



湖北工业大学
HUBEI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Course Title	Introduction to Film Theory
Course Code	FILM 2531
Semester	Winter 2027
Course Length	4 Weeks, 60 Contact Hours
Credits	4
Instructor	TBA
Office	TBA
Email	TBA
Prerequisite	FILM 1121 Introduction to Film

Course Description:

An introduction to the major theoretical debates around film and the analysis of film texts that have emerged from the early days of cinema to contemporary developments. Topics to be studied include auteurism, semiotics and structuralism, Marxist theory, ideology and apparatus theory, psychoanalysis, feminism, critical race theory, poststructuralism, post-colonialism, and post-classical cinema. Students will gain knowledge of key theorists within Film Studies, such as Baudry, Mulvey, Metz, Deleuze, and Sobchack, and will apply the theoretical models to specific film texts, adding a conceptual dimension to their textual analysis.

Course Goals:

Students who successfully complete this course will demonstrate competency in the following general education core goals:

- **Critical thinking skills** – Students will engage in creative and/or innovative thinking, and/or inquiry, analysis, evaluation, synthesis of information, organizing concepts, and constructing solutions.
- **Communication skills** – Students will demonstrate effective written, oral, and visual communication.
- **Teamwork** – Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal and consider different points of view.
- **Social responsibility** – Students will demonstrate intercultural competency and civic knowledge by engaging effectively in local, regional, national, and global communities.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- understand the historical development of film theory and its key movements;

- analyze film as a medium through various theoretical lenses, including semiotics, Marxism, psychoanalysis, and phenomenology;
- critically engage with debates about the relationship between film, ideology, and spectatorship;
- apply theoretical concepts to the analysis of specific films and cinematic practices;
- develop skills in critical thinking, close reading, and academic writing about film.

Textbooks/Supplies/Materials/Equipment/ Technology or Technical Requirements:

Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen *Film Theory and Criticism*. Oxford University Press, 7th Edition.

Course Requirements:

Participation and Attendance (10%)

Active engagement in class discussions and screenings is essential to your success in this course. Participation involves contributing thoughtfully to discussions, asking questions, and engaging with your peers' ideas. Attendance is mandatory for all lectures, screenings, and discussions, as these are integral to understanding the course material. You are expected to come prepared by completing the assigned readings and screenings beforehand, as this will enable you to contribute meaningfully to class conversations. If you must miss a class due to extenuating circumstances, please inform the instructor in advance.

Reading Responses (20%)

You will submit a short response (300-500 words) to the assigned readings. These responses should not simply summarize the texts but should critically engage with the ideas presented. Consider the following questions: What are the key arguments of the reading? How do they relate to the film screened that week? Do you agree or disagree with the author's perspective, and why? How does the reading contribute to your understanding of film theory? These responses are an opportunity to develop your critical thinking skills and to prepare for class discussions.

Midterm Essay (25%)

The midterm essay is a 1500-word analysis of a film through one theoretical lens discussed in class. You may choose any film (with instructor approval) and apply concepts from one of the theoretical frameworks we have studied, such as semiotics, Marxism, psychoanalysis, or phenomenology. Your essay should include a clear thesis statement, a detailed analysis of specific scenes or elements of the film, and a discussion of how the chosen theoretical lens enhances your interpretation. Proper citations and a bibliography are required. The essay will be evaluated based on the depth of your analysis, the clarity of your argument, and your engagement with the theoretical material.

Student Presentation (15%)

Each student will deliver a 10-minute presentation applying film theory to a chosen film. You may select any film (with instructor approval) and use one or more theoretical frameworks to analyze it. Your presentation should include a brief overview of the film, a clear explanation of the theoretical concepts you are applying,

and a detailed analysis of specific scenes or elements that illustrate your argument. Visual aids, such as clips or slides, are encouraged but not required. The presentation will be evaluated based on the clarity of your explanation, the depth of your analysis, and your ability to engage the audience. You will also submit a one-page outline of your presentation to the instructor beforehand.

