

# THTR 201: Introduction to Cinema

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

*For some people the art of Cinema isn't just an entity that exists, but a powerful force that has influenced them all their lives. They may not even know it. Most everyone has had cinema/film/movies form an integral part of their lives since before they can remember.*

*What was the first movie you saw in a theater? Do you remember? What about a film you watched over and over and over again as a child? What are some of your favorite quotes? What are some of your favorite quotes from films you've never seen?*

*I remember spending countless hours playing Star Wars in the backyard with my brothers and neighbor kids. Then I remember watching children I babysat play Peter Pan and Rufio. Now my own child plays Cars where ever he goes- and yes- he gets to be Lighting McQueen (unless he wants to be Doc Hudson or Jackson Storm).*

*The cinema industry is such an influence of our everyday lives; it's almost impossible to imagine what life would be like without film. And that's why this course is such a great one to add to your cannon of General Undergraduate Requirements. Because you already understand this thing called Cinema so intimately, and now I'm going to try and give you some tools to be able to interpret that knowledge you already have into analytic discourse about the purpose of catharsis and story and the place those two, ancient, human rights hold in this very modern world. We will also look at technique, style, and form. And hopefully answer a couple questions about what makes film such an important part of humanity.*

## Course Objectives

Participants who successfully complete this course should be able to:

1. Examine and summarize the basic/introductory techniques in filmmaking from the perspective of the designer, director, cinematographer, and screenwriter. (Viewing films with class during lab time)
2. Explain critically some of the historic influences on modern directors and movies. (Read articles, view informative webcasts, and group discussion)
3. Identify and defend or critique modern, non-traditional filmmakers predominantly based in the United States (Lecture and group discussion)
4. Create a short film using a smart phone and free apps (Online learning tools and final project)
5. Discuss and defend the necessity of film creation and distribution (Summary of class objectives through dialogue)

The Department of Theatre and Dance has many goals for our individual course objectives. They are listed below. Participants of this course will most likely find that this workshop-focused course meets these requirements in many different ways. Here are the learning objectives for the Department:

- 1) Knowledge of major works of dramatic literature representative of diverse cultures.
- 2) Knowledge of the history of theatrical production - its styles, conventions, and social context - from the ancients to the present day.
- 3) Knowledge and application of the means by which theatrical production is realized.
- 4) Knowledge of the role of theatre in shaping our past, present, and future.
- 5) Analyze and interpret dramatic literature and performance from the standpoint of designer, performer, director, playwright, or critic.
- 6) Use the tools and technology basic to theatrical production safely and efficiently.
- 7) Function effectively as a member of a collaborative team in the preparation and realization of a public performance.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

**This course utilizes open-sourced materials (articles/videos/etc. from on the internet that are free to access). Each week students can find their reading and viewing materials in the course modules that will help them successfully complete this course.**

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **ATTENDANCE & CLASS PARTICIPATION:**

This course requires all students to attend each class meeting, arriving on time and prepared to participate. Because of the nature of the readings and in-class activities, it is important that each person attend each session to receive full participation points. I do not have extra credit assignments and do not accommodate for these in-class activities to be completed outside of class. I also cannot guarantee that you won't miss something extremely important if you do not show up for our regularly scheduled meetings. Often times test questions are covered and new insights can be brought up during these "lecture" periods.

This class meets on Tuesdays from 3:00pm – 3:50pm and Thursdays from 3:00pm – 6:00pm. If you are not available to attend class during those times (including out of town trips, athletic/gym practices, rehearsals, regularly scheduled mental/physical health sessions, or any other regularly occurring time conflicts), this is not a good course for you to take. I am not referring to one-time appointments and sometimes life just happens on the same day as your class. We meet twice a week. There is a schedule. We have a regular routine. If you are not present then it is very likely you will not get points for activities. If you do not have enough points to get the grade you desire, then I have no extra activities for you to complete to "make up" points. Hopefully this all makes sense. Bottom line is, it's important to be present in class.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Some students who have contracts from Disability Access Center will need access to the items we view for lecture/discussion in class. There are also notes of extended times on quizzes. Please (PLEASE) send me an email and let's talk AS SOON AS POSSIBLE about how to ensure you are successful in this course! I am happy to accommodate, but I need you to help me help you.

## **GRADING**

Quizzes .....	120pts (20 each)
Midterm Exam .....	30pts
Short Vlog .....	10 pts
Final Project .....	55 pts
TOTAL	215 pts

## **CONTACT AND MISCELANEOUS INFORMATION**

*I am, very available via email and if you schedule an appointment with me. If you have any questions, please ask in a timely manner **at least 24 hours before the assignment is due**. Also, please note that I only respond to emergency emails over the weekends and between the hours of 6pm and 5am on weekdays. Thank you for your consideration.*

A note on the final project: Participants must complete the final to get a grade for the entire course. That means that if it not submitted correctly, per the instructions, you will receive a zero on the final and a grade of "K" for the course. The K grade will remain on your transcript until you submit the final grade, or after one year, the grade automatically turns into an F. If a year goes by and your grade turns into an F, that grade will remain as your permanent grade (I will not change it).

