

**Santa Barbara City College  
Film Studies Department**



**FS101 – Introduction to Film (3.0 units) > Online Course  
Fall 2011**

**Instructor:** Nico Maestu  
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**Film Program Website:** <http://film.sbcc.edu>  
**Instructor Website:** <http://filmstudiesonline.com>  
**Office Hours:** Tues/Thurs: 11:30-12:45 & by appointment  
**Office:** ECOC1, #16

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

*Available at the SBCC Bookstore and at [www.sbccbooks.com](http://www.sbccbooks.com)*

- Barsam, Richard. Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010. ISBN# 978-0-393-93279-9.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will introduce the art, technology, language, and appreciation of film, exploring the varieties of film experience, the relation of film and the other arts, and the way in which films produce meaning for viewers. Students will learn about basic cinematic techniques and structures, including form, narrative, adaptations, mise-en-scene, framing and cinematography, editing and the manipulation of cinematic time and space, and sound, as well as types and genres of film, such as documentaries, experimental films, international films, and classical as well as contemporary Hollywood and independent films. Consideration will also be given to analyzing the fundamentals of film production, directing, acting, and editing; how the elements of the production process are analyzed separately, then brought together to generate emotional impacts and allow intellectual analyses. Course units will consist of content presentations with clips and web links related to the readings and the given topic.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Analyze a film or films in relation to style and narrative using film terminology.
- Differentiate significant film periods, movements, and genres.
- Apply stylistic film analyses to historical and genre research.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Weekly Units:** Each week you will be required to read through specific units on the course website as you read the required pages and chapters from the textbook. You will need to read through the course webpage, as well as view the online clips and navigate through the external links.

**Responses:** For each weekly unit, you will be given a set of questions that you will need to respond to using the textbook, the class website, the external links, the online clips, and the film you watch that week. You will need to email these to the instructor by the specified date. Late submissions will lead to lower grades. You will receive a maximum of 10 points per response, for a total of 150 points: Orientation, Units 1-7 and 9-15. **Each response should be approximately 500 words in length.** Reference the book, the films, specific scenes, and past units for comparison when necessary. **Include your response in the body of the email** – be sure to spell and grammar check all emails.

**Forums:** We also will be using the discussion Forums in Moodle for topic discussions. The Moodle shell for this class is available through Pipeline -- <http://pipeline.sbcc.edu/> When discussion forum posts are assigned, the grades will be included to the Weekly Response grade for the maximum of 10 points.

**Films:** You will be watching an eclectic selection of films this semester. You will need to watch one full-length film selected from a group of films for most of the units in this course. It is your responsibility to acquire the film. You can look at the Resource page on the course website to find places to rent the DVDs.

**Readings:** All readings must be completed by their assigned dates so as to be prepared to respond to the week's topics and to make thoughtful contributions in email responses. The readings cover many films and filmmakers; in order to discern which are crucial to the class and to the exams, it is important for you to take notes while you read the Weekly Units and while you watch the films. The reading schedule is available on the course website, part of each unit.

**Midterm and Final:** There will be a midterm and a final during this semester length online course. These exams will cover information from the weekly units, films, and readings. The majority of the information you will need to know for these exams is in the class textbook and will be covered in the weekly units. It is thus crucial for you to complete the assigned readings and navigate through all schedules weekly units so as to be successful in the class. Each at-home exam will consist of short essay questions, which will need to be answered in at least 300 words per question.

