

The Well-Trained Mind Academy
Introduction to Film Studies

Required Texts:

- Ed Sikov, *Film Studies: An Introduction*. New York: Columbia UP, 2010. ISBN 9780231142939
- Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, 8th ed. Boston: Pearson, 2012. ISBN 9780205236398
 - Used copies of the 8th edition are available for less than \$10 on Amazon, and can be found here in full:
<https://english11048f16.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/282572321-corrigan-guide-to-writing-about-film.pdf>

Additional readings will be provided by the instructor and posted to the course Blackboard page.

Required Viewing:

- *Modern Times*, dir. Charlie Chaplin, 1936
- *Psycho*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1960
- *2001: A Space Odyssey*, dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1968
- *Citizen Kane*, dir. Orson Welles, 1941
- *On the Waterfront*, dir. Elia Kazan, 1954
- *Wizard of Oz*, dir. Victor Fleming, 1939
- *Jaws*, dir. Steven Spielberg, 1975
- *The Lion King*, dirs. Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff, 1994
- *You've Got Mail*, dir. Nora Ephron, 1998
- *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, dir. Sergio Leone, 1967
- *The Godfather: Part II*, dir. Francis Ford Coppola, 1974
- *Wall-E*, dir. Andrew Stanton, 2008
- *The Avengers*, dir. Joss Whedon, 2012
- *Groundhog Day*, dir. Harold Ramis, 1993
- *Casablanca*, dir. Michael Curtiz, 1942

Purchase links for films are listed in the course Kit:

<https://kit.com/wtmacademy/introduction-to-film-studies>

Make sure to check film availability at your local library or through any streaming services to which you are subscribed before purchasing!

Please note: The materials covered in this class contain content that some families may consider objectionable, including: violence, nudity, sexual content, and drug use. Parents are advised to consult the IMDb Parent Guide or another content-warning resource before enrolling their student.

Description:

Students in this course will watch, analyze, and write about classic films in many genres. Film will be approached as both art and entertainment, addressing such questions as:

- How does a film use different elements to tell its story (e.g., editing, acting, plot)?
- How does a film shape the viewer's understanding of the world or reflect the understanding of the filmmakers?
- How did various techniques of filmmaking develop, and why?
- How do you write a critique or review of a film?

Assignments:

Viewings: Students will watch one movie a week on their own outside of class, in addition to completing the required reading. All assigned viewing and reading must be completed *before* the class in which it's due to be discussed.

Quizzes: Students will complete short multiple choice quizzes throughout the semester to show that they have completed the required viewing/reading.

Discussion Posts: Students will be given a topic to focus on each week, and will write an original response to the viewing/reading/topic on that week's Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Midterm Paper: Students will write a 3-5 page (750-1250 words) analytical paper about one of the films viewed and techniques considered in the first half of class.

Final Exam: Students will complete a timed final exam that consists of several short answer questions and one essay.

Grading Breakdown:

Quizzes: 20%

Discussion Posts: 25%

Midterm Paper: 25%

Final Exam: 30%

Example Schedule:

The first weeks of class cover how to watch a film, and will make sure students are introduced to cinematography and film editing before going into depth about how to analyze film. In the second half of the course, specific techniques and features will be covered. Films in the second half of the class have been chosen to highlight study of that week's topic. For example, in Week 12 students will focus on performance and acting, and will narrow in on that specific topic when viewing and discussion France Ford Coppola's *The Godfather, Part II*.

Week 1

Reading: *Sikov, Intro Ch 1: Mise-en-scene & Corrigan Ch 1: Why Write and Audience and Aims of Criticism*

Viewing: *Early Films (Online)*
Horse in Motion, dir. Eadweard Muybridge, 1886
L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat (Arrival of a Train), dir. Auguste and Louis Lumière, 1895

Week 2

Reading: *Sikov, Ch 2: Camera Movement/Framing & Corrigan (selections from ch 2, 6, and 7: Preparing to Watch, Research, and Manuscript Form)*

Viewing: *Modern Times*, dir. Charlie Chaplin, 1936

Week 3

Reading: *Sikov, Ch 3: Cinematography*

Viewing: *Psycho*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1960

Week 4

Reading: *Sikov, Ch 4: Editing*

Viewing: *2001: A Space Odyssey*, dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1968

Week 5

Reading: *Corrigan, Ch 3: Film Terms and Topics*

Viewing: *Citizen Kane*, dir. Orson Welles, 1941

Week 6

Reading: Corrigan, *Ch 4: Six Approaches to Writing*
Viewing: *On the Waterfront*, dir. Elia Kazan, 1954

Week 7

Reading: Corrigan, *Ch 5: Style and Structure*
Viewing: *Wizard of Oz*, dir. Victor Fleming, 1939

**Midterm Paper Due*

Week 8

Reading: Sikov, *Ch 5: Sound*
Viewing: *Jaws*, dir. Steven Spielberg, 1975

Week 9

Reading: Sikov, *Ch 6: Narrative*
Viewing: *The Lion King*, dirs. Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff, 1994

Week 10

Reading: Sikov, *Ch 7: Screenplay*
Viewing: *You've Got Mail*, dir. Nora Ephron, 1998

Week 11

Reading: Sikov, *Ch 8: Filmmakers/Auteurs*
Viewing: *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, dir. Sergio Leone, 1967

Week 12

Reading: Sikov, *Ch 9: Performance/Acting*
Viewing: *The Godfather: Part II*, dir. Francis Ford Coppola, 1974

Week 13

Reading: Sikov, *Ch 10: Genre*
Viewing: *Wall-E*, dir. Andrew Stanton, 2008

Week 14

Reading: *Sikov, Ch 11: Special Effects*
Viewing: *The Avengers*, dir. Joss Whedon, 2012

Week 15

Reading: *Sikov, Ch 12: Overview*
Viewing: *Groundhog Day*, dir. Harold Ramis, 1993

Week 16

Reading: Review
Viewing: *Casablanca*, dir. Michael Curtiz, 1942

Week 17 Exam Week (Final Exam)