

LCC 2500: Introduction to Film
Fall 2009, Section F, T/R 9:35am – 10:55am, Skiles 368
Required Film Screenings: Thursdays, 5:00pm, Skiles 368

Instructor: L. Andrew Cooper
Office: Skiles 341
Office Hours: T/R 12pm-1pm
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Course Description

LCC 2500 carries 3 credit hours.

LCC 2500 fulfills a humanities requirement.

Georgia Tech's course catalog specifies that LCC 2500 "[i]ntroduces film techniques and vocabulary in an historical and cultural context. Written texts are supplemented by viewings of specific shots, scenes, and films." Film has been a dominant form of cultural expression for more than a century, so this course can't introduce every aspect of film as a medium and as an art form. What it *can* do is give you a solid foundation for thinking and communicating about film. By learning key terms and concepts while developing strategies for analyzing and interpreting the films you see, you will develop a deeper understanding of both the films themselves and their relationships with the cultures that produce them.

Course Materials

Required Textbook

Barsam, Richard. *Looking at Movies*. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007.

This textbook is packaged with a DVD that includes tutorials you are expected to view. It is also packaged with a pamphlet with useful tips for writing analytical essays about film. The book, the DVD, and the pamphlet are required for success in this course.

Films

Attendance at regularly scheduled screenings is also required. The films we watch and discuss in this course are readily available to rent or buy, and most of them will be on reserve in Georgia Tech's Library. Though you are not required to purchase copies of the films, I recommend securing copies of the films you use for major assignments.

Computer and Software

You need a computer with word processing and presentation software, such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint. You also need a media player capable of capturing still images from films, such as the VLC media player, which is available online to download for free. Software such as Windows MoveMaker, iMovie, and FinalCutPro is useful but not required because you can access it at the Library's Multimedia Studio. You must also regularly check your Georgia Tech email and review materials on this class's T-Square site. If you own a laptop computer, please bring it to each class meeting.

Additional Readings

I will provide copies of non-textbook readings via T-Square.

Objectives and Outcomes

The table below details this course's specific learning objectives (cognitive processes instructors want students to demonstrate) and outcomes (work students do to demonstrate success in those objectives).

Emphasis	Objectives	Outcomes
Rhetoric Filmmakers and film critics use specific vocabulary and techniques to make meaning from sounds and images.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn key terms for discussing film form and narrative Explore specific techniques and their impacts on form and narrative Develop critical strategies for interpreting and evaluating films 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate mastery of vocabulary through written and spoken communication, including quizzes, essays, and class discussions Create artifacts that analyze and/or use specific techniques and critical strategies for interpretation Write multimedia film reviews that state and defend evaluations
Culture, History, and Genre Films reflect the cultures that produce and receive them, and they relate to the history of film as a whole as well as the conventions of specific film genres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how films reflect the cultures and historical moments of their production Observe how genre conventions shape films' forms and narratives as well as their receptions and interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create artifacts that explain how culture, history, and genre affect form, narrative, reception, and interpretation Discuss how personal knowledge of and experience with films relate to the cultures, histories, and genres introduced in class
Analysis Understanding and interpreting films requires both attention to details (such as frames and shots) and attention to larger structures (such as sequences and diegesis).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine how smaller units of meaning fit within larger structures Understand how examination of films' details enriches viewing and interpretation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convey analytical insights through papers, presentations, and films Enjoy films from formal, aesthetic, historical, generic, and cultural perspectives

Assignments

Major Assignments (800 points total)

The outcomes in Table 1 refer to the following major assignments, which we will discuss in more detail during class:

1. **Shot-by-Shot Analysis (individual effort, 150 points).** Create a slideshow (using PowerPoint or other software) that examines a significant scene or sequence in one of the assigned films. Using multiple slides, a voiceover, and still images and/or brief clips, present an argument about how narrative, mise-en-scene, cinematography, and editing combine to make the scene meaningful.
2. **Interpretive Essay (individual effort, 150 points).** Write an essay of 1750-2000 words (approximately 7-8 pages) exploring how a film discussed in class reflects on its specific historical and/or cultural context. Submit a brief abstract a week before the due date.
3. **Film Review (individual effort, 100 points).** Post a 500-750 word (2-3 page) review in T-Square's Forums that evaluates a film based on its achievements (or lack of achievement) in narrative, mise-en-scene, cinematography, acting, editing, and/or sound. Discuss the review in class.

4. **Short Film (group and individual efforts, 300 points total).** Create a 5-7 minute film that reflects on and demonstrates the rhetoric, techniques, and conventions we have studied.
 - a. *Proposal (50 points, group).* Craft a 2-3 page proposal that describes your film and explains why you have chosen your specific topic and approach. Include storyboards.
 - b. *Film (200 points, group).* The film can take one of two forms:
 - i. Documentary. Choose a movie and explain why it deserves further study.
 - ii. Fiction. Produce either a stand-alone short fictional film or a scene you imagine as part of a larger fictional film.

After submitting the project, group members will submit evaluations of the group's performance. Using these evaluations as well as my own observations, I will assign grades for the film; therefore, individuals' grades might vary.

 - c. *Rationale (50 points, individual).* Craft a detailed rationale about how your video reflects on and demonstrates the rhetoric, techniques, and conventions we have studied.
5. **Final Exam (individual effort, 100 points).** Demonstrate your knowledge of film rhetoric, analytical technique, and the films we have studied.

Quizzes (100 points total)

During class on several unannounced (but usually predictable) occasions, you will complete quizzes on T-Square that assess your knowledge of assigned readings. Quizzes will focus primarily on terminology.

Participation (100 points total)

Participation in class discussions and activities is mandatory. Demonstrate your knowledge of the readings and films, and share your insights. Maintaining class decorum is part of participation: noisy cell phones, disrespectful behavior, and other intrusions lower productivity and, therefore, your grade. "Disrespectful behavior" includes harassment of any kind, directed either at peers or at the instructor. This course will foster discussions of sensitive issues such as gender, race, and sexuality. All viewpoints are welcome, but as individuals express themselves, they should avoid abusive or insulting language.

Course Policies

Grading

Each assignment has a point value. Assignments add up to a total of 1000 points. Convert point totals into percentages, and the letter grade equivalents are:

A = 90-100; **B** = 80-89; **C** = 70-79; **D** = 60-69; **F** = 0-59

Failure to complete an assignment will result in 0 points.

Attendance

Attendance is required. If you must miss class, email me ahead of time. You have two "freebie" days, classes you may miss without grade penalties. For other absences, you must have official documentation of an illness, injury, or legal obligation that keeps you from class. I will deduct 25 points from your grade for each non-freebie, undocumented absence. Three latenesses constitute an absence. After six absences, you may fail the course. *Even "excused," documented absences will affect your grade if they occur too often. Missing more than 25% of our class meetings for any reason could result in grade penalties and/or failure.* Attendance at film screenings does not count in the same way as attendance during class meetings, but failure to attend screenings without my prior approval will hurt your grade.

Punctual Work

Unless I approve a deadline extension in advance, which is unlikely, I will not accept major assignments after the deadline. You are responsible for all information covered during every class meeting.

Academic Conduct

You are responsible for knowing and abiding by GT's policy for academic integrity. Consult the Honor Code online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu>. The following text appears in the Honor Code:

"Academic misconduct is any act that does or could improperly distort Student grades or other Student academic records. Such acts include but need not be limited to the following:

- Possessing, using or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a Student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or person, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism);
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the claimant;
- Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Deliberate falsification of a written or verbal statement of fact to a member of the Faculty so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Forgery, alteration or misuse of any Institute document relating to the academic status of the Student.

While these acts constitute assured instances of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor."

Work that violates the Honor Code will receive zero credit and may result in failure of the entire course. I will also report any serious misconduct to the Office of Student Integrity.

Laptop Computer Use

You may only use your laptop for class activities and note-taking. Using the laptop during class for other activities—such as email, web-surfing, or games—is rude and strictly prohibited. Inappropriate laptop use may result in grade penalties and/or expulsion from class.