**Make-ups:** There will not be any make-ups for the exams. You must take the exam the week that it is scheduled.

**Late Work:** You can email late work (Units) for partial credit > **LATE WORK THAT IS MORE THAN 2 WEEKS LATE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**

**Paper:** You will need to write one paper (7-9 pgs.; at least 2,300 words) and complete a shot breakdown chart for this class. You will need to turn in: 1) a brief paragraph describing your topic; and, 2) a working thesis statement and a brief outline of your paper prior to the paper due dates, as outlined in the schedule. Papers must be typed and double-spaced, with standard one-inch margins and 12-point font. Paper topics will be distributed well in advance of the paper's due dates. Late papers will also not be accepted. **Copy and paste your paper within the body of the email – no attachments.**

Papers are evaluated in terms of their responsiveness to the assignment and to the material presented in class and in the readings, the logical coherence of their arguments, their quality of organization, their rhetorical sophistication, as well as their adherence to grammatical conventions. All papers should reference specific readings assigned for the class (MLA format). Outside research is highly recommended; you can research books and articles in the Library.

**Comments:** Approximately 30 Film Studies students are part of the Film Review Club at SBCC. The student

film critics are writing about film on the following site: <http://sbccfilmreviews.org/> You will need to go to the site and write two comments (at least 100 words) on two of the reviews. Each comment is worth 10 points.

To do this:

- Go to <http://sbccfilmreviews.org>
- On the top of the page, click on Register.
- Use your First name and Last name for a Username: ex. for me it would Nico Maestu (include a space between your first and last name -- you need to follow this so that I know it's you, and I can give you credit).
- Provide your email address, your name, and a password.
- Log in with your Username and Password.
- Go to the review you want to write a comment about.
- At the bottom of the review is a space for you to write the comment.
- Click "Add your Comment" and you're done.
- Once I approve it, the comment will be on the site.
- Email me to let me know that you posted the two comments and for which films.

**Plagiarism Statement:** Plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common knowledge) material without acknowledging the source. Types of plagiarism are: deliberately submitting someone else’s work (including copying directly from a source without documentation, having someone else write a paper, cutting and pasting from the internet), and carelessly or inadequately citing. A student who plagiarizes at minimum will fail the assignment; beyond that plagiarized papers and exams will result in a failure for the course. You are not obligated to cite any sources for your film exercises; for your paper, you will need to use the MLA or Chicago format.

**GRADES**

**Breakdown**

**Grade Scale / Points**

|                           |            |   |         |
|---------------------------|------------|---|---------|
| Midterm:                  | 100 points | A | 450-500 |
| Final:                    | 100 points | B | 400-449 |
| Paper topic:              | 10 points  | C | 350-399 |
| Paper research:           | 10 points  | D | 300-349 |
| Paper thesis and outline: | 10 points  | F | 0-299   |
| 2 comments on blog:       | 20 points  |   |         |
| Paper and shot chart:     | 100 points |   |         |
| Weekly responses:         | 150 points |   |         |
|                           | <hr/>      |   |         |
| Total:                    | 500 points |   |         |

**SCHEDULE:**

Each week you will receive an email with the weekly schedule, the due dates, and the links to the specific Units. All films, film clips, and web links are available on the class website.

*Reading schedule is available on the course website, which you will be able to access on the first day of class.*

**Week 1: Mon. August 22 - Sun. August 28**

- Introduction to course, website, and Flash videos.
- Complete Orientation Activities and email instructor as-soon-as-possible.
- Scheduling of video rentals (check Resources for online rentals, libraries, video stores, etc / films are also available at the Learning Resource Center at SBCC)
- Complete *Unit 1: Why Study Film? / What is Film? / Exhibition and Distribution / Studio System to Packages*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. August 29 midnight.

**Week 2: Mon. August 29 - Sun. September 4**

- **Sat. September 4: Last day to Add and Drop course**
- Complete *Unit 2: Film Productions / Low Budget Filmmaking / Film Form and Meaning*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. September 4 midnight.

**Week 3: Mon. September 5 - Sun. September 11**

- Complete *Unit 3: Principles of Film Form / International Film Movements: Dogme95 / Analyzing Form*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. September 11 midnight

**Week 4: Mon. September 12 - Sun. September 18**

- Complete *Unit 4: Parts of the Narrative / Classical Hollywood Cinema / Film Theory*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. September 18 midnight.

