



COMMUNICATION & CULTURE C190 INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA Spring 2015

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Office: Classroom Office Building (800 E. 3rd St.), Rm. 212

Office Hours: Tu./Th., 11-12, and by appointment

Screening: Mon. 7:15, CH 122

COURSE DESCRIPTION

People talk about “the media” all the time as powerful, as everywhere, and as important. But what exactly *are* the media? How do they work? Who controls them? Whom do they benefit, and how? As media increasingly pervade the fabric of daily life, and as fewer and fewer entities maintain ownership over the largest media institutions, the urgency of answering these questions only grows in importance.

These questions are very difficult to ask—much less answer—because the ways in which structure and function of media remain, for many of us, either so taken for granted as to seem self-evident, or so opaque as to seem utterly mysterious. This course will introduce you to the basic vocabularies of visual and media literacy, and it will hone your skills at analyzing media texts, institutions, apparatuses, and audiences *critically* as they exist in and help form culture. This course is divided into three major units: cinema, television, and digital technologies, although we will often gesture to other important media institutions such as advertising and radio in developing our units. Our goal is to explore the relationships between and among form, meaning, and cultural-historical contexts with respect to each.

C190 will help you appreciate more fully the complex ways in which media inhabit and affect cultural, political, social, and economic life. More importantly, it will provide you with the analytical and interpretive skills by which to navigate and begin to make sense of the densely mediated landscapes we inhabit.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Maria Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis, *Film, A Critical Introduction* (3rd edition). Available at the IU Bookstore and through various online retailers. ISBN-13: 978-0205770779

Additional readings will be made available as .pdf files via OnCourse. You can access these materials at the CMCL C190 OnCourse site; once there, click on the “Resources” link on the left side of the page.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance & Participation (10%)

Participation is perhaps the most ambiguous word in the university environment. You do not necessarily have to demonstrate mastery of the material each class, but you should consistently be willing to ask questions, respond to others, and show you have prepared for each class meeting (also known as “doing the reading”). I do my best to cultivate a respectful and comfortable environment for each and every student, and ask that you please respect the contributions of others. If you feel uncomfortable sharing your opinion or questions, please let me know so I can do my best to adjust accordingly. In order to participate, one must also attend class; accordingly, students missing more than **three (3)** classes will have their Attendance & Participation grade docked by one-third of a letter grade for each additional day missed (i.e., from an A- to a B+).

Response Papers (15%)

Over the course of the semester, you will write a series of **six (6)** one-page response papers—two for each unit of the class. You may select the days on which you turn in each of these papers, but you must submit two per unit. These papers must be turned in on the day we discuss the material; they cannot be submitted retroactively. In each response, you will connect the screening and the reading for the day, demonstrating you have both viewed and read the day’s material. These assignments will be graded on a scale of (✓+), (✓), or (✓-). A (✓) will satisfactorily perform the response paper, while a (✓+) will engage the material with more specific citations and examples. A (✓-) will not provide evidence of your having read and/or viewed the material. You should feel welcome to e-mail me if you have questions about the course readings or these response papers as the semester proceeds.

Sequence Analysis Essay (15%)

Towards the end of our unit on cinema, you will write a 3-4 page paper that demonstrates your ability to apply course vocabulary to an excerpt from a media text. More specifically, you will draw on the language of media aesthetics to rigorously describe and analyze a sequence from a film screened for class. This assignment will allow you to apply your observational skills regarding the formal elements of cinema, as well as explore what and how aesthetics *mean*. A detailed assignment sheet will be distributed on **February 5**, and the assignment will be due in class on **February 19**.

Critical Interpretive Essay (20%)

Towards the end of our unit on television, you will write a 4-5 page paper that analyzes and interprets a specific media object *critically* by: (1) considering how the formal and narrative elements of a specific media text produce meaning, and (2) arguing the appropriateness or complexities of those meanings for our contemporary world. This paper will also engage course vocabulary and readings. A detailed assignment sheet will be distributed on **March 27**, and the paper will be due in class on **April 9**.

Midterm Examination (20%)

This exam will be a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. It will be held on **February 26**, which is the end of week seven, and will cover all course material up to that date. You will not be allowed to make up this exam.

Final Examination (20%)

This exam will be *non-cumulative*; that is, it will cover only material from after the midterm. Like the midterm, it will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The final exam time is _____ . This time is set by the university and is non-negotiable, unless you have another final meeting at this time. No early exams will be administered.

