

**FTT 10101/20101**  
**Basics of Film and Television**  
**Spring 2006**

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Office Hours: TuTh 2-3:30 or by appointment

**Class meetings:** TuTh 12:30-1:45 DPAC Browning Cinema  
**Lab screenings:** M 7:00-9:00 DPAC Browning Cinema

**Required Texts**

- *Film Art: An Introduction*, 7th edition, by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (listed as FA below), available at Hammes Bookstore.
- Reading packet (listed as Packet below), available at the Copy Shop in LaFortune by Week 3.

**Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to basic concepts of film and television study. It operates on the philosophy that to be intelligent consumers of visual media, you must have a firm grasp on how to describe the basic elements of film and television texts and their potential functions, as well as some basic approaches to understanding film and television form, culture and industry. Armed with this knowledge, you can enhance your everyday viewing of film and television, be more aware of the aesthetic, industrial and cultural logic behind what you see on big and small screens, build upon this knowledge in subsequent visual media courses, and generally impress your friends and neighbors with words like “diegesis” and “cheat cut.”

**Grading Breakdown**

Participation & Quizzes	15%
Paper I (due Feb. 23)	15%
Midterm (on March 9)	20%
Paper II (due April 13)	25%
Final exam (on May 11)	25%

**Important Details:**

***WebCT Vista***

I have created a website for the course on the university’s WebCT Vista space. Here you will be able to access the syllabus, weekly handouts, PowerPoint presentations from lecture, and a discussion board. To access the site, go to [vista.nd.edu](http://vista.nd.edu), enter your AFS ID and password in the top right corner, then in the course list, select FTT-20101 - SP06-FTT-10101-20101-03-Becker. From there, click whatever you’d like to access on the site.

***Attendance***

Attendance will be taken at each class meeting via a sign-up sheet. You are responsible for signing your own name on the sheet, and if you have someone else sign for you when you are not in class, this will be considered a violation of the Honor Code and could result in an F for your participation grade.

You are granted three absences without penalty. These freebies are designed to allow for illness and unforeseen circumstances, so use them wisely and plan ahead. For every absence in excess of three, the participation grade automatically will be lowered by a grade level (e.g. A- to B+, B to B-, etc.). It is your responsibility to find out what happened in class on any days you miss; however, the PowerPoint slides from class will be available on the course's WebCT Vista space after each lecture. Please note that the slides do not contain everything you need to know for the course, so don't feel that you can nap through or skip lectures since the PowerPoint slides will be available; they are merely there to facilitate your note-taking.

### *Screenings*

This course has a lab for screenings on Mondays at 7:00p.m. in the Browning Cinema. You are expected to attend the lab screenings. However, if you have to miss a screening, video copies of all films are on reserve in the Hesburgh Library audio-visual center (second floor). You are expected to watch the films carefully from beginning to end, and you will be tested on them. It is highly recommended that you take notes during screening so as to be able to remember details of the films, which will especially benefit you come exam time.

During the labs, you will see "old" movies, black-and-white movies, and foreign movies with subtitles. Approach these films with an open and attentive mind. If you hate "old," black-and-white and/or foreign films, you should seriously consider dropping the class. While I hope you will enjoy the screenings, their primary purpose is to help you build your viewing skills and expand the breadth of your cinematic knowledge, not to entertain you.

### *Participation*

Participation is essential to the course. The more people we hear from on any given day, the more ideas we will be able to explore and the more we will all enjoy and benefit from the course. Also, if you are confused by anything in the films or readings, do not hesitate to bring up your questions in class. I sincerely don't mind class discussions that go in unexpected directions, so speak your mind! Also be aware that posting your thoughts and questions on the course's WebCT Vista discussion board counts in your participation grade, as does e-mailing me with questions or comments, meeting with me in my office, and simply being an attentive listener in class.

### *Readings*

Please note that you sometimes have readings assigned for the lab screening days, particularly in the first half of the semester. Because of our assigned schedule, you see the films on Monday before I can lecture on the relevant material on Tuesday. Thus, it is often essential for you to do the assigned readings prior to the screening so that you know what you're watching the films for and can come prepared to discuss your analyses of the films on Tuesday. Also note that not everything in the reading will be covered in class sessions, and you are responsible for the material in the readings even when it does not come up in class sessions. Thus, make sure you keep up with the weekly readings, read everything closely, take good notes, and ask questions in class.

### *Quizzes & Exams*

We will have periodic announced quizzes across the semester. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest quiz score; because of that, no make-up quizzes are offered. The midterm and final exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. **No make-up midterm or final exams are offered, unless okayed by your college dean.**

### ***Paper Policies***

Late assignments and papers will lose a grade level for every late day. For example, if a paper is due on Tuesday but is turned in on Wednesday, an A will be reduced to an A-, an A- to a B+, etc. If you hand in an assignment to my mailbox or e-mail it to me, it is your responsibility to confirm that I received it on time. “You mean you didn’t get my paper? I e-mailed it to you but must have sent it to the wrong address” is not an acceptable reason for a late paper. Even if it’s the internet’s fault, you’re responsible for getting your paper in on time.

Plagiarism, copying, and other forms of cheating will result in academic failure. Check the student handbook for University policies, and review the Honor Code at [www.nd.edu/~hnr/code](http://www.nd.edu/~hnr/code); I will follow the policies and procedures outlined therein. Plagiarism is any instance of trying to pass off the ideas of others as your own, whether those ideas are from published sources, web sources, or your peers. Most often, students who plagiarize say they didn’t know how to cite sources. Papers in this class won’t require you to go to outside sources, but if you do, you must know how to cite sources correctly. Come see me if you have any question about how to do this or about the guidelines of plagiarism.

