

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

English 202 – Introduction to Film as Literature

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

Discover how films tell powerful stories and explore what they reveal about the world around us. This course introduces cinematic techniques, narrative structures, film genres, and key concepts in film theory. Whether you're a film enthusiast or new to analysis, you'll gain tools to interpret and think critically about the movies you watch.

Prerequisite

None

Recommended Preparation

“C” grade or higher or “Pass” in ENGL C1000 (formerly ENGL 120) or equivalent

Entrance Skills

Without the following skills, competencies and/or knowledge, students entering this course will be highly unlikely to succeed:

- 1) Critically read and analyze a text at the college level.
- 2) Write college level essays which include an introduction, conclusion, thesis statement, support and include information from sources; MLA format.

Course Content

- 1) Narrative and Storytelling, such as:
 - a. Classical Hollywood narrative structure
 - b. Nonlinear and experimental narratives
 - c. Character development and archetypes
 - d. The Hero's Journey and mythic structure
- 2) Cinematography and Visual Composition, such as:
 - a. Shot types and camera movement
 - b. Lighting and color theory
 - c. Framing and visual symbolism
 - d. Point of view and visual perspective
- 3) Editing, Sound, and Mise-en-Scène, such as:
 - a. Continuity editing and montage
 - b. Diegetic and non-diegetic sound
 - c. Production design and setting
 - d. Costume, props, and performance style
- 4) Genre and Conventions, such as:
 - a. Major film genres (e.g., horror, sci-fi, drama, documentary)
 - b. Hybrid and sub-genres
 - c. Genre evolution and revision
 - d. Genre as cultural commentary
- 5) Film Theory and Analysis, such as:
 - a. Auteur theory and directorial voice

- b. Formalist vs. realist approaches
- c. Feminist, queer, and postcolonial theory
- d. Psychoanalytic and ideological critique
- 6) Representation and Identity, such as:
 - a. Race, ethnicity, and representation
 - b. Gender and sexuality in film
 - c. Class, ability, and intersectionality
 - d. Stereotypes and counter-narratives
- 7) Films as Social and Ideological Texts, such as:
 - a. Cinema and national identity
 - b. Historical and political contexts
 - c. Media, power, and propaganda
 - d. Film as resistance and activism
- 8) Adaptation and Intertextuality, such as:
 - a. Literature-to-film adaptations
 - b. Intertextual references and creative transformation
 - c. Debates about authenticity and fidelity
- 9) Audience and Interpretation, such as:
 - a. Viewer positioning and identification
 - b. Reception theory and cultural context
 - c. Fandom, critique, and popular discourse
- 10) Global and Historical Perspectives, such as:
 - a. World cinema traditions
 - b. Silent cinema and early film history
 - c. New waves and national movements
 - d. Contemporary global storytelling

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Analyze how films construct narrative through plot structure, character development, and thematic elements.
- 2) Evaluate the use of camera work, lighting, color, and framing to convey meaning and emotion in film.
- 3) Interpret how editing, sound design, and mise-en-scène shape a film's tone, pacing, and storytelling.
- 4) Identify major film genres and assess how filmmakers follow, subvert, or reinvent genre conventions.
- 5) Apply key film theories to the analysis of cinematic texts, including auteur, feminist, and ideological frameworks.
- 6) Examine how films represent identity categories such as race, gender, class, and sexuality, and discuss their social implications.
- 7) Critique the ways films reflect, reinforce, or challenge dominant cultural narratives and ideologies.
- 8) Compare literary texts with their film adaptations and evaluate the creative and interpretive choices involved.
- 9) Discuss how different audiences interpret films based on cultural background, historical context, and individual experience.
- 10) Explore major movements in world cinema and contextualize films within their historical and national origins.

Method of Evaluation

Grades are based on demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation. Assessment frameworks may include alternative, equity-minded approaches to evaluation, such as ungrading, labor-based grading, contract grading, etc. The instructor continually evaluates students' work and provides regular and timely feedback so that students can improve their skills. Feedback is strengths-based and supportive. The instructor also proactively addresses concerns with attendance and assignment outcomes before the student is in danger of failing the course.

Methods of evaluation may include:

- 1) Students' awareness of their own difficulties, methods of overcoming difficulties, and improvement.
- 2) Written exercises, class discussion, participation, in-class presentations, quizzes, examinations, reflection activities, peer review work, journals, reading and viewing responses, screening notes.
- 3) Essays that require students to respond to assigned course materials.
- 4) Written assignments that require students to produce prewriting and preliminary drafts before completing a final draft.
- 5) Revision which demonstrates students' ability to utilize peer and instructor feedback, as well as individual reflection to improve draft(s).

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

Smart classroom

Method of Instruction

Instructors use culturally relevant and equity-minded approaches to teaching and learning. These approaches center student identities, values, experiences, and goals; use strengths-based approaches to learning; convey growth-minded faculty mindsets about student potential; offer just-in-time remediation strategies to boost reading, writing, and language skills; are attentive to student affective domains; and individualize support so that students may have equitable learning experiences.

On assignments, the instructor will include comments to indicate strengths and areas for improvement, enabling students to revise their work. Class time is also devoted to explaining and discussing various analytical and interpretive techniques. A variety of teaching methods may be used:

- 1) Film screenings
- 2) Lecture and discussion
- 3) Small and large group discussion
- 4) Structured, in-class activities
- 5) Multimedia presentations
- 6) Guest speakers
- 7) Individual and/or group projects
- 8) Oral presentations
- 9) Self-assessment
- 10) Auxiliary use of study groups and peer tutoring

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) **Reading:** reading, viewing, and/or listening to texts, course materials, digital references, and more.
- 2) **Writing:** various assignments and activities, such as essay drafts, discussion posts, responses, presentations, notes, etc.
- 3) **Other:** analysis of texts, film screenings, research for essays and/or other project, group, and/or unit work as applicable.

Texts and References**1) Required (representative examples):****a. Survey texts:**

1. Petrie, Dennis and Joseph Boggs. *The Art of Watching Films*. 10th edition. McGraw-Hill, 2022.
2. Belton, John. *American Cinema American Culture*. 6th edition. McGraw-Hill, 2021.
3. Nichols, Bill. *Engaging Cinema: An Introduction to Film Studies*. Norton, 2010.
4. Sharman, Russell Leigh. [*Moving Pictures: An Introduction to Cinema*](#). University of Arkansas, 2020. OER Resource under Creative Commons.
5. Skidmore, James. [*Contemporary World Cinema*](#). 2022. OER Resource under Creative Commons.

2) Supplemental: None**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Apply key concepts in cinema studies and film theory to discuss, analyze, and interpret cinematic texts in various genres.
- 2) Write evidence-based analyses of cinematic texts, demonstrating close reading and interpretive skills, logical reasoning, and argumentative strategies.
- 3) Evaluate the ways films reflect, reinforce, or challenge dominant cultural narratives and ideologies.