

Digital Cinema: Theory & Production

Course Objectives

This is an introduction to film and media studies and, in particular, to the close analysis of movies. About half of the course deals with the technical particulars of film and television texts, such as camerawork and editing, and about half deals with more general concepts and theories that film scholars have found useful in discussing how movies work, such as authorship and ideology. The course has been approved for University of California arts credit.

Film and television analysis produces real insights and knowledge (about particular movies, about how movies in general work, and about our cultures and ourselves) but it is never exhaustive or finished. The reason is that it is not so much a body of knowledge, like anatomy or linguistics, as a skill, like playing the piano. To do it well requires practice. Accordingly, this course is set up not so much to teach you "facts" about movies as to help you learn to practice analyzing movies. Toward that end, there will be plenty of thinking, writing, and discussion and production, but little emphasis on traditional tests and quizzes. The effort necessary to do well in this class is unavoidable. In short, no "coasting" is allowed in this class. Intellectual engagement is required.

This course has three fundamental goals.

- One is to train you to watch popular movies and TV shows more thoughtfully, carefully, and critically—to teach you to hold them at arm's length and to think about what they may be doing besides "entertaining" you.
- The second is to introduce a working knowledge of film production such that each student will be capable of producing short films that encompass the various aspects of pre-production, production, and post-production that are common to the film industry.
- The third is to sharpen your communication skills, both by helping you explore the ways in which the orchestrated images and sounds in movies work to communicate ideas and feelings, and by giving you plenty of practice putting your own insights into words.

Conduct

This is a college prep class. Students are expected to be in class and to be on time. It is very difficult to "make up" classroom activities for an arts participation class. Students are expected to trade contact information and to be responsible for contacting classmates if missing class.

Equipment

Students are responsible for equipment checked out to them. Equipment damaged, destroyed, lost or stolen due to student negligence must be replaced by the student.

Film Ratings

Films studied in this class range from MPAA ratings of G through R. For a comprehensive study of cinema it will be necessary to occasionally view material that may be considered objectionable to some students and their parents. However, all the material presented in class has been carefully selected for both historical and educational value. Parents and students signing this course expectation sheet are consenting to the content of this course and to the viewing of those films deemed necessary by the instructor.

Contact

Parents and students may reach me by email: mwhitmore@edisonchargers.com.

I have read, understand, and agree to the above course expectations.

Parent:

Student: