

ENGH 372 Introduction to Film (3 credits)

Summer 2019

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Course description

I think we just wanted to be part of the lifestyle.
The lifestyle that everybody kinda wants.
--*The Bling Ring* (2013)

This course focuses on how films, videos, and television convey ideas and shape viewers' responses. We will learn how to analyze how films work, as well as vocabulary to develop that analysis. We will study films' formal and narrative strategies, the influences of commercial, political, and historical contexts, and the effects of evolving technologies and distribution options.

This is a fully online five-week long course. The majority of the work is due in the first three weeks of the course as you absorb all the terminology and basic concepts of film analysis. Please plan to work at least 20 hours a week on your assignments to keep up with the intensive pace of this course.

Blackboard login instructions

Access to [MyMason](#) and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Please make sure to update your computer and prepare yourself to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class. Check [the IT Support Center](#) website. Navigate to [the Student Support page](#) for help and information about Blackboard. In the menu bar to the left you will find all the tools you need to become familiar with for this course. Take time to learn each. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning.

Required textbook

Film Art: An Introduction, 11th edition.

Authors: David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith.

Publisher: McGraw Hill.

ISBN-10: 1259534952

ISBN-13: 978-1259534959

The hard copy of the book is available through the Mason Bookstore. You can also purchase it through various online sources such as Amazon.

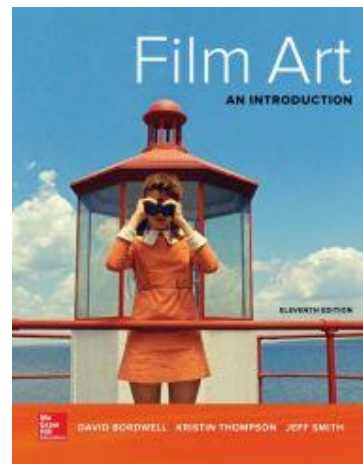
Other required learning materials

You will be required to watch a number of videos in this course. Some DVDs are available at GMU's Johnson Center Media Reserve Desk, and some titles can be found online (sometimes for a one-time use price), at Netflix, Amazon, iTunes, and other sources. Most of the movies you are required to watch are available for streaming via GMU library. The links will appear in weekly modules in Blackboard.

I recommend a Netflix account for this course: some titles are only available on Netflix.

For week 1/ Module 1: Mise en scène and Cinematography

- *Scarface* (Howard Hawks 1932) available streaming on Bb and in GMU library PN1997 .S337 2007



- *The Bling Ring* (Sofia Coppola 2013) available streaming on Bb and in GMU library PN1997.2 .B559 2013

For week 2/Module 2: Cinematography, Editing, and Sound

- *Suspense* (Lois Weber 1913, 11 minutes) available on Netflix
- *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (Lily Amirpour 2014) available streaming on Bb and in GMU library PN1997.2 .G575 2015
- *The Babadook* (Jennifer Kent 2014) available streaming on Bb and in GMU library PN1997.2 .B3233 2015
- *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg 1972) available streaming on Bb and in GMU library PN1997 .J388 2000

For week 3/Module 3: Film and Narrative Form, Documentary and Animation

- *Paris is Burning* (Jennie Livingston 1990) available streaming and in GMU library HQ77.95.U6 P37 2005
- *5 Broken Cameras* (Emad Burnat, Guy Davidi 2013) available streaming on Bb
- *Cutie and the Boxer* (Zachary Heinzerling 2013) available on Netflix

For week 4/Module 4: Form and Genres

- *The Searchers* (John Ford 1956) available streaming on Bb and in the library PN1997 .S437 1997
- *Wonder Woman* (Patty Jenkins 2017) available streaming on Bb and in the library PN1997.2 .W665 2017
- *Black Lightning: S01 E1 - "The Resurrection"* (Salim Akil, Mara Brock Akil, CW 2017) available on Netflix

For week 5/Module 5: Art and Analysis

- *Treeless Mountain* (Se-Yong Kim 2009) available streaming on Bb and in GMU library PN1997.2 .T7445 2009
- *The Fits* (Anna Rose Holmer 2017) available streaming on Bb and in GMU library PN1997.2 .F576 2018

Course learning outcomes

By the end of this asynchronous online course students will be able to:

- Identify and analyze the formal elements of film, using appropriate vocabulary.
- Analyze films and television using apposite evaluative standards.
- Analyze and interpret the content of films, with an understanding of their social, historical, and personal contexts.
- Engage in generative artistic processes, including conception, creation, and ongoing (self-)critical analysis.

