.1  
WAEB AM 790, WEST AM 1400
- Internet: WFMZ.com

It is also recommended that you sign up for Cedar Crest's e2Campus emergency notification system. The e2Campus system will send electronic notifications to all registered mobile phones, Blackberries, wireless PDAs, pagers, Smart or Satellite phones, and email addresses. Messages can also "pop up" to anyone using Google, Yahoo, or AOL as their home page. To sign up for e2, visit the Cedar Crest College website.

Of course, you should always use common sense and place your safety first when determining whether or not it's appropriate to drive to campus under such conditions.

**Class Cancellation:** If I have to cancel class (independent of the campus closing) due to weather or for any other reasons, I will send a class-wide email to your Cedar Crest account and (if possible) place an outgoing message on my office voicemail. (x6482)

**Final Exam Schedule:** As noted above, there is no final exam. However, the scheduled exam time provided by the CCC Registrar will be utilized as the time for students to have their portfolios returned and receive their final grades. This process will only take a few minutes, and your obligations for the course include this. The exact time will be scheduled by the Registrar. You should not make travel arrangements until the final exam schedule is published; if you must make plans early, be safe and schedule your travel for after the last exam day.

**Special Considerations/Changes:** Discussed in class or by appointment as need arises.

**Classroom Protocol:** Appropriate behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest Honor Code. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as: late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations, and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction or otherwise compromise students' access to their college education.

Honest and open discourse is the rule of the classroom. Respect for the subject matter, fellow students, visitors, and the professor is expected. Behavior that is disrespectful will not be tolerated and may result in expulsion from class, or more extreme actions, if warranted.

**Cedar Crest College Honor Code:** The CCC Honor Code states that students shall uphold community standards for academic and social behavior to preserve a learning environment dedicated to personal and academic excellence. It is based upon the principle that, as a self-governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgment that will guide them through life.

See the complete CCC Honor Code in Section A of *A Student's Guide to Cedar Crest College*.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is defined as the submission of any paper, work or project that may contain information:

- a. produced, written, or obtained from or by another person or source, submitted as one's own and used without credit;
- b. presenting work that uses un-credited and/or unquoted material;
- c. contains thoughts or ideas that are copied in whole or in part from the internet or other sources, are submitted without citation, and can be construed by the reader or audience as the student's own work or ideas.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. It is academic dishonesty and an affront to the professor, other students, our educational system, and the community that we are attempting to build. It is a negative statement about the student, their values, and their education. Plagiarism is theft. It is expected that students discuss any concerns they might have about plagiarism with the professor prior to submission of their work.

At minimum, plagiarism will result in a grade of zero ("0") for the assignment with no opportunity to resubmit. Withdrawal from the class after the submission of plagiarized work is not allowed. The professor may impose other sanctions on the student who submits plagiarized work or assists students who plagiarize. In addition to the grade of zero, these sanctions may include but are not limited to: a. giving the student a grade of failure (F) for the class (no matter what their overall class grade point average is on that date) b. suspending or expelling the student from the class, the program or the school; or c. any combinations of these sanctions deemed appropriate by the professor. All cases of plagiarism will be kept on record by Cedar Crest College's Office of The Provost.

If the student has any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or how to properly cite and reference material, it is suggested that they talk with the professor, a research librarian, or consult Modern Language Association (MLA) standards prior to the submission of their work for a grade.

**Students With Disabilities Policy:** Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with their professors during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact Academic Services.

**GRADING SCALE:**

A	94-100	[4.0]	B-	80-83.99	[2.7]	D+	67-69.99	[1.3]
A-	90-93.99	[3.7]	C+	77-79.99	[2.3]	D	60-66.99	[1.0]
B+	87-89.99	[3.3]	C	74-76.99	[2.0]	F	Below 60	[0.0]
B	84-86.99	[3.0]	C-	70-73.99	[1.7]			

Although the professor is happy to discuss any grades with students individually, all grades are final and will not be changed unless there was a mechanical error in recording.

## **Requirements for Grading:**

### **1. Attendance is mandatory. (5%)**

One absence may be accepted without impact on your grade. Each successive absence will result in the lowering of your grade. Additionally, students are expected to be on time and prepared for class at the scheduled meeting time. Unexcused lateness may be counted as an absence at the discretion of the professor.

