

Jennifer Horne  
King 141-I (located in the *Octet* Suite)  
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Class: King 343  
T/Th 1:30-2:45 (sec. 03), 3:00-4:15 (sec. 04)  
Screenings: T, W 7-10; King 106  
Office Hours: M, W, 10-11 & by appt.

## FORM, STYLE, AND MEANING IN CINEMA CINE 101/ENGL 271

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### BASIC INFORMATION

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The purpose of this course is to learn to think critically about images and our relationship to them. We will cover the basic vocabulary of film form and film style (cinematography, editing, *mise-en-scène*, sound, narration) and explore, in examples from a variety of film traditions, how those elements are used to produce meanings. Building on our investigation into form and style in the first half of the course, the second half of the course will take up questions of politics, interpretation, and spectatorship central to the field of cinema studies. Critical essays will guide our discussions of individual films toward the broader contexts of film production, exhibition, and reception. In short, the tools of analysis we will study together will help us to become more critical spectators of the cinema and to understand cinema as an art form, as an industry, and as a system of cultural meaning.

### Required Texts and Materials

- Bordwell and Thompson, Film Art: An Introduction 6th ed [BT]  
*Film Art* is the central text of the course and includes a “Film Viewer’s Guide” that I strongly recommend
- Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, Oxford History of World Cinema [GNS]  
The *Oxford History* provides valuable historical context; it will not, however, be the focus of our discussions.
- Corrigan, Timothy, A Short Guide To Writing About Film [TC]  
Please consult this text as you approach writing assignments.
- As noted in the schedule below, some required readings are on E-Reserve [E-Res] (<http://eres.cc.oberlin.edu>). Select “Pingree” as the instructor and use the password “engl271” in order to access the articles.
- Light Pens: The Oberlin College Bookstore has ordered light pens for your use in the screenings. Please purchase **one** pen each so that there are enough of them to go around.

### Library Resources

Copies of all the films screened in the evenings are available on reserve in Mudd Library. There is a growing collection of films, in both DVD and VHS formats, available in the Audio-visual department on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Mudd Library. These films can be found by searching in OBIS or by using the print catalogue at the AV desk and you may watch them at one of 8 viewing stations there. Don’t forget to bring your ID with you.

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### ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

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Your final grade will be determined on the basis of grades for several kinds of work:

Attendance (10% of final grade): Being absent from class and/or the screening without a valid reason will jeopardize this part of your grade and will result in a significantly lower grade for the course. I expect each member of the class to participate in an active and respectful manner. Films will be screened on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings so that we can discuss them during Thursday’s class. For the first half of the semester, the same film will be screened on both nights; for the second half of the semester, a different film will be screened each night. You must attend at least one of these scheduled screenings each

week. Please arrive to screenings on time as a courtesy to your classmates. At mid-term and at semester's end I will ask you to sign a sheet indicating the screenings you attended

Ungraded Entry Statement: This is a very brief piece of writing, no more than a typed, single-spaced page long, with the title: "What I love about the Cinema." Due in class on Thursday, September 5. The only constraint on your self-expression is that you do not mention any directors or films.

A Screening Notebook (10% of final grade): is required and will be collected twice over the course of the semester. I require that you take notes on the primary screenings, either during or after (or, even better, both). Light pens, available at the bookstore, will help make your notes legible. Please bring your light pen to each screening. I ask that you include in your screening notebook entries on at least six additional films viewed during the semester. Examples of useful notetaking formats can be found in the "Film Viewer's Guide," and will be discussed in class. Your participation and your writing will benefit from the practice of taking notes during screenings and writing up those notes immediately after you see a film.

Short Paper (20% of final grade): I will ask you to turn in a short (2-3 page) paper based on close analysis of a scene, and a segmentation of that scene, just after the fall break. I will hand out a detailed description of the assignment in class.

Mid-Term Exam (30% of final grade): A mid-term exam, covering all course material up to that point, is scheduled for October 17.

Long Paper (30% of final grade): I will ask for a longer (4-6 page) critical essay on one film, due the last week of the semester. This long paper will be based on a plot segmentation that will be handed in advance. I will hand out a detailed assignment sheet in class after fall break.

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## OTHER IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES

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Honor Code: I will ask you to write and sign the Honor pledge ("I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment") on all major writing assignments and tests. Assignments turned in without the Honor Code will be returned ungraded.

Late Work and Make-Up Exams: Late work will receive a lowered grade. Make-up exams will only be given in the case of extreme emergencies; documentation of that emergency will be required.

E-Mail Policy: All assignments must be turned in as hard copies on paper. I cannot accept final drafts of assignments as e-mail attachments at this time. No exceptions will be made.

Additional Considerations: Please speak to me about any accommodations you may require due to a disability so that those accommodations may be made promptly.

