

**FILM THEORY AND CRITICISM**  
**FILM 4390 – 19397 -- SEC 002**  
**FALL 2018**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Nakisha Acosta

**OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays 2:30 – 5:00 Cotton Memorial, Room 307A

**LOCATION:** Classroom Building C301

**DATE AND TIME:** Mondays 1:30 – 4:20 PM

**EMAIL:** ntacosta@utep.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The course will review philosophical ideas and theoretical approaches that have influenced filmmakers and film scholars.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

After completing this course a student can expect to understand the main theoretical approaches to film criticism, along with learning the importance of film sequence analysis, and how it provides deeper meaning to film.

**DIGITAL MEDIA PRODUCTION SEQUENCE OUTCOMES:**

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate disciplinary knowledge  
Assessment tool: Final paper in FILM 1390  
Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on final paper
- Apply communication theories to communication events  
Assessment tool: Final paper in COMM 3371  
Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on final paper.
- Evaluate and employ various research methods  
Assessment tool: Final exam in COMM 4372  
Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on the final exam
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills in digital media preproduction and production  
Perform competency in the preparations, processes, and practices of beginning and completing a digital media production project
- Perform competency in a variety of digital media production environments such as in a studio and on location  
Perform competency in using production hardware and software

Assessment tool: film project in COMM 2342

Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on film project

- Demonstrate aptitude in storytelling techniques in terms of postproduction

- Perform competency in conceptualizing, evaluating, and implementing filming and editing techniques  
Assessment tool: Final exam and film project in COMM 3343  
Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on final exam and film project
- Demonstrate the ability to produce a film combining conceptual, creative, and technical skill sets  
Apply all three phases of production  
Aggregate various forms of communication to create a topical basis for a documentary film project  
Pursue assorted outlets and venues to showcase a film  
Assessment tool: Final exam and film project in COMM 3346  
Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on their final exam and film project.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

#### **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.**

Your attendance and participation are integral to the class curriculum. It is imperative that you attend class regularly and on time. Everyone is allowed one emergency absence. After that point your grade will be dropped one full letter grade for any unexcused absence acquired thereafter. Likewise, a student will be dropped after three unexcused absences. An unexcused absence is any absence without valid documentation explaining the reason for missing class. An excused absence will have valid documentation explaining why the student was absent. It is under the discretion of the instructor if an absence can be considered excused. Students will be considered absent if they are not present for roll call at the beginning of class. Likewise, if a student leaves during class the student will be considered absent.

Do not schedule doctors appointments or other activities during my class.

### **GRADING:**

If you attend class on time, take your assignments and screenings seriously, and participate in the class discussions, (i.e. asking questions, and sharing your opinions) you can expect to do well in this class. Completion of a midterm paper, group presentation, and final paper are required in order to pass this class. Papers are due on a Monday, and late papers will not be accepted after Friday of the same week. You will lose one letter grade for each day your paper is late.

Grading Scale: 100

100 – 90 = A

89 – 80 = B

79 – 70 = C

69 – 60 = D

59 and below= F

### **GRADING BREAKDOWN:**

Attendance: 10%  
Participation: 10%  
Mid-Term: 30%  
Presentation: 20%  
Final: 30%

### **REQUIRED READINGS:**

*Film and Television Analysis, An Introduction to Methods, Theories, and Approaches*, Harry M. Benshoff

This textbook is available in the UTEP bookstore.

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Mid-Term:** Choose any one of the film theories that have been discussed in class, and write a 7 page paper explaining its importance to the study of film. Give examples from films, directors, and film scholars to help strengthen your ideas. Include at LEAST two outside sources aside from the textbook.

**Group Presentation:** Apply the assigned theory to a 10 minute film sequence, and describe how the scene fits with what we have discussed in class.

**Final:** In an 8 – 10 page paper use ONE of the film theories discussed in class and apply it to any movie of your choice. Make sure to discuss the mise-en-scene, camera movement, and story points to strengthen your ideas. Include at LEAST two outside sources aside from the textbook, and the film.

### **PAPER GUIDELINES**

The paper **MUST** have a cover page, and works cited page done in MLA format. The cover page should include your name, date, class number, and topic. The page should have a maximum of 1-inch margins. The font should be size 12, and commonly used like Times New Roman or Arial. Double spaced.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In all matters of intellectual pursuit, UTEP faculty and students must strive to achieve excellence based on the quality of work produced by the individual. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of

the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. It is imperative, therefore, that the members of this academic community understand the regulations pertaining to academic integrity and that all faculty insist on adherence to these standards. Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP)*, and available in the Office of the Dean of Students and on the homepage of the Dean of Students at [www.utep.edu/dos](http://www.utep.edu/dos), may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to a failing grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others.

**CASS POLICY:**

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu). Or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass). CASS Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Note: This course calendar may change at any time under the discretion of your instructor. Chapters should be read before the class date in which they are assigned.

### **WEEK 1**

**AUG. 27** Course introduction and syllabus.

### **WEEK 2**

**SEP. 3** **LABOR DAY – NO CLASS**

### **WEEK 3**

**SEP. 10** Read Ch. 1 – 3  
Cultural criticism, ideology, semiotics, and structuralism  
Mise-en-scene

### **WEEK 4**

**SEP. 17** Ch. 4 - 5  
Authorship and auteur theory

### **WEEK 5**

**SEP. 24** Ch. 5  
Film genres

### **WEEK 6**

**OCT. 1** Ch. 6  
Psychoanalysis (part one): Basic concepts

### **WEEK 7**

**OCT. 8** Ch. 7  
Psychoanalysis (part two): Screen and apparatus theory

**WEEK 8**

**OCT. 15      MIDTERM PAPER DUE AT 1:30 PM  
COTTON MEMORIAL MAIN OFFICE**

**WEEK 9**

**OCT. 22      Ch. 8  
Feminist approaches to film**

**WEEK 10**

**OCT. 29      Ch. 9  
Film and postmodern**

**WEEK 11**

**NOV. 5        Ch. 10  
Cultural studies and reception**

**WEEK 12**

**NOV. 12      Ch. 11  
Audiences and Fandoms**

**WEEK 13**

**NOV. 19      Ch. 12  
Beyond identity politics: contemporary thinking on nation, race,  
gender, and sexuality**

**WEEK 14**

**NOV. 26      GROUP PRESENTATIONS  
1 - 8**

**WEEK 15**

**DEC. 3        GROUP PRESENTATIONS  
10 - 16**

**WEEK 16**

**DEC. 10**

**FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE AT 1:30 PM  
COTTON MEMORIAL MAIN OFFICE**