### **2. Participation in class discussions is required. (10%)**

Following each feature film we screen, there will be a brief in-class (time permitting) discussion of the ideas, elements, and impact of the film, and how those things relate to the topic of that night's lecture. Additionally, weekly eCollege discussion board assignments will supplement our in-class discussions. Following each screening, you will post **one response** to the film (1-2 paragraphs in length) and then post **at least one reply** to the observations of your classmates. Discussion board responses and replies are due within the week after each film is screened, before the next class. (There will be no discussion board work for the final film.)

Effective discourse helps students process, articulate, and sometimes defend their thoughts and ideas pertaining to the films we screen in class. In order to maintain a positive environment in our classroom, it is imperative that students treat one another with honesty and respect during these discussions. (Please refer to the *Classroom Protocol* section of the syllabus.)

### **3. In-Class Presentation: Oral + Written (10%)**

Each student is required to present/introduce one of the films viewed in class. This will require research into the film's major cast and crew, the history (or "back story"), one example of the film's impact (artistic, historic, cultural, etc.), and other anecdotal information. These presentations will include information on the director, producer, actors, script, genre, studio, special effects, sound, cinematography, etc. Written materials that are developed for the presentation must be typewritten, every page should have your name and section written on it, and they should be turned in to the instructor upon completion of the presentation. The instructor will try to work out a schedule through a volunteer basis. If that proves impossible, dates/films will be assigned via lottery.

### **4. Three (3) Take-home Essay assignments (15% each = 45% total)**

These assignments are individual work that will require additional research into the specific films from class and topics related to them. There will also be questions based on required readings from the textbook. Guidelines will be discussed in class. All essays must be typed, grammatically correct, spell-checked, and written in a clear and coherent form.

**A NOTE REGARDING ESSAYS AND SOURCES:** At times, specific essay questions may require researching and citing legitimate academic and/or professional sources. Encyclopedias (including *Wikipedia*), fan websites and popular magazines cannot be used as sources except when they are being discussed as mass media. If necessary, these sources may be used by the student as a starting point to develop an idea or topic. The source should be noted, but it will not count as a college level source.

### **5. Five (5) quizzes (5% each = 25% total)**

Quizzes will cover material from the lectures and required readings.

### **6. A Portfolio is required. (5%)**

This is a binder that contains all of your graded coursework in a fashion that is organized and presentable. The portfolio will also include a table of contents and a grade application. (see #7)

### **7. A Grade Application is required to be included in your Portfolio.**

This is a short essay that you write to tell me about your class experience. This essay is no longer than one page in length. It specifies what you have learned and why you believe that you have **earned** the specific grade for which you are applying. Keep in mind, however, that this only an application - final grades are awarded only by the professor.

### **8. Extra Credit**

Students seeking extra credit may be given the opportunity to present a specific film topic to the class. The instructor will discuss the details and grading procedures on an individual basis.

**ASSIGNMENT FORMAT:** All formal out-of-class assignments must be typewritten, stapled, and double-spaced with a standard 12-point font. Proper spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax of American English should always be used. Title pages are not required, but be certain to include your name, our class information, and the date at the top of the first page. In the interest of saving trees, I encourage you to print double-sided.

**DEADLINES/LATENESS:** Assignments are due on the dates listed in the course schedule. If you miss class when an assignment is due, it may be submitted via email ([mjwagner@cedarcrest.edu](mailto:mjwagner@cedarcrest.edu)) as an attached MSWord or RTF document, no later than 7:15pm on the night the assignment is due. Please do not send attachments in any other format (WordPerfect, etc.) as they will not be counted as being received if I can't open them. Most word processing programs allow you to save files as either Word (.doc) or RTF (.rtf) documents. My version of MSWord is the latest (Office 2007) and will accept any MSWord document. Assignments handed in (or sent) late will lose ten (10) points from their possible highest grade. If they are not handed in by the beginning of the following class meeting, the assignment will not be accepted. This is not negotiable. Individual extensions may be granted for extenuating circumstances (family crisis, serious illness, etc.) but should be requested and explained as soon as possible. Computer problems are not acceptable excuses for extensions or lateness.