### ***Course Structure***

The first half of this course follows a “textual analysis” approach, meaning that across this section we will explore the narrative and stylistic components of film and television and discuss how producers of film and television texts can creatively manipulate these components for aesthetic, emotional, and intellectual purposes. However, because film and television are not simply formal texts shaped only by a filmmaker’s creative desire to produce entertainment and/or art, we will broaden our scope in the second half. During the second half of the course, we will largely turn our attention to the contextual circumstances that shape film and television texts, and our approaches here will be primarily economic and cultural ones. Accordingly, we will consider how economic pressures shape the texts that emerge from the film and television industries, and we will also assess theories which explore the cultural power of film and television texts, including how such texts might both reflect and shape our society and its cultural norms.

### **Course Schedule**

Week 1 Introductions

<b>Jan. 17</b>	<b>Introduction to the Course</b>
<b>Jan. 19</b>	<b>Introduction to Textual Analysis</b> <u>FA</u> : pp. 2-8, 20-45 & Ch. 2

Week 2 Classical Storytelling Modes

<b>Jan. 23</b>	<b>Lab: <i>Casablanca</i> (Michael Curtiz, 1942, 102 min.)</b> <u>FA</u> : pp. 68-82, 89-91
<b>Jan. 24</b>	<b>Classical Narrative Principles</b>
<b>Jan. 26</b>	<b>Narration</b> <u>FA</u> : pp. 82-89, 103-105

Week 3 Alternative Storytelling Modes

<b>Jan. 30</b>	<b>Lab: <i>Cleo From 5 to 7</i> (Agnes Varda, 1961, 90 min.)</b> <u>FA</u> : pp. 486-489 <u>Packet</u> : Bordwell, “Art Cinema”
<b>Jan. 31</b>	<b>Art Cinema</b>
<b>Feb. 2</b>	<b>Television Series and Serials</b> <u>Packet</u> : Butler, “The Television Series”

Week 4 From One Shot to the Next

- Feb. 6**            **Lab: *Run Lola Run* (Tom Tykwer, 1998, 81 min.)**  
                            FA: pp. 294-310
- Feb. 7**            **Basic Principles of Editing**
- Feb. 9**            **Continuity Editing and Its Alternatives**  
                            FA: pp. 310-346

Week 5 “Putting Into the Scene”

- Feb. 13**          **Lab: *Edward Scissorhands* (Tim Burton, 1990, 105 min.)**  
                            FA: pp. 176-191, 198-220
- Feb. 14**          **Basic Principles of Mise-en-Scene**
- Feb. 16**          **Lighting and Color**  
                            FA: pp. 191-198, 472-474, 485-486

Week 6 The Camera

- Feb. 20**          **Lab: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941, 119 min.)**
- Feb. 21**          **What's So Great About *Citizen Kane*?**  
                            FA: pp. 91-102, 394-401
- Feb. 23**          **Basic Principles of Cinematography**  
                            FA: Ch. 7

\*\*\*\*FILM ESSAY I DUE\*\*\*\*

Week 7 The Sounds of Cinema

- Feb. 27**          **Lab: *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974, 113 min.)**  
                            FA: Ch. 9
- Feb. 28**          **Basic Principles of Sound**
- March 2**          **What a Silent Theater Sounds Like: No Class Today!**

Week 8 Summary & Midterm

- March 6**          **NO LAB SCREENING**
- March 7**          **Summary of Style as a Formal System & Midterm Review**  
                            FA: pp. 389-394
- March 9**          **MIDTERM**

**SPRING BREAK March 11-19**

Week 9 Genre Study

- March 20**          **Lab: *Stagecoach* (John Ford, 1939, 96 min.)**
- March 21**          **The Importance of Genre to Society**  
                            FA: Ch. 4  
                            Packet: Altman, “Towards a Theory of Genre Film”
- March 23**          **The Importance of Genre to Industry**  
                            No reading.

Week 10 Authorship Study

- March 27**          **Lab: *The Searchers* (John Ford, 1956, 119 min.)**  
                            Packet: Wollen, “John Ford”  
                            Spittles, “Ford as Auteur”

**March 28      The Development of Authorship Study**

Packet: Corrigan, "Authorship"

**March 30      John Ford as Auteur**

No reading.

Week 11    The Business of Contemporary Film

**April 3            NO LAB SCREENING**

**April 4            How The Film Industry Works**

FA: pp. 8-20

**April 6            Industry and Aesthetics**

FA: pp. 489-493

Packet: King, "Spectacle, Narrative & the HW Blockbuster"

Week 12    The Business of Contemporary Television

**April 10          NO LAB SCREENING**

**April 11          How the Television Industry Works**

Packet: Campbell, "The Economics of Television"

**April 13          Television Style and Production**

No reading.

\*\*\*\*FILM ESSAY II DUE\*\*\*\*

Week 13    Two Critical Approaches to Television

**April 17          NO LAB SCREENING**

**April 18          Political Economy**

Packet: Budd, et. al., "The Flow of Commodities"

**April 20          Cultural Studies**

Packet: Fiske, "Popular Television and Commercial Culture"

Week 14    Integrating the Approaches: Reality Television

**April 24          Lab: SCREENING TBA**

**April 25          Textual Analysis and Political Economy Approaches to Reality TV**

Packet: Haralovich, "Expect the Unexpected"

Magder, "The End of TV 101"

**April 27          Cultural Studies Approaches to Reality TV**

Packet: Ticknell & Raghuram, "Big Brother"

Week 15    TV and Children

**May 2            NO LAB SCREENING**

**May 3            Is TV Bad for Kids?**

Packet: Seiter, "The Real Power of Commercials"

\*\*\*\*FINAL EXAM Thursday, May 11 10:30am\*\*\*\*