

## **ENG/FTV 50: Introduction to Visual Culture**

Fall Quarter 2016

### **Course Description and Goals:**

ENG/FTV 50 introduces students to film study and analysis, particularly of cinematic narration and narrative construction. The course includes instruction in formal analysis of film texts and their role in and as culture. This quarter we will consider fiction and autobiographical documentary films set primarily in Los Angeles and made within different modes of production: Hollywood/industrial, independent, and artisanal. Students will learn how to analyze a film's opening, narrative, genre, and its formal systems--mise-en-scene, sound, cinematography and editing, together with the terminology appropriate for close textual analysis. We will also consider the historical, cultural, social, and political implications of narrative films. Lectures and discussion sections will teach students the vocabulary and practice of film analysis, and improve their critical reading, writing, speaking, and thinking skills. English 50 is an ideal course for students interested in cultivating media literacy and studying and writing about film at the university level. As a consequence, it should especially interest students who consider majoring in English, and Cinema and Media Studies.

### **Required Texts/Readings:**

Bill Nichols *Engaging Cinema: An Introduction to Film Studies* (available at the UCLA LuValle Commons Bookstore)

Other assigned readings available through the course website.

### **Weekly Course Schedule:**

#### **Week 1**

**4/1 Tues:** Course Introduction, Industrial Cinema, and Classical Hollywood narrative

**Screening:** *Die Hard* (John McTiernan, 1989) 131min

**4/3 Thurs:** American myths: the Outlaw Hero

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*:

"Some Basic Issues and Concepts" 3-16; "Hollywood Production and the Studio System" 232-247

**From reading packet:** Robert Ray "Thematic Paradigms" 55-69

Paul Cohen "Cowboys Die Hard" 71-81

#### **Week 2**

**4/8 Tues:** Reading Film Beginnings

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*: "Cinematic Worlds" 70-75; "Storytelling and Narrative Fiction Film" 136-150; "Interpretive Goals" 153-58; "Exploring the Social Context" 160-69; "The Relation of Cinematic Signs to Power and Desire" 75-83

**Screening:** *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1944) 107min

*Meshes of the Afternoon* (Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid, 1943) 14min

**4/10 Thurs:** Opening Worlds and Narrative through Mise-en-scene

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*: “The Viewer’s Challenge to Respond and Interpret: Formal-Social Analysis” 23-25; “The Expressive, Persuasive, and Poetic Uses of Film Technique” 36-38; “Lighting” “Mise-en-scene: Composition of the Image” 57-64

### **Week 3**

**4/15 Tues:** Sound, Depth, and Space

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*: “Sound” 64-66

**From reading packet:** Michel Chion “The Audiovisual Scene” 66-94

**Screening:** *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1967) 106min

*Illusions* (Julie Dash, 1983) 34 min

**Short paper assigned**

**4/17 Thurs:** Sound before Image

**Reading:** Reni Celeste, “The Sound of Silence: Film Music and Lament” 113-124

### **Week 4**

**4/22 Tues** Cinematography or Ways of Cinematic Seeing

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*: “Cinematography” 50-57; Ideology and the Cinema 287-310

**From reading packet:** Andre Bazin “The Evolution of the Language of Cinema”

**Screening:** *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974) 130 min

**Short Paper Due**

**4/24 Thurs--Genre films**

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*: “Genre Films” 248-286

**From reading packet:** Thomas Doherty “Chinatown”

### **Week 5**

**4/29 Tues:** Editing or Making Time and Space

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*: “Editing” 38-50

**From reading packet:** Vsevolod Pudovkin “On Editing” 9-14

Sergei Eisenstein “The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram” 15-25

**Screening:** *The Terminator* (James Cameron, 1984) 107min

*La Jetée* (Chris Marker, 1962) 28min

**5/1 Thurs:** Stereotypes and Industrial Feminism

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*:

“Gender and Masculinity” 359-395

### **Week 6**

**5/6 Tues:** Feminist Criticism and Post Feminism

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*: “Feminist Film Criticism and the Paradigm Shift to Formal-Social Analysis” 395-412

**Screening:** *Pretty Woman* (Garry Marshall, 1990) 119min

**5/8 Thurs: MIDTERM EXAM**

## **Week 7**

**5/13 Tues:** Independent Cinema and Styles

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*: “Realism as the Cornerstone of Film Style” 175-187;  
Artisanal Filmmaking 213-216

**From reading packet:** “The Ontology of the Photographic Image” 195-199

Screening: *Killer of Sheep* (Charles Burnett, 1979) 83min

*Requiem 29* (David Garcia, 1971) 31min

**5/15 Thurs:** Race and Ethnicity in Cinema

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*: “Race and Ethnicity in Film” 325-358

## **Week 8**

**5/20 Tues:** Independent Cinema

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema*: “Women on the Move: Alternatives to Domesticity”  
412-19

**From Reading Packet:** Chris Holmlund “Postfeminism from A to G”; Angharad  
Valdiva, “Is Penelope to J.Lo as Culture is to Nature?”

*Real Women Have Curves* (Patricia Cardoso, 2002) 90min

**5/22 Thurs:** From Realism to Documentary

**Reading:** From *Engaging Cinema* “Documentary” 99-132

## **Week 9**

**5/27 Tues:** Experimental Autobiographical Film

**From Reading Packet:** Vivian Sobchack: “Inscribing Ethical Space”

Screening: *Silverlake Life* (Peter Friedman and Tom Joslin, 1993) 99min

**5/29 Thurs:** Death, Autobiographical Documentary, and Mourning

**From Reading Packet:** Julia Lesage “Women’s Fragmented Consciousness in Feminist  
Experimental Autobiographical Video”

## **Week 10**

**6/3 Tues** Autobiography as Public Memory

**From Reading Packet:** Marita Sturken “The Politics of Video Memory”

Screening: *History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige* (Rea Tajiri, 1991) 32min

*Who’s going to pay for these donuts* (Janice Tanaka, 1992) 58min

**Week 10/Thurs**

Course conclusion

**Final Exam: Wed, June 11<sup>th</sup> 11:30-2:30**

## Course Requirements and Statement of Grading:

For this course, it is important that students do the reading, attend class and section regularly, and complete assignments on time. You should also be prepared to participate in section discussion. I will assign weekly study questions that are due at the beginning of each Friday section. These study questions will be based on that week's lecture, film screening, and readings and will serve as preparation for the midterm and final exams. You will also write a short paper (3-4 pages).

The major course requirements are:

Participation	10 points
Weekly study questions	20 points
Short Essay	10 points
Midterm	25 points
Final Exam	35 points
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Please note that assigned readings and writings are *due* on the date listed in the course schedule. The weekly study questions, submitted in hard copy, **are due at the beginning of each week's Friday section**. If you are late to class, points will be deducted from an assignment due that day. No writing assignments will be accepted after the class for which they are due unless you have a doctor's note or some other written excused absence.

With its status as a world-class research institution, it is critical that the University uphold the highest standards of integrity both inside and outside the classroom. As a student and member of the UCLA community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors. Accordingly, when accusations of academic dishonesty occur, The Office of the Dean of Students is charged with investigating and adjudicating suspected violations. Academic dishonesty, includes, but is not limited to, cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, multiple submissions or facilitating academic misconduct. Plagiarism is a serious offense. It is the presentation of another author's words or ideas as if they were your own. If you have any questions about documentation, quotations, and related matters, please do not hesitate to ask your instructor before submitting your work.

No cell phones in class, please. Turn them off before all classes and screenings. Also, no computers or iPads in screenings.

Please also refer to the UCLA Rules of Student Conduct at the below website:

<http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Student-Conduct>