

LaSalle College

*Cinema: The Seventh Art*

504-KPA-03 – Group 412

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Randolph Jordan

**General Objective**

This course is designed to provide an understanding of film as an art form. It will acquaint students with the complexities of the film medium and examine the treatment of film as a major shaping force in social, political, and cultural life.

**Specific Objectives**

1. Understand and appreciate the dynamic of the imagination in all stages of a film's production and reception.
2. Evaluate the quality of a film in reference to its technical and aesthetic elements.
3. Recognize the defining characteristics of different cinematic genres and trends.
4. Establish links between film and society.
5. Learn to comment intelligently on the relationships between form, content, and ideology.

**Course Outline**

Part I – The Basic Elements of Film

Jan. 29<sup>th</sup> – Introduction: *Mise-en-scène*

Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> – Lighting

Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> – Editing

Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> – Camera Movement

Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> – Sound

March 5<sup>th</sup> – Narrative and Performance

March 12<sup>th</sup> – Mid-Term Exam

## Part II – Film Genres, Styles, and Ideologies

March 19<sup>th</sup> – Expressionism vs. Realism

March 26<sup>th</sup> – German Expressionism and Russian Formalism

April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Neo-Realism and the Dogma Movement

April 9<sup>th</sup> – Reading Day – NO CLASS

April 16<sup>th</sup> – Documentary I – Before the 1950s - (Practical Exercise #2 due)

April 23<sup>rd</sup> – Documentary II – After the 1950s

April 30<sup>th</sup> – Exam Review

May 7<sup>th</sup> – Final Exam

## **Methodology**

The course is organized around two complementary axes: discussions of film theory and the viewing of films and film excerpts. Each class will consist of a lecture pertaining to the specific topic of the week. The lecture will be illustrated with relevant film excerpts and occasionally a full-length screening. We might also make a field trip to a local cinema or relevant museum exhibition. You will be writing two short film analyses and one exam during the term. There is also a final exam at the end of the term. In addition to these assignments you are responsible for keeping up with the assigned readings and participating in class discussion each week.

## **Evaluation**

1. Practical Exercises – 45 %
2. Mid-Term Exam – 25 %
3. Final Exam – 30 %

## **Attendance Policy**

Students who miss more than seven hours for any reason whatsoever - **including legitimate medical absences** - will receive a failing grade for the course. See your student guide for more details.

## **Assignments**

### Practical Exercise #1 – 20% - Short Paper and Presentation of Film Excerpt in Class

Each of you will sign up for one day during the first section of the course in which you will bring a film excerpt to class (5 minutes max, on VHS or DVD only). You will choose the excerpt based on its relevance to the topic of the day. Along with the excerpt you will hand in a 250 – 500 word essay explaining how it relates to the topic of the day. In this paper you must make at least two references to the associated reading which will be provided a week in advance. We will screen the excerpt in class and you will briefly summarize your paper at that time.

For example, if you sign up to bring an excerpt to class on February 5<sup>th</sup>, you will write your essay on why you think it makes an interesting example of lighting, referring at least twice to the assigned reading for that day. You will also be prepared to discuss your paper briefly with the class (5 minutes max).

**If you do not show up with your excerpt on the required day you will receive a ZERO for the assignment.**

### Mid-Term Exam – 25% - 500 words - The Basic Elements of Film

During this exam you be shown a film excerpt in class. You will then be asked to describe it according to three of the six basic elements of film discussed in the first section of the course.

### Practical Exercise #2 – 25% - A paper of 500 - 750 words

In this paper you will discuss the concepts of “expressionism” and “realism” in relation to the film excerpt that you chose for exercise #1. What aspects of your excerpt would fall under the category of expressionism? What aspects would be considered realist? Discuss these two questions with respect to TWO of the basic elements of cinema discussed in the first section of the course.

### Final Exam – 30% - 700 – 800 words

In the last week of class you will write a final exam which will cover materials discussed since the mid-term exam.

**All papers must be typed in 12 point font, double spaced, and with borders not exceeding 1.5 inches. Make sure you proofread you work before handing it in.**

**Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Refer to your student guide for information regarding penalties.**