FILM TV 122B – Introduction to the Art and Technique of Filmmaking – 4 units

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THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Class Website:
Session A: https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/171A-FILMTV122B-1
Session C: https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/171C-FILMTV122B-2

Objectives

In this class we are going to study filmmaking as a process of construction. It will be assumed throughout the lectures that movies are designed by their makers so as to produce specific effects. One of those effects is comprehension, and understanding how filmmakers help us to understand their films will be one of our primary goals.

Toward this end we will, in the first half of the course, explore general possibilities of story, form and style in the cinema: plot structure, performance, lighting, etc. In the second half we will look at films from several different filmmaking traditions as a way to discover some of the specific craft practices and design principles that have proven effective for filmmakers in their ongoing attempts to connect with audiences.

In particular, we are going to look at how filmmakers select and combine elements of **plotting** and **style** in order to guide audience responses to their work (comprehension again, but also interpretive and emotional responses). In terms of plot, everything from lines of dialogue to large-scale “act” structures will be of interest to us. In terms of style, or **film technique**, we will focus on:

- Casting, Blocking, Performance
- Costumes, Production Design, Settings
- Cinematography and Editing

Upon successful completion of this course:

1. You will better understand how filmmakers organize and pattern both events and filmic techniques in their work so as to create specific meanings and effects.
2. You will have an enhanced vocabulary for discussing films and filmmaking.
3. And you will have a deeper understanding of and appreciation for how movies are actually made, and how audience members comprehend and respond to them.

How Class Works

Students listen to bi-weekly lectures via web browser. Reading assignments accompany all lectures and film viewings accompany many of the lectures. There are two midterms and a final. Each requires a single 1000-1200-word response (approx. 3 pages, double-spaced). Each week your TA will post one or two discussion questions that you are also expected to respond to. Your final grade will be determined by the three exams and by your participation in the online discussion activities facilitated by your TA.

Readings

One book is required: *Film Art: An Introduction* by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, either 10th edition or 11th edition. Except where indicated, the page numbers in the reading assignments below conform to both editions. The 11th edition is available for purchase at the UCLA Bookstore—either on campus or online. Both editions are available at other stores and online booksellers such as Amazon. Please do not buy an edition of *Film Art* older than the 10th edition.

Additional *required* reading assignments, as indicated in the course schedule, will be made available for download from the class website.

Because of the additional reading assignments and short length of the course you are only being assigned readings from eight of the twelve chapters in *Film Art*. Oftentimes you are only being assigned parts of chapters. This should make your life easier and the course more fun (it is summer after all).

You are encouraged, though, to read *Film Art* in its entirety if you can, either this term or in the near future when you have a bit more time. However, you are only expected to be familiar with the material in the *assigned readings*, each of which should be completed *before* viewing the lecture it is assigned for.

Required Films

Before beginning the reading assignments please watch *The Wizard of Oz* and *ET: The Extra-Terrestrial*. *ET* is probably the most important film you will watch for this class, at least in terms of the three exams, which have many questions that refer to it. For this reason you may want to obtain and hold onto a copy of *ET* for the duration of the course.

You are expected to watch *ET*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and all the films assigned in this class, in a high quality video format, such as DVD or HD streaming. The films assigned in this class can be found at Netflix, iTunes, Amazon etc.

The required films are also streamed at low resolution from the Calendar section of the
class website. These streams are not suitable for viewing a film in its entirety. They are provided for review purposes only. They serve as easy reference for taking the exams and responding to discussion questions.

Assignments and Exams

1 – Midterm Exam #1. Comprised of essay questions based on lectures 1 thru 3 and the accompanying film screenings and reading assignments.

2 – Midterm Exam #2. Comprised of essay questions based on lectures 4 thru 6 and the accompanying film screenings and reading assignments.

3 – Final Exam. Comprised of essay questions based on lectures 7 thru 11 and the accompanying film screenings and reading assignments

Grade Breakdown

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

*Participation* – 25%
*Midterm Exam #1* – 25%
*Midterm Exam #2* – 25%
*Final Exam* – 25%

Please note that each exam is due not only on a particular day but by a particular time (see course schedule below). **Late exams** will be marked down half a letter grade (5 pts). Exams submitted more than 24 hours late will be docked 10 pts. And exams submitted more than 48 hours late will NOT be accepted. Also, late discussion board responses will receive half credit and responses more than two days late will not be accepted.

