

Introduction to Film

CST 130: Sec 90

Cedar Crest College

May Term 2010: Fri 6PM – 9PM;
Sat 9AM – 5PM; & Sun 9AM – 5PM

Room: MIL 33 (Exams in MIL 20)

Format: Lecture/Discussion

Dr. Robert A. Wilson

Office: 113 Hartzel Hall

Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 5-5:50 PM
and by appointment

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Citizen Kane (1941)

“Whereas painting is a more rarefied art form, with a limited audience, I recognized film as this extraordinary social tool that could reach tremendous numbers of people.”

--Kathryn Bigelow, director of *The Hurt Locker* (2009)

Course Description: This course introduces students to the study of film forms and film contents. It provides a historical overview of the development of film from its commercial premiere in 1895 by the Lumière Brothers to the diversity of today’s cinema. (This course counts toward the Humanities liberal-arts requirement under the Cedar Crest College curriculum.)

Books and Course Resources:

- a) **Required Textbook:** One book is essential for our course, available at the Cedar Crest Campus Bookstore or elsewhere:

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*. 9th edition. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2010.
ISBN: 978-0-07-338616-4

Film Art also has a tutorial CD-ROM with supplemental video clips, a glossary, and practice quizzes on film terms and concepts. There’s also a supplemental website available at www.mhhe.com/filmart9e and the authors’ blog at www.davidbordwell.net/blog.

- b) **Supplemental Text:** For those of you who are pursuing either Film or Communication Studies—or are curious about the concepts we’re covering beyond Bordwell and Thompson’s writing—I recommend the book below to supplement *Film Art*:

Bill Nichols, *Engaging Cinema: An Introduction to Film Studies*. New York: Norton, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-393-93491-5

- c) **Course Website:** You'll also want access to the course's eCollege (.Next) companion website, which will have digital copies of the syllabus, schedule, assignments, and handouts. The site is accessed at: www.cedarcresonline.net.

To login, you'll need a user ID and password issued to you from the Cedar Crest Registrar's Office, typically sent to your Cedar Crest email account.

We'll complete our exams via the course website, and you'll submit essays via the website's "Dropbox" features.

Course Outcomes: The aim of this course is to develop an appreciation of film as an artistic medium and to be able to interpret how a film communicates its messages to audience members. Through our course, then, these are the skills that I hope you'll come away with:

- You'll develop an understanding of film as an art form, including a knowledge of:
 - the production process (how films are made through studios and independently),
 - formal elements of composition (such as mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound), and
 - common film concepts and terminology (such as technical approaches, genre conventions, and interpretive strategies).
- You'll be able to write critical analyses of film that draw upon your knowledge of film as an artistic form.

Course Assessment: Since the best way to gain a careful understanding of film is to watch examples of its techniques and styles from various movies, we'll spend much of our class analyzing both feature-length and film-segment screenings.

- Two exams will allow you to synthesize these analyses in short-answer and essay questions, as well as to demonstrate your knowledge of film terminology and concepts through multiple-choice questions.
- Two analytical papers (of about 2 pages each) will give you practice in writing analytical interpretations about film that detail artistic decisions made regarding 1) mise-en-scene and cinematography and 2) editing and sound.
- Regular course discussion will allow you to work through your understandings of film techniques and express your interpretations of film techniques.

Honor Philosophy: The Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy 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.

Classroom Protocol: Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy. 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 Cedar Crest College education.

Since we'll be spending a good amount of time this semester sitting in the dark watching movies, it's appropriate here to make note of good classroom film-watching etiquette. While you may certainly laugh, weep, or shriek when appropriate, let's keep those outbursts to the clowns, tragedians, and monsters on screen, not in the seats around us. No one likes a shushing, neither the shusher nor the shushee.

As we live in an age of increasing technological diversion—the call of cell phones, or the click of mice, ringing in our ear—it becomes easy to forget the good manners of paying attention to those immediately around us. Please remember to shut off cell phones and refrain from texting your friends or any wayward browsing of the Internet during class.