**\*\*VERY IMPORTANT NOTE:** We will be screening many short and feature films in class this semester. Talking during the films will not be tolerated, nor will any noises caused by cell phones, pagers, or other personal electronic devices, etc. With that said, feel free to bring popcorn or whatever your favorite movie munchies might be for the feature films. Just please be conscientious and make the absolute least amount of noise as possible. (This privilege may be revoked if it is abused.)

### Weekly Class Schedule

#### **Class One - WED, 8/27**

Introduction & course organizational business.  
Lecture: Who does what? The details behind the credits.  
GENRES, FORM, STRUCTURE, TONE and STYLE  
Readings DUE: None  
Assignments DUE: None  
Screening: *Creature Comforts, Balance, Tango*

**\*TUESDAY, 09/02/08 - LAST DAY TO DROP/ADD\***

#### **Class Two - WED, 9/3**

Lecture: Mise en Scene, or the Frame  
Readings DUE: *The Film Experience* (Corrigan/White) Chapter 2  
Assignments DUE: None  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *The Graduate*  
QUIZ #1

#### **Class Three - WED, 9/10**

Lecture: Film Production  
Readings DUE: *The Film Experience* (Corrigan/White) Chapter 1  
Assignments DUE: None  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *The Player*  
QUIZ #2

#### **Class Four - WED, 9/17**

Lecture: The Screenplay  
Readings DUE: None  
Assignments DUE: None  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *Chinatown*

#### **Class Five - WED, 9/24**

Lecture: Production Design  
Readings DUE: None  
Assignments DUE:  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *Edward Scissorhands*  
QUIZ #3

**Class Six - WED, 10/1**

Lecture: The Director's role/impact  
Readings DUE: *The Film Experience* (Corrigan/White) pgs 350-351 - Hitchcock Sidebar  
Assignments DUE:  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *Rear Window*  
Discuss/distribute TAKE-HOME ESSAY #1

**Class Seven - WED, 10/8**

Lecture: Cinematography  
Readings DUE: *The Film Experience* (Corrigan/White) Chapter 3  
Assignments DUE: TAKE-HOME ESSAY #1  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *Visions of Light*

**Class Eight - WED, 10/15**

Lecture: Editing & Post-production  
Readings DUE: *The Film Experience* (Corrigan/White) Chapter 4  
Assignments DUE: None  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *Raging Bull*

**Class Nine - WED, 10/22**

Lecture: Sound Design & Music  
Readings DUE: *The Film Experience* (Corrigan/White) Chapter 5  
Assignments DUE: None  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *The Lives of Others*  
QUIZ #4

**Class Ten - WED, 10/29**

Lecture: Documentary Film  
Readings DUE: *The Film Experience* (Corrigan/White) Chapter 7  
Assignments DUE: None  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *Hell House*  
QUIZ #5  
Distribute/Discuss TAKE-HOME ESSAY #2

**Class Eleven - WED, 11/5**

Lecture: Animation  
Readings DUE: None  
Assignments DUE: TAKE-HOME ESSAY #2  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *Millennium Actress*

**\*MONDAY, 11/10/08 - WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE\***

**Class Twelve - WED, 11/12**

Lecture: American Independent Film  
Readings DUE: None  
Assignments DUE: None  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *Half-Nelson*

**Class Thirteen - WED, 11/19**

Lecture: Global Cinema  
Readings DUE: *The Film Experience* (Corrigan/White) Chapter 10  
Assignments DUE: None  
Presentation by: TBD  
Screening: *City of God*  
Distribute/Discuss TAKE-HOME ESSAY #3

**WED, 11/26 - THANKSGIVING BREAK**

NO CLASS.  
Assignment: Enjoy your meal.

**Class Fourteen - WED, 12/3**

Lecture: Semester wrap-up/Questions

Readings DUE: None

Assignments DUE: TAKE-HOME ESSAY #3 and PORTFOLIO

Presentation by: TBD

Screening: Class Choice Film

**WEDNESDAY, 12/10**

Pick up PORTFOLIOS and receive final grades.

NO FINAL EXAM

**FIN**

**Enjoy the holidays.**

**MW**

Cedar Crest College  
Fall 2008  
CST 130 - Introduction to Film  
Sections 70/80  
3 Credits

I have received, read, and reviewed the syllabus for the Cedar Crest College 2008 Fall Semester course titled **CST 130 - Introduction to Film, Sections 70/80**. I understand the policies and procedures outlined in the syllabus, and agree to the terms and conditions of this course as presented.

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_