Policies

This class takes advantage of MyUCLA and a third-party service known as Turnitin. Submissions are screened for improper citations and potential plagiarism. Quotes or ideas paraphrased from other work must be properly cited. Turnitin flags all instances of plagiarism and exam answers plagiarized in whole or in part will receive zero credit.

Anyone caught **cheating** from another student, past or present, will automatically **fail** the course. There is no exception to this rule. Do not turn in the work of other students as your own work. (Turnitin archives all student work that has and ever will be submitted at this university and at every other college and university that uses Turnitin).

http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Student-Conduct-Code
Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310) 825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit http://www.cae.ucla.edu. Disability accommodations needs should be communicated to the instructor and/or Teaching Assistant before assignments are due unless there are extenuating circumstances. These policies apply to both matriculated UCLA students and visitors in Summer Session.
Course Schedule

Week One

Lesson 1: Plot Structure and Story-Making in the Movies
Reading: - *Film Art*, Chap. 2: The Significance of Film Form – entire chapter
- *Film Art*, Chap. 3: Narrative Form, pp. 72-86

(Lesson 1 cont’d.)

Lesson 2: The Role of Style
Reading: - *Film Art*, Chap. 1, pp. 4-9 “Creative Decisions in Filmmaking”
- “Cinematic Sequencing and Narration” (excerpt) by Noël Carroll (this reading is available for download from the class website)

Week Two

Lesson 3: Setting, Costumes, and Makeup
Reading: *Film Art*, Chap. 4: Mise-en-Scene, pp. 112-124

Midterm #1: Exam available for download on Monday beginning at 12:01 AM PDT

Lesson 4: Casting and Performance
Reading: *Film Art*, Chap. 4: Mise-en-Scene (Performance), pp. 131-140

Week Three

Midterm #1: Completed exam due on Tuesday by 6:00 PM PDT

Lesson 5: Cinematography and Lighting
Reading: - *Film Art*, Chap. 4: Mise-en-Scene (Lighting), pp. 124-131
- *Film Art*, Chap. 5: Cinematography, pp. 159-174 and 177-194 (10th ed. pp. 160-175 and 178-195)
Lesson 6: Classical Hollywood Cinema – History and Narrative Techniques

Reading:  
- Film Art, Chap. 3: Narrative Form, pp. 87-99  

Screenings: The Apartment (1960); Jaws (1975); Jerry Maguire (1996)  
(Week Three cont’d.)

Midterm #2: Exam available for download on Thursday beginning at 12:01 AM PDT

Week Four

Lesson 7: Classical Hollywood Cinema – Plot Structure

Reading: “Modern Classicism” (excerpt) from Storytelling in the New Hollywood by Kristin Thompson (available for download from the class website)

Midterm #2: Completed exam due on Wednesday by 6:00 PM PDT

Lesson 8: Classical Hollywood Cinema – Editing and Shooting Strategies

Reading: Film Art, Chap. 6: Editing, pp. 216-253 (10th ed. pp. 218-255)

Screenings: Re-watch The Apartment and Jerry Maguire (watch with the sound off as much as possible to pay attention to the editing and shooting strategies)

Week Five

Lesson 9: Plot Structure, Narrative Strategies, and Style in the Art Film

Reading:  
- “The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice” (download)  
- Film Art, Chap. 12: Film History “Italian Neorealism,” pp. 477-479 (10th ed. pp. 483-485)

Screening: Nights of Cabiria (1957)

Lesson 10: Plot Structure, Narrative Strategies, and Style in the Modernist Art Film

Screening:  *Vivre Sa vie* (1962)

Final Exam:  Exam available for download on Thursday beginning at 12:01 AM PDT

**Week Six**

**Lesson 11:** New Hollywood: American Movies After the Art Film

  - “*Chinatown* and Generic Transformation in Recent American Films” by John G. Cawelti (available for download from the class website)

Screening:  *Chinatown* (1974)

Final Exam:  Completed exam due on Friday by 6:00 PM PDT