Attendance: Simply put, you must attend class. Since we'll be watching a range of film segments, missing class will make it difficult for you to make those screenings up.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's ideas or words and passing them off as your own without giving credit to the original source, whether or not you intended to mislead your reader. Since a key goal of a college education is to develop and express your own ideas, plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense. Here's the official college policy, which stands for this class:

It is dishonest to present oral or written work that is not entirely the student's own, except as may be approved by the instructor. Students must follow the requirements of the instructor regarding when and how much collaboration with other students is permitted. Any language taken from another source, whether individual words or entire paragraphs, must be placed in quotation marks and attributed to the source, following the citation format specified. Paraphrased material from an outside source must also be attributed. In addition, if the student is indebted to another source for a specific perspective or a line of argument—regardless of whether the student has directly quoted the source or not—that debt must be acknowledged.

In this class, the penalty for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty is a grade of F either on the individual assignment or for the entire course, to be determined by the instructor based upon the severity of the offense. All cases of plagiarism will be kept on record with Cedar Crest College's Provost Office.

Class Cancellation: If Cedar Crest's campus is open, you should expect our class meetings to be held. If troublesome weather threatens to close the campus and thus cancel class, you should refer to Cedar Crest's Inclement Weather Hotline at 610-606-4629 for notification. Of course, you should always use common sense and place your safety first when determining whether or not it's appropriate for you to drive to campus under such conditions. If I cancel class independently of the campus closing, due to weather or for 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 for confirmation (x3474).

College Policy Regarding Learning Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with me during the first class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the Learning Center.

Assignment Format: All formal out-of-class assignments must be typewritten, stapled, and double-spaced with a 12-pt Times New Roman font and at least one-inch margins. Syntactically correct American English should be used. While you don't need a title page, be certain to include your name, our class information, and a descriptive title on the first page. Submit digital copies of all typewritten assignments as either MSWord (*.docx/.doc) or Rich Text Format (*.rtf) documents.

Deadlines and Lateness: Essays and exams are due on the dates listed on the course schedule. If you're absent from class when an essay is due, it should still be submitted via the course website's Dropbox for the assignment. If the website is down, you may email assignments as an attached MSWord or RTF document to rawilson@cedarcrest.edu. Please do not send assignments in a different format (WordPerfect, etc.) as they will not be counted as being received if I cannot open them: most word processing programs allow you to save files as either Word (.doc) or RTF (.rtf) documents. Assignments handed in past their due date will be reduced one letter grade (e.g. A to A-) for each 24-hour period they are late. Individual assignment extensions may be granted for extenuating circumstances (personal or family crisis, serious illness, roommate problems, etc.), but should be requested and explained as soon as possible. Computer problems are not acceptable excuses for extensions or lateness.

Assignments:

Exams (60% total, 2 for 30% each)—Exams are moments where you'll be asked to synthesize our readings, lectures, and discussions to demonstrate your own understanding of film interpretation and knowledge of film form and history. Exams will have a combination of multiple-choice questions (emphasizing terminology and historical movements outlined in our readings), but also short-answer and essay questions. Essay questions will ask you to interpret film segments to be shown (or re-shown) during class.

Scene Analysis Essays (20%, 2 for 10% each)—As a way of refining your abilities both to closely read a film and to express your observations about it, you'll write two scene-analysis essays where you pick apart a one-minute film segment of your choice. These papers should be about 2-3 pages each. Essay 1 will focus on a scene's mise-en-scene and cinematography. Essay 2 will focus on a scene's editing and sound. You may write both essays on the same one-minute segment or choose two different segments about which to write.

Discussion Participation (20% of Final Grade): Lively and thoughtful—that's how we want our class discussions to go. For each class meeting, you are expected to participate in our discussion of the films we will

watch, demonstrating your questions and understand of lecture and reading material. Your comments and questions should express a developing sense of film as an artistic medium and an understanding of the semester's readings. Participation will be evaluated at our class's end according to the below rubric.