**Week 5: Mon. September 19 - Sun. September 25**

- Complete *Unit 5: Non-Classical Narratives – Critical Approaches*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. September 25 midnight

**Week 6: Mon. September 26 - Sun. October 2**

- Complete *Unit 6: Aspects of Mise-en-scene: Realism, Formalism, and Meaning*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. October 2 midnight.

**Week 7: Mon. October 3 - Sun. October 9**

- **Paper topic (one paragraph)** due by Fri. October 7 midnight.
- Complete *Unit 7: Acting and Mise-en-scene*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. October 9 midnight.

**Week 8: Mon. October 10 - Sun. October 16**

- Deadline to submit your two comments on <http://sbccfilmreviews.org> is Fri. October 14 at midnight.
- Complete *Unit 8 (Midterm Questions)* email by Sun. October 16 midnight.

**Week 9: Mon. October 17 - Sun. October 23**

- **Paper update** – (one paragraph about research, films, scenes, changes) due by Fri. October 21 midnight.
- **Fri. October 21: Last day to withdraw from course**
- Complete *Unit 9: Cinematography, the Moving Camera, and the Long Take*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. October 23 midnight.

**Week 10: Mon. October 24 - Sun. October 30**

- **Thesis and outline for Paper** due by Fri. October 28 midnight.
- Complete *Unit 10: The Effect of Editing: Continuity Editing*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. October 30 midnight.

**Week 11: Mon. October 31 - Sun. November 6**

- Complete *Unit 11: The Effect of Editing: Continuity Editing & Alternative Editing Patterns*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. November 6 midnight.

**Week 12: Mon. November 7 - Sun. November 13**

- **Paper due:** email paper by Fri. November 11 midnight > no attachments.
- Complete *Unit 12: Variations on Sound*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. November 13 midnight.

**Week 13: Mon. November 14 - Sun. November 20**

- Complete *Unit 13: Defining Genres: Film Noir / Ideological Analysis*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. November 20 midnight.

**Week 14: Mon. November 21 - Sun. November 27**

- Complete *Unit 14: Representing Reality: Documentaries*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. November 27 midnight.

**Week 15: Mon. November 28 – Wed. December 4**

- Complete *Unit 15: Experimental Film*, rent and watch film, and email responses by Sun. December 4 midnight.

**Week 16: Mon. December 5 – Wed. December 7**

- Complete *Unit 16 (Final Questions)*, and email responses by Wed. December 7 midnight.
- **Exams will NOT be accepted after the deadline.**

## Film Glossary

**DIEGESIS:** In a narrative film, the world of the film's story. The diegesis includes events that are presumed to have occurred and actions and spaces not shown onscreen.

**MISE-EN-SCENE:** (French, "putting into the scene") *What* is filmed, including all the elements that appear on the screen, such as the settings and props (decor), lighting, costumes, make-up, etc.; the arrangement of things and spaces in front of the camera.

**NARRATIVE FORM:** A type of filmic organization in which the parts relate to each other through a series of causally related events taking place in time and space (linear or non linear). Good examples of non-linear (*Pulp Fiction* or *Memento*).

**Plot:** In a narrative film, all the elements that are directly presented to us, including their causal relations, chronological order, duration, frequency, and spatial locations.

**Story:** All the events that we see and hear, plus all those that we infer or assume to have occurred, arranged in their presumed causal relations, chronological order, duration, frequency, and spatial locations.

**Narration:** The process through which the *plot* conveys or withholds *story* information.

**FRAMING:** the spatial representation of figures in relation to the edges of the screen (the frame). Framing changes when the camera moves.

**Close-up:** People or objects have been filmed from a short distance. With a person, the head and shoulders would fill most of the screen.

**Extreme close-up:** A small object or body part fills most of the screen. With a person, for example, a head, face, or eye fills the screen.

**Medium shot:** People or objects have been filmed from a medium distance. With a standing person, he/she is seen from the waist up.