COURSE POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS

Academic Honesty

Do not attempt to cheat, plagiarize, or pass off another's work as your own. **You will be caught.** You are expected to comply with the IU policy on academic misconduct, which is outlined in the *IU Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct*, available at: <<http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/index.shtml>>

All students are expected to understand what does and does not constitute plagiarism. If you are worried about whether or not your writing is properly citing sources, *please* contact me.

*****Violating the IU Policy on Academic Misconduct will result in your receiving a failing grade in this course and could result in your suspension or expulsion from school. *****

Late Work

Assignments are due *at the start of class in hard copy*. I do not accept email submissions or work turned in to my mailbox without prior approval. I will accept no technical excuses (no paper, no ink, broken printer, etc.)—you should assume all your technology will fail the morning the paper is due. Papers not handed in during class on the due date will be considered late, and will be dropped one-third of a letter grade (e.g. from a B+ to a B) per 24-hour period, including weekends.

Contacting Me/Office Hours

I do my best to return e-mails on the same date, provided they are sent at reasonable hours. Please contact me at <jamgildo@indiana.edu> and *not* through the OnCourse messaging system.

I encourage each of you to meet with me during office hours at least once a semester. This is a great opportunity to share your opinions about the course and let me know how I can help you succeed. If my scheduled time is inconvenient, you should feel welcome to schedule a meeting with me via e-mail.

Personal Technology

You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet to take notes or to discuss the day's reading, but please do not use cell phones during class. **Please note:** Technology is a privilege; I reserve the right to suspend technology use later in the semester if I feel its presence is impeding learning.

Screenings

Course screenings are mandatory and are important components of the course. You are expected to attend screenings, and should let me know if you foresee a conflict. If you intend to use an electronic device to take notes, please sit in the back of the auditorium so as to not disturb others.

In the event that you miss a screening, all materials are on reserve at Media Reserve Services in the basement of the Herman B. Wells Library (E044). You can check out and view all media resources for C190.

Writing Assignments

I firmly believe writing is a process and not an event. Good writing takes time and consideration, and cannot be done the night before a paper is due. You should anticipate composing and revising a series of drafts for each of your writing assignments in order to craft the best work possible. I encourage each of you to meet with me in my office throughout the semester to discuss the evolution of your writing, and to seek help on developing and clarifying your ideas. Once a grade is assigned, you will not be allowed to rewrite your paper.

If you need more intensive assistance, please take advantage of the campus's Writing Tutorial Services (WTS). You can find hours, location, and contact information at www.indiana.edu/~wts/

Special Needs

If you have any special needs (economic constraints, illnesses, unusual learning styles, complex schedules, etc.) that may affect your work in the course, please let me know as soon as possible (ideally, by the end of Week One) so we can develop a plan to accommodate them.

COURSE CALENDAR

FCI = *Film: A Critical Introduction*

OC = OnCourse .pdf

UNIT ONE – CINEMA: HISTORY AND AESTHETICS

Week One: Early Cinema

Mon., Jan. 12: Screening: *Train Arriving at the Station* (Lumiere Brothers, 1895)
 Workers Leaving the Factory (Lumiere Brothers, 1896)
 A Trip to the Moon (Georges Melies, 1902)
 The Great Train Robbery (Edwin S. Porter, 1903)
 The Unknown (Tod Browning, 1927)

Tues., Jan. 13: Introductions to the Course. No reading.

Thurs., Jan. 15: Read Ch. 1: "Introduction," and Ch. 2: "An Approach to Film Analysis" (FCI)

Week Two: Analyzing Film Style: Cinematography and Editing

Mon., Jan. 19: ***MLK, Jr. Day – No Screening. Rescheduled to 1/21***

Tues., Jan. 20: Read Ch. 6: "Cinematography" (FCI)

Wed., Jan. 21: Screening: *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1943)

Thurs., Jan. 22: Read Ch. 7: "Editing" (FCI)
Recommended: Umberto Eco, "Casablanca: Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage" (OC)

Week Three: Analyzing Film Style: Space and Sound

Mon., Jan. 26: Screening: *Singin' in the Rain* (Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, 1952)

Tues., Jan. 27: Read Ch. 5: "Mise en Scene" (FCI)
Read Ch. 8: "Sound" (FCI)

Thurs., Jan. 29 Read: Steven Cohan, "Case study: interpreting *Singin' in the Rain*" (OC)

Week Four: Classical Hollywood Cinema

Mon., Feb. 2: Screening: *Shadow of a Doubt* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1943)

Tues., Feb. 3: Read: David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, "Preface" to
The Classical Hollywood Cinema (OC)
Read Ch. 10: "Social Context and Film Style," excerpt: "Hollywood's Industrial Context: The Studio System as Dream Factory" (FCI)