Evaluation of Course Participation	
Grade	Criteria
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consistently raises thoughtful questions and proposes original ideas based upon course texts and concepts. Makes substantive connections, criticisms, and interpretations between multiple texts. Goes beyond those interpretations presented in lectures and readings. ○ Regularly cites specific textual evidence (passages from the readings, scenes from a film, etc.). When offering reader-response to a text or drawing upon personal experience or anecdotal evidence, regularly bases those reactions in a clear understanding of how textual language and images operate. ○ Regularly engaged in discussion with professor and classmates, and responds constructively to questions and alternative interpretations. Maintains consistent participation throughout the semester. ○ Demonstrates excellent understanding of course texts and concepts.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequently contributes to discussion with relevant points and questions drawn from course texts and concepts. ○ Tends to cite specific textual evidence. May rely upon reader-response to a text, personal experience, or anecdotal evidence with a vague understanding of how textual language and images operate. ○ Listens attentively to discussion with professor and classmates, and responds to questions and alternative interpretations. Maintains regular participation throughout the semester. ○ Demonstrates good understanding of course texts and concepts.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infrequently contributes to discussion except when called upon, but contributions demonstrate familiarity with essential course texts and concepts. ○ Occasionally cites textual evidence. Relies heavily upon unqualified reader-response to a text, personal experience, or anecdotal evidence without reference to how textual language and images operate. ○ Listens to discussion with professor and classmates, but does not respond to questions or alternative interpretations. Participation variable throughout the semester. ○ Demonstrates competent understanding of course texts and concepts.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rarely contributes to class discussion except when called upon and contributions are off-topic and do not reference course texts and concepts. ○ Does not cite textual evidence. Relies almost exclusively upon unqualified reader-response to a text, personal experience, or anecdotal evidence without reference to how textual language and images operate. ○ Absent from several classes. ○ Demonstrates unsatisfactory understanding of course texts and concepts.
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fails to contribute to class discussion. ○ Absent from multiple classes. ○ Demonstrates negligible understanding of course texts and concepts

Grades: The breakdown of how the above assignments translate into your assessment for the course and your evaluation in terms of a final grade is as follows:

Points	Assignment	Final grades for our course will be issued according to the following percentages:	
_____/300	Exam 1		
_____/100	Scene Analysis Essay 1	94-100%	A
_____/300	Exam 2	90-93.99%	A-
_____/100	Scene Analysis Essay 2	87-89.99%	B+
_____/200	Course Participation	84-86.99%	B
		80-83.99%	B-
Total:		77-79.99%	C+
_____/1000		74-76.99%	C
		70-73.99%	C-
		67-69.99%	D+
		64-66.99%	D
		60-63.99%	D-
		0-59.99%	F

May 2010 Term Schedule

Date	Assignments: Readings, Exams, & Essays	Film Screenings
<p>Friday, 5/21/10 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM</p>	<p>Film Art: Part One, Film Art and Filmmaking, Chapter 1 “Film as Art: Creativity, Technology, and Business” (pp. 1-54) Supplemental Reading, <i>Engaging Cinema</i>: Introduction (pp. 3-25) and Chapters 5 & 6 (pp. 175-247)</p>	<p>Case Study: <i>Run Lola Run</i> (1998, Tom Tykwer dir., 80 min.) Auguste & Louis Lumière Shorts (1895): “Arrival of the Train at the Ciotat Station” (50s) “The Sprinkler Sprinkled” (49s) <i>A Trip to the Moon</i> (1902, Georges Méliès, 8 or 14m)</p>
<p>Saturday, 5/22/10 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM</p>	<p>Film Art: Part Two, Film Form, Chapter 2 “The Significance of Film Form” and Chapter 3 “Narrative as a Formal System” (pp. 55-117) Supplemental Reading, <i>Engaging Cinema</i>: Chapter 4 (pp. 136-172)</p>	<p>Case Study: <i>Citizen Kane</i> (1941, Orson Welles, 119m) <i>The Outsiders</i> (Francis Ford Coppola, segment) <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> (1939, Victor Fleming, 101m), segment</p>
<p>Sunday, 5/23/10 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM</p>	<p>Film Art: Part Three, Film Style, Chapter 4 “The Shot: Mise-en-Scene” and Chapter 5 “The Shot: Cinematography” (pp. 118-222) Supplemental Reading, <i>Engaging Cinema</i>: Chapter 1, “Film as a Language” (pp. 29-38), “Cinematography” (pp. 50-56), “Lighting” (pp. 57-59), “Mise-en Scène” (pp. 60-64) Exam 1 (After lunch, we’ll have a study and review session followed by the exam. Expect the exam to take an hour and a half. Exams will be completed in Miller 20, online through the course’s eCollege site: www.cedarcrestonline.net)</p>	<p><i>25th Hour</i> (2002, Spike Lee, 135m), segment <i>Star Wars IV: A New Hope</i> (1977, George Lucas, 121m), segment <i>Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography</i> (1992, Arnold Glassman & Todd McCarthy, 92m), segment <i>Blow-Up</i> (1966, Michelangelo Antonioni, 111 m.) segment <i>The Passenger</i> (1975, Michelangelo Antonioni, 126 m.), segment <i>The Libertine</i> (2005, Laurence Dunmore, 130m), segment <i>Lost in Translation</i> (2003, Sofia Coppola, 102m), segment</p>
<p>Wednesday, 5/26/10</p>	<p>Scene Analysis Essay 1 Due: Mise-en-Scene and Cinematography (2 pages; analyze a 1-minute film scene of your choice) <i>Essays due before midnight.</i> Submit via course website “Dropbox” (www.cedarcrestonline.net) Film Art: Chapter 11, Appendix, “Writing a Critical Analysis of a Film” (pp. 443-451) Supplemental Reading, <i>Engaging Cinema</i>: Chapter 12, “Writing and Speaking about Film” (pp. 435-491)</p>	
<p>Friday, 5/28/10 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM</p>	<p>Film Art: Part Three, Film Style, Chapter 6 “The Relation of Shot to Shot: Editing” (pp. 223-268) Supplemental Reading, <i>Engaging Cinema</i>: Chapter 1, “Editing” (pp. 38-49)</p>	<p><i>The Maltese Falcon</i> (1941, John Huston, 101m), segment <i>Life</i> (1999, Ted Demme, 108m), segment <i>Battleship Potemkin</i> (1925, Sergei Eisenstein, 75m), segment <i>The Untouchables</i> (1987, Brian DePalma, 119 m), segment <i>The Godfather</i> (1972, Francis Ford Coppola, 175m), segment <i>Silence of the Lambs</i> (1991, Jonathan Demme, 118m), segment</p>