Technology requirements

Hardware: You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. This is particularly important for this course as you will be watching a lot of movies/videos. See Mason's information on [Computers & Software](#).

Software: To use Blackboard you will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the [myMason Portal](#). See [Blackboard help for students](#). Log in to [myMason](#) to access your registered courses. Some courses may use other learning management systems. Check the syllabus or contact the instructor for details. Online courses typically use [Acrobat Reader](#), [Flash](#), [Java](#), and [Windows Media Player](#), [QuickTime](#) and/or [Real Media Player](#). Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free [here](#).

Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. See [this page](#) for information about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your

systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Assignment descriptions

Quizzes (10%)

There are 10 quizzes in this course (one for each assigned chapter in the textbook). Each quiz contains 10 multiple choice and True/False answers. Only one attempt is allowed and you will have up to 30 minutes to complete the quiz, at which point the quiz will auto-submit.

Blogs (20%):

There are 4 blogs in this course (not counting the final creative project which you will submit for grading using the Blog feature of Blackboard). For three blog assignments, you will need to identify a specific scene in a movie assigned for that week, and analyze that scene looking for the elements covered in the module. For instance, you will need to break down a scene shot by shot, so you can analyze how the shots (what's in frame, what the camera does, how shots are edited next to one another, how a shot works with sound) lead you to your conclusion about or reaction to the scene. That is, you are reading more than plot, you are reading how the plot is conveyed.

Blogs will be graded according to the following criteria:

	Excellent	Competent	Insufficient
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Blog entry and peer comments are submitted on time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blog entry and/or comments are slightly late. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blog entry and/or comments are very late or missing altogether.
Blog Post Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial blog entry is at least 200 words. Entry makes a clear argument, with minutes marker, and provides detailed evidence and analysis of that evidence. Blog entry is free of grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. - Blog entry features correct vocabulary, and demonstrates an understanding of the assigned readings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial blog entry makes a general point, but doesn't include minutes marker, or describe evidence in detail or offer clear analysis. Blog entry includes a few grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. - Blog entry uses language that is vague or does not incorporate correct vocabulary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blog entry does not offer an argument or include evidence beyond telling the plot. Blog entry does not offer analysis. Blog entry includes many grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. Blog entry does not use correct vocabulary or fails to demonstrate an understanding of concepts in the assigned readings.
Peer Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments to peers advances the argument by asking clarifying questions, providing additional evidence or analysis. Comments should be at least 100 words (please provide more substance than "Great job!" or "I agree!"). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comment is general or vague. Comment is under 100 words or does not help to advance an argument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comment does not speak to the original argument or encourage further analysis.

- Your initial blog entry is due at 11:59pm on Tuesday or Wednesday.
- By 11:59pm on Saturday, you are required to review the entries of your classmates and comment on at least one.

Online Discussions (20%):

Your active participation online is critical for effective learning to take place. We'll maintain an ongoing dialogue about the movies and weekly readings via Blackboard discussion forums. You will be assigned to groups in Unit 2 and stay in those groups for all four discussions. You are required to read and reply to the discussion posts in your group, and you are encouraged to look at the conversations occurring in the other groups.

- Discussions will run from **Monday to Saturday**, after which discussion postings will not count. Each of you should make a minimum of one response per prompt (due dates vary) and then also make a minimum of one additional reply to your peers (no later than Saturday 11:59pm EST).
- Points will be based on quality rather than quantity. A grading rubric is below.

Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial post and replies are well distributed throughout the week (i.e., initial post by Wednesday and replies by Saturday)
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your initial post addresses all the prompts in the assignment directions. • Discussion postings are easy to read and free of grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing contributes to encouraging communication. • Use proper vocabulary, refer to your textbook whenever possible.
Peer Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to peers stimulate discussion by either asking clarifying questions and/or providing additional evidence or analysis. • Posts should be at least 100 words (e.g., "Great Job!" or "I agree!" will not earn you any points).

Shot-by-shot Assignment (15%)

For this assignment, you will choose one (short) scene or part of one scene from *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg 1975). You will write a list of shots and edits. Describe each shot by using correct vocabulary (from the chapters you have been reading) and note elements of mise en scène and cinematography. **Also include a two-paragraph analysis of how these shots shape the scene's narrative and emotional effects.**

Analysis Essay (20%)

The essay should be about 800 words long, typed and double-spaced, with a title that indicates your argument. That argument must be based on analysis of cinematography, editing, and sound in two scenes. You will analyze what the camera does and how shots work together, sometimes with sound. This is an essay, not a shot list. In the essay, you will describe and analyze shots as they are edited together.

Final Creative Project (15%)

For this project, the range of formal possibilities is broad. You also have content options (see assignment).

- Write a screenplay, with dialogue, setting descriptions, and most importantly camera directions.
- Describe a scene in prose, a story that includes precise camera directions.
- Draw storyboards.
- A movie, submitted as a link. The running time can be anywhere from 3 to 8 minutes.

Note: these projects take time: you should begin planning soon.

The point is for you to have some fun thinking about how movies tell stories. The focus of the project is not plot, but a detailed description of **filmmaking techniques**.

Grading scale

Graded Assignments	Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Quizzes	10 quizzes @ 4 points each	10%
Discussion Boards	5 discussion boards @ 4 points each	25%
Blogs (not including creative project)	4 blogs @ 4 points each	15%
Analysis Essay	1 essay @ 4 points	20%
Shot-by-shot Assignment	1 shot-by-shot assignment @ 4 points	15%
Creative Project	1 creative project @ 4 points	15%
	Total:	100%

Please note that all assignments will be graded using a four-point system, meaning A, B, C or D. However, some assignments are worth more towards your final grade according to the percentages above (using a weighted system).

A=90-100%

B=80-89%

C=70-79%

D=60-69%

F=below 60%

Course policies

Gender identity:

Please let me know your preferred gender pronouns and how best to address you in class and by email. I use female pronouns for myself. If you have questions, please ask and respect your peers' gender pronoun preferences.

Late Assignments:

All assignments must be turned in on the due date provided in the Course Schedule. In case of emergencies, if you need an extension, you must contact me before the due date.

Instructor-Student Communication:

I will respond to your emails within 24 to 48 hours. If I am away from email for more than one day, I will post an announcement on Blackboard. Many questions can be answered using the following resources (available on your Blackboard course menu):

1. Syllabus
2. Ask Professor Discussion Board Forum (unless the question is of a personal nature)
3. On-demand Blackboard videos on how to use Blackboard features (Blackboard Help on the menu)

Feel free to respond to other students in the Ask Professor forum if you know the answer.

University Policies and Resources

- a. Academic Honesty: George Mason University's Honor Code requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, and/or lie in matters related to academic work. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. You are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's Honor Code. The Code can be found [here](#). It is your responsibility to see me if you have questions about these policies.
- b. Students must follow the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](#)
- c. Student services: The University provides range of services to help you succeed academically and you should make use of these if you think they could benefit you. I also invite you to speak to me (the earlier the better).
- d. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- e. [The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance. Counseling Center: Student Union I, Room 364, 703-993-2380.
- f. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the [George Mason University Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester.
- g. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- h. [The George Mason University Writing Center](#) staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. University Writing Center: Robinson Hall Room A114, 703-993-1200. The writing center includes assistance for students for whom English is a second language.

- i. **Diversity:** George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.