**Long shot:** People or objects have been filmed from a distance. A standing person's entire body would be seen or a large object would be in view (car, storefront, several people).

**Extreme long shot:** Humans are very small; crowds and landscapes can be seen.

**Establishing shot:** A shot at the beginning of a sequence, showing the spatial relations among important figures or objects and the setting in a scene.

**Long take:** A shot that continues for an unusually lengthy time period before the transition to the next shot.

**EDITING:** in a finished film, this is the set of techniques that govern the relations between shots.

**Shot:** A single continuous image that is not interrupted by a cut. The framing may change, due to camera movement or the movement of objects or characters, but this is a continuous take.

**Cut:** An instantaneous change from one shot or image to another.

**Montage:** Two or more images are juxtaposed, often creating meaning through their relation to one another that was not present in either one image by itself.

**Dissolve:** The slow replacement of one shot by another (the first shot is briefly visible under the second).

**Scene:** A segment of narrative film that takes place in one time and space or that uses crosscutting to show two or more simultaneous actions.

**Sequence:** A series of scenes or shots unified by a shared action or motif.

**Ellipsis:** The shortening of *plot* duration achieved by omitting intervals of *story* duration.

**Graphic match:** Two successive shots joined so as to create a strong similarity of compositional elements (ex: color, shape).

**Continuity editing:** A system of editing that maintains continuous narrative action, so that the editing goes unnoticed by the spectator. Continuity editing often involves the following editing methods:

**Crosscutting:** Editing that alternates shots of two or more lines of action going on in different places, usually simultaneously.

**Shot/reverse shot:** Two or more shots edited together that alternate characters so as to maintain the illusion that they are looking at each other. This is typically used for conversation and often captures a part of the back of the head and shoulder of one of the characters.

**Eyeline match:** Shot A shows someone looking at something; shot B is what the person is looking at. If the person looks left, the following shot would imply that the looker is off-screen right. This often incorporates a **point-of-view shot:** the camera occupies a certain character's physical space, seeing what that character sees, often from the angle at which he or she is presumed to see it. Point-of-view shots create a subjective positioning of the character within the diegesis.

**CAMERA MOVEMENT:** the movement of the camera (not figures) during shooting.

**Pan:** A stationary camera pivots horizontally from right to left or left to right.

**Tilt:** A stationary camera pivots vertically up or down.

**Tracking shot:** The camera moves (or dollies) forward or backward on tracks.

**Zoom (in or out):** Movements of the lens (not the camera itself), producing change in size/distance of images.

**Crane shot:** a shot with a change in framing accomplished by having the camera above the ground and moving through the air in any direction.

**FOCUS:** the definition/clarity of the image in relation to the camera lens.

**Soft focus:** An intentional blurriness (often used for leading ladies' close-ups).

**Deep focus:** Several different planes in the image are in focus at the same time.

**Depth of field:** The distance within which objects are in focus.

**CAMERA ANGLE:** the position of the frame in relation to the subject it shows.

**High angle:** People or objects are filmed from above, viewer looks down at the action.

**Straight-on angle:** People or objects are filmed looking straight at them or the action.

**Low angle:** People or objects are filmed from below, viewer looks up at the action.

**Canted frame:** Horizon is tilted one direction or another, appears "crooked."

**SOUND/MUSIC:**

**Voice-over:** Unseen character or narrator speaks from a different time/place that is not within the time/place represented on screen (not in the fictional space and time).

**Voice-off:** Unseen character who is heard speaking and is within the same time/place as the people and objects seen on screen.

**Diegetic sound/music:** Sound and music that take place within the fictional world of the characters, where the characters can hear the sound.

**Non-diegetic sound/music:** Sound and music from outside the fictional world of the characters that they cannot hear. It is added on after the original footage is completed and is often used for emotional or dramatic purposes.

For a more extensive list of film terminology, please see David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's Film Art and Timothy Corrigan's A Short Guide to Writing About Film.