<p>Saturday, 5/29/10 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM</p>	<p>Film Art: Part Three, Film Style, Chapter 7 “Sound in the Cinema” and Chapter 8 “Summary: Style as a Formal System” (pp. 269-326); and Chapter 11, “Do The Right Thing” (pp. 404-408) Supplemental Reading, <i>Engaging Cinema</i>: Chapter 1, “Sound” (pp. 64-66)</p>	<p>Case Study: <i>Do the Right Thing</i> (1989, Spike Lee, 125m) <i>The Prestige</i> (2006, Christopher Nolan, 130m), segment <i>The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly</i> (1966, Sergio Leone, 161m), segment <i>Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon</i> (2000, Ang Lee, 120m), segment <i>Singin' in the Rain</i> (1952, Stanley Donen & Gene Kelly, 103m), segment</p>
<p>Sunday, 5/30/10 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM</p>	<p>Film Art: Part Four, Types of Films, Chapter 9 “Film Genres” and Chapter 10 “Documentary, Experimental, and Animated Films” (pp. 327-397) Supplemental Reading, <i>Engaging Cinema</i>: Chapters 2 & 3 (pp. 70-135), Chapters 7 through 11 (pp. 248 – 431) Exam 2 (After lunch, we’ll have a study and review session followed by the exam. Expect the exam to take an hour and a half. Exams will be completed in Miller 20, online through the course’s eCollege site: www.cedarcrestonline.net)</p>	<p>Case Study: <i>Memento</i> (2001, Christopher Nolan, 113m) <i>Olympia</i> (1938, Leni Riefenstahl, 201m, 2 parts), segment <i>A Scanner Darkly</i> (2006, Richard Linklater, 100m), segment <i>Sin City</i>, “The Customer Is Always Right” (2005, Robert Rodriguez, 124m), segment <i>Chicago</i> (2002, Rob Marshall, 113 m), segment <i>Double Indemnity</i> (1944, Billy Wilder, 107m), segment</p>
<p>Wednesday, 6/2/10</p>	<p>Scene Analysis Essay 2 Due: Editing and Sound (2 pages; analyze a 1-minute film scene of your choice) <i>Essays due before midnight</i>. Submit via course website “Dropbox” (www.cedarcrestonline.net)</p>	