**Class Format:** We will screen films and clips in class, introduce concepts in lecture, and hold discussions on stylistic and cultural elements of filmmaking on Tuesdays fifty minute meeting. On Thursdays we will begin our lab session by watching a feature length film, followed immediately by taking our weekly quiz ONLINE- this will be an active, online quiz in which you may discuss with classmates and use notes. **You will need to bring your device or laptop from which you take quizzes, notes, thoughts, etc.** There is one ten minute break scheduled between the film and the quiz, but during the film there are no breaks. I expect you to break as you need and be mindful of the disturbance that is created by individuals coming and going.

Snacks are fine (especially on these long days), but please remember this is a classroom and we are responsible to leave it as clean as it was upon arrival. Take your trash and dispose of it properly when you leave. If you spill something, please clean it up. Thank you.

**Canvas** will be utilized to the full extent. This class is a hybrid class (online assignments and contact time lecturing). Canvas is used for the posting of assignments, grades, and as a means to facilitate group discussion and so much more. The Student Technology center can provide participants with tutorials and workshops if needed, however it is each individual's responsibility to access the canvas site and the information for themselves.

## **ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

**CONTENT POLICY:** This course presumes your willingness and commitment to responsibly engage the ideas raised by reading and writing addressing challenging topics in a broad range of cultural contexts. Course participants should be alert to the fact that this course examines performances that include content, imagery, language and situations that might be challenging and/or disturbing to some. **Course materials will oblige students to engage seriously with performances addressing diverse spiritual traditions, obscenity, censorship, violence, war, race, religious fundamentalism, pornography, nudity, transgender identity, homosexuality, AIDS, sexual labor, feminism, self-harm/suicide, and PTSD, among other potentially controversial topics.**

*By remaining in this course, you are obligating yourself to reading, viewing, and discussing such works as you complete the requirements of the class. Additionally, by remaining in this course, you are making a commitment to treating these subjects, your classmates and the instructional staff with courtesy, respect and maturity.*

I will do my best to warn if there are any triggering situations within the movies we view, but just note, there absolutely will be. Life is full of risky situations and that is what great films are about; life's dangers. If you feel that some of these subject matters will be too much of a conflict for you to expose yourself to, this might not be a good class fit for you.

**COPYRIGHT:** *This course contains copyright-protected materials such as media clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to Fair Use and/or Creative Commons licensing. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items without permission. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder.*

**CRISIS POLICY:** It remains your responsibility to manage your commitments so that you can also meet your obligations in this class. However, if a personal situation arises during the semester that threatens to affect your classroom performance, you are strongly encouraged to communicate with the instructor about your circumstances **immediately**. The easiest thing to do may be to contact [The Office of Student Life](#). Do not wait until the situation has begun to impede your participation or damage your grade/s in the course. It is your responsibility to communicate with the instructor **sooner rather than later** so that an appropriate strategy or resolution can be devised. After the fact there isn't much I can do to help you.

**REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS:** WWU provides academic support to students who experience learning challenges and/or disabilities. If you know or suspect you might need alternative accessible formats for undertaking and completing coursework successfully, you are strongly encouraged to contact [Disability Access](#)

[Center](#) immediately to assure that your needs can be accommodated in an appropriate and timely manner. If you are a student that is offered extra test taking time, extensions on deadlines, etc. I am fully equipped and happy to assist you as well!

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** The University, the College of Fine Arts, and the Department take issues of cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty very seriously. For this course, any student who claims credit for work not done, or done by others, or who violates other standards of academic integrity, will receive a failing grade for the assignment/task in question and a report will be sent to the [Center for Academic Integrity](#). Cheating is a pretty serious offense, and if it's the only way to pass your elective film class for your undergraduate degree, then I think there is something a lot more serious going on than getting a good grade.

**AMENITIES/ACCOMMODATIONS/HELP:** There are many different services available on campus designed to help students be as successful in their pursuit of education. Please seek out these services if you feel you need them. Here is a brief list of language a person may use in the WWU search bar in order to find the contact information (or just click on the links below). If you require assistance with any of these services please don't hesitate to ask a professor, a peer, an administrator, or anyone else you think may be a good advocate for you.

[Diversity & Inclusion](#)

[Disability Access Center](#)

[Queer Resource Center](#)

[Student Counseling Center](#)

[Student Health Center](#)

[Map of Gender Neutral Restrooms on Campus](#)

[On Campus Breastfeeding Rooms](#)

[Student Technology Center](#)

[Classroom Services](#) (where you check out cameras/lenses and tripods and ipads)

[Tutoring and Writing](#) in Wilson Library

## CLASS SCHEDULE

*The regularly scheduled activities for the class can be found on the Canvas site that correlates with the course (Introduction to Cinema/THTR 201). As activities may change periodically, please use Canvas as the most current resource when seeking instructional information.*