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**SCHEDULE**


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\*\*\*All readings should be completed by the *first* class period of each week.\*\*\*

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Introduction: What is cinema?</b>
Sept 3,4	screening: <u>The Purple Rose of Cairo</u> (Woody Allen, 1985; 82 min.) assignment: What I love about the Cinema
<b>Week 2:</b>	<b>The concept of film form and the impression of reality</b>
Sept 10	reading: Kracauer, "Basic Principles" (e-res), Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" (e-res), Arnheim, "The Complete Film" (e-res) GNS: "Dziga Vertov" (92-93);BT 402-403
Sept 10, 11	screening: <u>Man with a Movie Camera</u> (Dziga Vertov, 1929; 80 min.)
<b>Week 3:</b>	<b>The shot: cinematographic properties</b>
Sept 17	reading: BT chapter 7 (103-248)
Sept 17, 18	screening: <u>Grand Illusion</u> (Jean Renoir, 1937; 101 min.)
<b>Week 4:</b>	<b>Editing: space, time, and the relation of shot to shot</b>
Sept 24	reading: BT chapter 8 (249-290), and 412-415
Sept 24, 25	screening: <u>The Graduate</u> (Mike Nichols, 1967, 106 min.)
<b>Week 5:</b>	<b>Composition for the shot: <i>mise-en-scène</i></b>
Oct 1	reading: BT chapter 6 (156-192), and 406-408
Oct 1,2	screening: <u>Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</u> (Robert Wiene, 1919; 50 min.)
<b>Week 6:</b>	<b>Sound in narrative cinema</b>
Oct 8	reading: BT chapter 9 (291-326)
Oct 8, 9	screening: <u>Magnolia</u> (Paul Thomas Anderson, 2000; 191 min.)
Oct 9	assignment: Scene Analysis
<b>Week 7:</b>	<b>Midterm</b>
Oct 15	Midterm Review
Oct 17	Midterm Exam
Oct 18	assignment: Screening Notebook
<b>Week 8:</b>	<b>The Movies as Industry and Apparatus</b>
Oct 29	reading: J-L. Baudry, "Ideological Effects ..." (e-res) BT chapter 1 (2-34) Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "New Concepts of Cinema" (750-759)(GNS)
Oct 29, 30	screening: <u>The Player</u> (Robert Altman, 1993; 124 min.)
Oct 30	assignment: Short Paper
<b>Week 9:</b>	<b>Narrative, Narration, and the Classical Hollywood Cinema</b>
Nov 5	reading: BT chapter 3 (59-92) Douglas Gomery, "The Hollywood Studio System" (43-53) (GNS)
Nov 5, 6	screening: <u>The Sweet Hereafter</u> (Atom Egoyan, 1997; 112 min.) <u>Stagecoach</u> (John Ford, 1939; 66 min.)

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<b>Week 10:</b>	<b>Genre: The Western</b>
Nov 12	reading: BT: 93-109 Rick Altman, "Cinema and Genre" (276-286) (GNS) Edward Buscombe, "The Western" (286-294) (GNS)
Nov 12	screening: <u>The Searchers</u> (John Ford; 1956, 119 min.)
Nov 13	<u>Unforgiven</u> (Clint Eastwood, 1992; 131 min.)
	<u>Lone Star</u> (John Sayles, 1996; 135 min.)
Nov 13	assignment: film segmentation

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<b>Week 11:</b>	<b>Auteur, Star, Spectator</b>
Nov 19	reading: BT 419-422 Belton, "The Star System" (e-res) Wollen, "The Auteur Theory" (e-res) Rosenblum, "Annie Hall: It Wasn't the Film He Set Out to Make" (e-res)
Nov 19	screening: <u>Annie Hall</u> (Woody Allen, 1977; 93 min.)
	<u>Sex, Lies, and Videotape</u> (Steven Soderbergh, 1989; 98 min.)
Nov 20	<u>Do The Right Thing</u> (Spike Lee, 1989; 120 min.)
	<u>Sherman's March</u> (Ross McElwee, 1986; 157 min.)
Nov 20	assignment: paper proposal

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<b>Week 12:</b>	<b>Experimental Film</b>
Nov 26	reading: BT 128-144 A.L. Rees, "Cinema and the Avant-Garde,"(95-105) (GNS) A.L. Rees, "Avant-Garde Film: The Second Wave" (537-551) (GNS)
Sun., Nov 24	screening: <u>Meshes of the Afternoon</u> (Maya Deren, 1943; 18 min.)
	<u>Mothlight</u> (Stan Brakhage, 1963; 4 min.)
	<u>Kustom Kar Kommandos</u> (Kenneth Anger; 1965, 3 min.)
	<u>A Movie</u> (Bruce Conner, 1958; 12 min)
	<u>It Wasn't Love</u> (Sadie Benning; 1990, 5 min.)
	<u>Finding Christa</u> (Camille Billups, James Hatch, 1991; 55 min.)

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<b>Week 13:</b>	<b>The Documentary Film</b>
Dec 3	reading: BT 110-128 Bill Nichols, "The Voice of Documentary" (e-res) Charles Musser, "Documentary," (322-333) (GNS) Charles Musser, "Cinéma-Vérité and the New Documentary" (527-537) (GNS)
Dec 3	screening: <u>Nanook of the North</u> (Robert Flaherty, 1922; 79 min.)
	<u>Nobody's Business</u> (Alan Berliner, 1996; 60 min.)
Dec 4	<u>The Thin Blue Line</u> (Errol Morris, 1988; 103 min.)
	<u>Human Remains</u> (Jay Rosenblatt, 1998; 30 min.)

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<b>Week 14:</b>	<b>Breaking the Frame: Celluloid Past and Media Future</b>
Dec 10	reading: BT 144-149 Laura Kipnis, "Film and Changing Technologies" (e-res) William Moritz, "Animation in the Post-Industrial Era" (551-558) (GNS) William Moritz, "Animation" (267-275) (GNS) John Belton, "New Technologies" (483-490) (GNS)
Dec 10	screening: <u>Duck Amuck</u> , (Chuck Jones, 1953; 7 min.)
	<u>Waking Life</u> (Richard Linklater, 2001; 99 min.)
Dec 11	<u>The Celebration</u> (Thomas Vinterberg, 1995; 108 min.)
Dec 13	assignment: Final Paper and Screening Notebook due by 5pm