



CINEMA AS LITERATURE SYLLABUS

COURSE OVERVIEW

Film and television is an increasingly relevant way to experience storytelling and its lessons in modern culture. Film and television communicate meaning differently than written text, and their realm is a world of rich visual language. This form of storytelling is no less compelling or worthy of analysis than traditional literature. Cinema as Literature will examine the elements of this visual language and how filmmakers use them to translate traditional literary devices. The course will also explore different film genres and how each approaches story and character development.



COURSE PREREQUISITES

English I

COURSE LENGTH

1 Semester

REQUIRED TEXT

None

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

BIG IDEAS

- Film allows us to explore the familiar lessons and themes of storytelling through visual language specific to the medium.
- The treatment of literary devices changes according to medium, but the core elements of a valuable story remain.
- Just like traditional literature, film examines themes and topics that are culturally relevant to time and audience.



- Movies can and do teach us the same valuable lessons as literature; they do not simply entertain.

UNIT 1 OBJECTIVES

- Examine the representation of storytelling elements across different mediums.
- Explore visual vs. verbal narrative.
- Examine the different treatment of characters, plot, conflict, theme, and meaning in film vs. novel.
- Write an analysis on the differences in a novel and its film adaptation.
- Develop a clear, strong thesis.
- Use textual/visual evidence to support analysis.
- Apply understanding of compare/contrast analysis.

UNIT 2 OBJECTIVES

- Analyze the use of visual language and how it conveys narrative meaning.
- Identify the narrative use of light and color in context.
- Analyze the use of light and color and how they communicate narrative meaning.
- Identify the narrative use of framing and composition in context.
- Analyze the use of framing and composition and how it communicates narrative meaning.
- Identify the narrative use of camera angle and movement in context.
- Analyze the use of camera angle and movement and how they convey narrative meaning.

UNIT 3 OBJECTIVES

- Explain how the films and technology of the silent era influenced the development of modern film.
- Interpret the meaning of sound and music to the story.

UNIT 4 OBJECTIVES

- Explain how the film industry and historical events influenced the development of film noir.
- Examine the ways in which classic film noir influenced more modern films.

- Examine how visual language establishes the tone of a scene and film.
- Recognize the anti-hero and femme fatale character tropes.
- Recognize how anti-hero and femme fatale characters contribute to tone and theme.

UNIT 5 OBJECTIVES

- Explain how history influenced the Western film genre.
- Explain how Western films reflect traditional American cultural values.
- Explore the relevance of Westerns in modern American culture.
- Identify character types specific to Westerns.
- Examine how traditional written narratives and film approach setting.
- Make use of imagery to establish setting and atmosphere in written narrative.
- Examine the importance of setting to Western characterization and themes.
- Create a written narrative adaptation of a Western scene.

UNIT 6 OBJECTIVES

- Examine the impact of a play as both a verbal and visual medium.
- Explain the differences in how plays and movies approach story elements.
- Compare plot driven and character driven stories.
- Analyze the use of dialogue to establish story elements.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

- **Intro Assignments:** This is a brief assignment at the beginning of unit that allows for students to express previous knowledge and anticipate lesson/unit content, a pre-test of sorts. This assignment carries no weight in a student's grade.
- **Prompts & Scene Analysis:** There are two different types of lesson specific assignments in this course. Prompts are short answer writing prompts and scene analysis assignments give students the opportunity to analyze movie scenes related to lesson concepts. Lessons will either have a prompt or a scene analysis. Prompts and scene analysis are worth 35% of the student's final grade.
- **Movie Review:** Students will complete a movie review for each unit. They will watch a movie (either from suggested viewing list or with

instructor approval) and write a series of reviews or “host” a series of podcasts or shows framed as if they are an actual prominent film critic. The review must touch on both the visual elements of the film and the storytelling/literary devices discussed in the unit. Movie reviews are worth 25% of the student's final grade.

- **Unit Projects (Filmmaker's Challenge):** Unit projects will be devoted to exploring the unit concepts through the form of a filmmaker challenge. Student's will assume the roll of an emerging talented filmmaker and complete real world tasks. Students may choose to do an additional movie review in place of one Filmmaker's Challenge. The course essay is considered a unit project, and these assignments are worth 40% of the student's final grade.
- **Concept Checks:** These assignments are intended as self-assessments and give the students an opportunity to explore their strengths and weaknesses in the unit concepts. Concept checks also give students the opportunity to ask questions related to the unit.

COURSE CONTENT

This is a course that features video content for instruction. You'll find videos that give you more information on the lesson concepts, and you'll also find examples from films to reinforce those concepts. A concerted effort was made to make these videos appropriate. Offensive language has been censored, but you will come accross violence and sexuality in some videos, especially in units 4 & 5 on film noir and Westerns. Both of these genres deal with themes of a mature nature. All the material used in the course would be considered PG-13 in nature, but if you feel uncomfortable with any video content please contact your instructor for alternatives.

You will find bolded, lightly underlined words throughout the course. If you hover over these words, you will find additional text/images/videos related to the word. The videos you find in these "rollover" boxes are not required. They are there to supplement the course material and provide additional avenues of interest.

GRADING POLICY

High scores will be taken for each assignment and quiz. Students are expected to complete each assignment at Mastery level (80%) or higher.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Scores in each category will be added together and divided by total possible points for that category and then multiplied by the weight of the category.

CATEGORY WEIGHTS

- Prompts and Scene Analysis = 35%

- Movie Reviews = 25%
- Unit Projects (Filmmaker's Challenge) = 40%

GRADE SCALE:

Percentage	Letter Grade	GPA
95 - 100	A	4.0
90 - 94.9	A-	3.7
87 - 89.9	B+	3.3
83 - 86.9	B	3.0
80 - 82.9	B-	2.7

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

PREREQUISITE SKILLS

Before you begin, you should be able to:

- Complete basic operations with a word processing software.
- Complete basic operations with presentation software.
- Perform online research using various search engines.
- Communicate through email.

CONTACT TECHNICAL SUPPORT

1. Check the **technical support webpage** to see if your issue is listed.
2. If your technical issue is not addressed on the technical support page then fill out a **support ticket**.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Academic integrity is founded upon and encompasses the following five values:

1. honesty,
2. trust,
3. fairness,
4. respect, and
5. responsibility.

Supporting and affirming these values is essential to promoting and maintaining a high level of academic integrity. Each member of the academic community must stand accountable for his or her actions. As a result, a community develops in which students learn the responsibilities of citizenship and how to contribute honorably to their professions.

If knowledge is to be gained and properly evaluated, it must be pursued under conditions free from dishonesty. Deceit and misrepresentations are incompatible with the fundamental activity of this academic institution and shall not be tolerated. Members of the CMASAS community are expected to foster in their own work the spirit of academic honesty and not to tolerate its abuse by others.

First responsibility for academic integrity lies with individual students and faculty members of this community. A violation of academic integrity is an act harmful to all other students, faculty and, ultimately, the school.

Students are expected to practice responsible and honest behavior. Acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated at CMASAS and are listed below:

- Cheating on tests, homework, or grading of assignments
- Fabrication (any intentional falsification or invention of date, citation, or other authority in an academic exercise)
- Unauthorized collaboration
- Plagiarism (stealing and passing off as one's own the words or ideas of another)
- Theft or alteration of materials

For more information on Plagiarism and how to avoid it visit **Owl Purdue Online Writing Lab**.