Final Paper (30%)

The final paper is a 2500-word research paper exploring a topic in film theory. You may choose to expand on a topic discussed in class or pursue an independent research question related to film theory. Your paper should include a clear thesis, a review of relevant literature, and a detailed analysis of one or more films that support your argument. Proper citations and a bibliography are required. The paper will be evaluated based on the originality of your research question, the depth of your analysis, and your engagement with theoretical and cinematic texts. A proposal and annotated bibliography will be due midway through the semester to help you develop your topic. The final paper is due at the end of the semester, and late submissions will incur a penalty unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor.

Assessments: Activity	Percent Contribution
Participation and Attendance	10%
Reading Responses	20%
Midterm Essay	25%
Student Presentation	15%
Final Paper	30%

Grading:

Final grades will be based on the sum of all possible course points as noted above.

Grade	Percentage of available points
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D	64-69
D-	60-63
F	0-59

Course Schedule:

The schedule of activities is subject to change at the reasonable discretion of the instructor. Minor changes will be announced in class, major ones provided in writing.

FILM 2531 Schedule		
Lecture	Topic	Readings
L1	Overview of Course Syllabus and Assignment Outlines Introduction to Film Theory: Concepts, Problems and	Chapter 1: Film Language

L2	Prospects An Introduction to Post-Classical Film Theory: Images in Need of Theory Screenings: Selections of <i>Last Year at Marienbad</i> (Resnais 1961)	D. N. Rodowick, "An Elegy for Theory"
L3	An Introduction to Post-Classical Film Theory: Images in Need of Theory (cont.) Screenings: <i>Taste of Cherry</i> (Kiarostami 1997) & <i>Goodbye, Dragon Inn</i> (Tsai 2003)	Malcolm Turvey, "Theory, Philosophy, and Film Studies"
L4	Semiotics and the Influence of Structuralism Screening: <i>Made in U.S.A</i> (Godard 1966)	Chapter 1: Semiotics and the Cinema: Metz and Wollen Christian Metz, "The Cinema: Language or Language System?" Peter Wollen, "The Semiology of the Cinema"
L5	Semiotics and the Influence of Structuralism (cont.) Screenings: <i>Pierrot le Fou</i> (Godard 1965) & <i>Weekend</i> (Godard 1967)	<u>Reading Response</u>
L6	Psychoanalysis, Suture, and Apparatus Theory Screening: <i>Lady in the Lake</i> (Montgomery 1946)	Chapter 2: Film and Reality Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects" Christian Metz, "Identification, Mirror"
L7	Psychoanalysis, Suture, and Apparatus Theory (cont.) Screenings: <i>High Noon</i> (Zinnemann 1952) & <i>Rear Window</i> (Hitchcock 1954)	Christian Metz, "The Passion of Perceiving" <u>Reading Response</u>
L8	Psychoanalysis, Feminist Film Theory, Gender Screening: <i>Out of the Past</i> (Tourneur 1947)	Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" Teresa de Lauretis, "The Technology of Gender"
L9	Psychoanalysis, Feminist Film Theory, Gender (cont.) Screenings: <i>Forty Guns</i> (Fuller 1957) & <i>Vertigo</i> (Hitchcock 1958)	Chapter 3: Film Genres Feminist Frameworks for Horror Films
L10	Psychoanalysis and Critical Race Theory Screening: <i>She's Gotta Have It</i> (Lee 1986)	Chapter 7: Film: Spectator and Audience
L11	Psychoanalysis and Critical Race Theory (cont.) Screenings: <i>Menace II Society</i> (Hughes 1993) & <i>Eve's Bayou</i> (Lemmons 1997)	Manthia Diawara, "Black Spectatorship" <u>Reading Response</u>
L12	Post-Theory and Cognitive Film Theory Screenings: <i>The Usual Suspects</i> (Singer 1995) <i>Mildred Pierce</i> (Curtiz 1945)	Stephen Prince, "Psychoanalytic Film Theory" <u>Reading Response</u>
L13	Post-Theory and Cognitive Film Theory (cont.) Screening: <i>Memento</i> (Nolan 2000)	David Bordwell, "Cognition and Comprehension"
L14	Gilles Deleuze, Film Philosophy, Poststructuralism Screening: <i>The Mirror</i> (Tarkovsky 1975) Midterm Essay Submission	Gilles Deleuze, "Theses on Movement" Gilles Deleuze, "Frame and Shot, Framing and Cutting"
L15	Gilles Deleuze, Film Philosophy, Poststructuralism (cont.)	Gilles Deleuze, "Recapitulation of Images"