Disability Notice

If you need accommodations for a disability, please contact me at the beginning of the semester so that we can discuss them. You should also contact Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) within the first two weeks of the semester so that they can help us to develop reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor call (404) 894-2564 (voice) / (404) 894-1664 (voice/TDD) or visit 220 Student Services Building. For more information visit <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>.

The Fine Print

I reserve the right to alter policies and assignments. I exercise this right rarely, but I often provide more detailed information during class. This syllabus is your guide. Keep it. Know it. Love it.

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

NOTE: For chapters 1 through 7 in *Looking at Movies* (LM), read the chapter pages mentioned AND watch the corresponding parts of the tutorial DVD (disc one in the set that comes with the book).

	Reading and Textbook DVD Assignments	Due Dates and Screenings
Tu., Aug. 18	[Introduction]	
Th., Aug. 20	LM Ch. 1 (all)	
Screening		<i>V for Vendetta</i>
Tu., Aug. 25	LM Ch. 2 pp. 53 – 79	
Th., Aug. 27	LM pp. 345 – 350	Film Review 1
Screening		<i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i>
Tu., Sept. 1	LM Ch. 3 pp. 91 – 122	
Th., Sept. 3	LM Ch. 4 pp. (all)	Film Review 2
Screening		<i>Rope</i>
Tu., Sept. 8	Miller, “Anal Rope”	Film Review 3
Th., Sept. 10	LM Ch. 6 pp. (all)	
Screening		<i>Memento</i>
Tu., Sept. 15	Sibielski, “Postmodern Narrative”	Film Review 4
Th., Sept. 17		Shot-by-Shot Analysis
Screening		<i>This Film Is Not Yet Rated</i>
Tu., Sept. 22	LM pp. 350 – 371	Film Review 5
Th., Sept. 24		
Screening		<i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i>
Tu., Sept. 29	LM. Ch. 5 pp. 195 – 228	Film Review 6
Th., Oct. 1	LM Ch. 7 pp. 273 – 306	
Screening		<i>Bonnie and Clyde</i>
Tu., Oct. 6	FALL RECESS	
Th., Oct. 8		Film Review 7
Screening		<i>Do the Right Thing</i>
Tu., Oct. 13	LM Ch. 8 (all)	Film Review 8
Th., Oct. 15	McKelly, “The Double Truth, Ruth”	Essay Abstract
Screening		<i>Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon</i>
Tu., Oct. 20	Articles on <i>Crouching</i> by Pham and Chan	Film Review 9
Th., Oct. 22		Interpretive Essay
Screening		<i>The Terminator</i>
Tu., Oct. 27	Articles on <i>Terminator</i> by Friedman and Telotte	Film Review 10
Th., Oct. 29		Film Proposal
Screening		<i>Poltergeist</i>
Tu., Nov. 3		Film Review 11
Th., Nov. 5		
Screening		<i>Lost in Translation</i>
Tu., Nov. 10		Film Review 12
Th., Nov. 12		
Screening		<i>Dude, Where’s My Car?</i>
Tu., Nov. 17		Film Review 13
Th., Nov. 19		
Screening		<i>No Country for Old Men</i>
Tu., Nov. 24		Film Review 14
Th., Nov. 26	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY	
Tu., Dec. 1		
Th., Dec. 3	SHORT FILMS SCREENED IN CLASS	Short Film and Rationale
WED., DEC. 9	EXAM: 8:00am – 10:50am	

PLEASE READ, SIGN, AND RETURN THESE STATEMENTS TO DR. COOPER.

I affirm that I have read the entire syllabus and policy sheet for LCC 2500-F and understand the information and the responsibilities specified.

print name

signature

date

DIRECTIONS: Read carefully and check all that apply.

- I give my instructor, Dr. L. Andrew Cooper, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, LCC 2500-F as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.
- I do NOT give my instructor, Dr. L. Andrew Cooper, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, LCC 2500-F as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.

Please indicate whether you want to be acknowledged if your work is used:

- Please use my name in association with my work.
- Please use my work, but do NOT acknowledge me.

If your instructor decides to use your work, he//she may wish to contact you. Please provide your contact information below:

print name

signature

email address

phone number

print permanent address

print campus address

date