Thurs., Feb. 5 **Sequence Analysis Assignment Distributed**
Read Ch. 12: "Film Stardom as a Cultural Phenomenon" (FCI)
Recommended: Richard Dyer, "Stars as a Social Phenomenon" (OC)
Recommended: Ch. 3: "Writing About Film" (FCI)

Week Five: Auteurism/Genre

Mon., Feb. 9: Screening: *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)

Tues., Feb. 10: Read Ch. 14: "Film Authorship" excerpts: "The Idea of the *Auteur*," "*Auteur* as Marketing Strategy," "Using the *Auteur* Approach" (FCI)
Read: Andrew Sarris, "The *Auteur* Theory Revisited" (OC)
Recommended: Thomas Schatz, "The Whole Equation of Pictures" (OC)

Thurs., Feb. 12: Read Ch. 13: "Genre" – "What Makes a Genre?" "Genre, Film Production, and Audiences" (FCI)
Read: Rick Altman, "A semantic/syntactic approach to genre" (OC)

Week Six: *Avant-garde* Cinema

Mon., Feb. 16: Screening: *Un chien andalou* (Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali, 1919)
First Comes Love (Su Friedrich, 1991)
Daisies (Vera Chytilova, 1966)

Tues., Feb. 17: Read: Ch. 9 “Alternatives to Narrative Film” excerpt: “Avant-garde film” (FCI)
Read: Malcolm Turvey, “Surrealism and *Un chien Andalou*” (OC)

Thurs., Feb. 19 **Sequence Analysis Assignment Due**
Read: Bliss Cua Lim: “Dolls in Fragments: *Daisies* as Feminist Allegory” (OC)

Week Seven: Art Cinema

Mon., Feb. 23: Screening: *Contempt* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1963)

Tues., Feb. 24: **Last Day to Turn in First Set of Response Papers**
Read: Jean-Luc Comolli and Jean Narboni, “Cinema/Ideology/Criticism” (OC)
Recommended: Richard Brody, “*Contempt*” (OC)

Thurs., Feb. 26: *****MIDTERM EXAM*****

UNIT TWO – TELEVISION: REPRESENTATION AND CULTURE

Week Eight: What Was Television?

Mon., March 2: Screening: “TV or Not TV,” *The Honeymooners* (1955)
“Betty, Girl Engineer,” *Father Knows Best* (1956)
“Homer vs. Lisa and the Eighth Commandment,” *The Simpsons* (1991)
“Boob Tubed,” *Rocko’s Modern Life* (1994)

Tues., March 3: Read: Horace Newcomb and Paul M. Hirsch, “Television as a Cultural Forum” (OC)

Thurs., March 5: Read: Todd Gitlin, “Prime Time Ideology: The Hegemonic Process in Television Entertainment” (OC)

Week Nine: Television and Representation, Part 1 (Gender/Sexuality)

Mon., March 9 Screening: “I Wasn’t Ready,” *Orange is the New Black* (2013)
“Hi Diddle Riddle,” *Batman!* (1966)
“Isn’t it Romantic?” *The Golden Girls* (1986)

Tues., March 10 Read: Lynn Spigel, “The Suburban Home Companion: Television and the Domestic Ideal in Postwar America” (OC)
Read: Julie D’Acci, “Television, Representation and Gender” (OC)

Thurs., March 12 Read: Alexander Doty, “There’s Something Queer Here” (OC)

Week Thirteen: Surveillance and Information

Mon., Apr. 13: Screening: *Citizenfour* (Lauren Poitras, 2014)

Tues., Apr. 14: Read: Michel Foucault, "Panopticism" (OC)

Thurs., April 16: Read: Eli Pariser, "The You Loop" (OC)
Read: Mark Andrejevic, "Infoglut and Clutter-Cutting" (OC)

Week Fourteen: Media Activism

Mon., Apr. 20: Screening: *The Yes Men Fix the World* (Servin, Vamos, and Engfehr, 2009)

Tues., Apr. 21: Read: John Downing, "Alternative Media and the Boston Tea Party" (OC)

Thurs., April 24: **Last Day to Turn in Third Set of Response Papers**
Read: Marcus Schulzke, "Fan action and political participation on *The Colbert Report*" (OC)

Week Fifteen: Media Studies in the Future Tense

Mon., Apr. 27: Screening: None

Tues., Apr. 28: Read: Nico Carpentier and Henry Jenkins, "Theorizing participatory intensities: A conversation about participation and politics" (OC)

Thurs., April 30: Catch-up Day / Final Discussion

Week Sixteen: Final Exam