	Screenings: <i>Umberto D.</i> (de Sica 1952) & <i>L'Avventura</i> (Antonioni 1960)	and Signs"
L16	Affect and the Cinematic Body Screening: <i>Mulholland Drive</i> (Lynch 2001)	Steven Shaviro, "Film Theory and Visual Fascination"
L17	Affect and the Cinematic Body (cont.) Screenings: <i>Written on the Wind</i> (Sirk 1956) & <i>Blue Velvet</i> (Lynch 1986) Submission: Proposal and Annotated Bibliography of Final Paper	Elena del Río, "Powers of the False"
L18	Phenomenology and Cinematic Materiality Screenings: <i>The Piano</i> (Campion 1993) & <i>Hiroshima Mon Amour</i> (Resnais 1959)	Vivian Sobchack, "What My Fingers Knew"
L19	Phenomenology and Cinematic Materiality (cont.) Screening: <i>Eraserhead</i> (Lynch 1977)	Jennifer M. Barker, "Skin"
L20	Radical Formalism and Theories of Affect: Poststructuralism Screening: <i>Tampopo</i> (Itami 1985)	Eugenie Brinkema, "Form" Eugenie Brinkema, "Ten Points to Begin"
L21	Radical Formalism and Theories of Affect: Poststructuralism (cont.) Screenings: <i>Killer of Sheep</i> (Burnett 1978) & <i>Wild at Heart</i> (Lynch 1992)	Eugenie Brinkema, "Film Theory's Absent Center" <u>Reading Response</u>
L22	Post-Classical, Post-Cinema, Post-Memory Screening: <i>2046</i> (Wong 2004)	Jeffrey Pence, "Postcinema/Postmemory"
L23	Post-Classical, Post-Cinema, Post-Memory (cont.) Screenings: <i>Rashômon</i> (Kurosawa 1950) & <i>After Life</i> (Koreeda 1998)	Russell J. A. Kilbourn, "The 'Crisis' of Memory"
L24	Posthumanism, the Nonhuman Turn, Posthuman Cinema Course Review Recommended Films: <i>The Tree of Life</i> (Malick 2011), <i>Cave of Forgotten Dreams</i> (Herzog 2010) & <i>Annihilation</i> (Garland 2018)	Terrance H. McDonald, "Posthuman Cinema"
L25	Student Presentations Final Paper Submission	/

Accommodation Statement

Academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire. Students who may require assistance in emergency evacuations should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow.

Academic Integrity Statement

Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or otherwise fails to meet the standards. Any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in coursework may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, dishonesty in quizzes, tests, or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others; hindering the academic work of other students; misrepresenting academic or professional qualifications within or without the University; and nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records.

Other Items:**Attendance and Expectations**

All students are required to attend every class, except in cases of illness, serious family concerns, or other major problems. We expect that students will arrive on time, be prepared to listen and participate as appropriate, and stay for the duration of a meeting rather than drift in or out casually. In short, we anticipate that students will show professors and fellow students maximum consideration by minimizing the disturbances that cause interruptions in the learning process. This means that punctuality is a must, that cellular phones be turned off, and that courtesy is the guiding principle in all exchanges among students and faculty. You will be responsible for the materials and ideas presented in the lecture.

Assignment Due Dates

All written assignments must be turned in at the time specified. Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior information has been obtained from the instructor. If you believe you have extenuating circumstances, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Make-Up Work

The instructor will not provide students with class information or make-up assignments/quizzes/exams missed due to an unexcused absence. Absences will be excused and assignments/quizzes/exams may be made up only with written documentation of an authorized absence. Every effort should be made to avoid scheduling appointments during class. An excused student is responsible for requesting any missed information from the instructor and setting up any necessary appointments outside of class.

Access, Special Needs and Disabilities

Please notify the instructor at the start of the semester if you have any documented disabilities, a medical issue, or any special circumstances that require attention, and the school will be happy to assist.