

English219.FILM AS TEXT.EnglishDept.Spring2021@{T/Th 12:30-1:45}

Associate Prof. Joshua D. Gonsalves: jodago@aub.edu.lb--Office Hrs: T/Th 3:15-4:00 or by appt.

What is REALISM in the Cinema?

This course will ask a simple question: “*What do we need to learn to read films as texts?*” The cinema is often regarded as too commercial a medium in comparison with literature, yet this preconception is due to the fact that its logic, grammar or language has not been respectfully understood. In this course, we will develop a critical language that will enable us to read the disparate aspects that come together to create both a cinematic **narrative** and an aesthetic **style**: *mise-en-scène*, editing, cinematography, sound design, generic conventions, stars/actors/auteurs. Taking all these ‘aspects’ together (after working through them one by one) we will attempt to determine what film form is and how *style & narrative* interact to produce the fascination of the **cinematic gaze**. We will use these determinations to interrogate what **Realism** in cinema means: does it reveal reality (the socio-historical real, for example), or only the cinema itself as an unavoidable frame, or is the truth somewhere in-between . . . ?

METHODS OF EVALUATION

The student will be evaluated based on his or her ability to learn the paradigms, techniques, and vocabulary of film analysis (i.e., how-to-use the formalist glossary in *Film Art*). Analysis will also be supplemented by an awareness of how formal systems relate to the production of thematic meanings: ideological, aesthetic, generic and narrational (i.e., how narrative manipulates, guides and patterns audience expectations via the manipulation of affect, feeling and knowledge). The student’s grade will reflect his or her capacity for combining formal analysis and thematic readings of specific film texts in relation to our investigation into what realism signifies on a generic/conceptual level.



TEXTS

Bordwell, Thompson, etc.: *Film Art: An Introduction* (12th ed. McGraw-Hill; hereafter abbreviated FT).

FILMS

Nosferatu: A Symphony of Terror (F.W. Murnau 1922)

Nosferatu: Phantom of the Night (W. Herzog 1979)

Psycho (A. Hitchcock 1960)

Assassination Nation (S. Levinson 2018)

Mandy (P. Cosmatos 2019)

Miller's Crossing (Coen Bros. 1990)

Titane (J. Ducourneau 2021)

ITINERARY

BASIC BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE CINEMA

“SHOTS AND CUTS”

SECTION 1: *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Terror & mise-en-scène* (FT 112-158, 341-344 [on horror genre]).

SECTION 2: *Nosferatu: Phantom of the Night & Cinematography* (FT 159-215).

SECTION 3: *Psycho* (Editing Story/Narrating POV (point of view))(FT 216-262) and the Horror Genre (FT 328-339).

REALISM

(supplementary readings ToBeDistributed on Moodle)

SECTION 4: Contemporary Realism: *Assassination Nation* and Narrative Form (FT 50-110 [film-&-narrative form]).

SECTION 5: Brutal Realism—*Mandy: SOUND & NARRATIVE EXCESS* (FT 262-302).

SECTION 6: Retro-Realism: *Miller's Crossing* (FT 303-324 [film style and the auteur's signature]).

SECTION 7: Extreme Realism (?)—*Titane*

Grade Distribution

Multiple choice Tests at end of each Section (except the last) on both the film and the terms-concepts covered

(i.e., a tracking shot is best described as 1/b/c/d/....): Worth 5 % each (5 x 6 =30 %)

Film analyses due at the end of Section 3 and Section 6: Worth 15 % and 15% each.

Final and Mid-term exam = Worth 15 % and 15 % each

Participation: 10%

Papers should be formatted according to the latest edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* and must be turned in during the class session on the due date, with no exceptions. Papers will be penalized 5 points a day (i.e., a deduction from 85% to 80%) starting immediately after the class session for which they are due. NO papers will be accepted by E-MAIL! Any plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment.

* Screen logs are notes (incl. drawings, doodles, diagrams, etc.) made in class during screenings

of the film. The point of writing the log is to make film-watching an active and not a passive activity. Once we have covered the film in class, a 2-page, double spaced typed response based on these logs will be due. Logs may also be consulted by the professor to insure student participation in films, lectures and class discussion. Lastly, there will be drop-quizzes testing film criticism terminology and film watching skills...

* Papers should be formatted according to the latest edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* and must be turned in during the class session on the due date, with no exceptions. Papers will be penalized 5 points a day (i.e., a deduction from 85% to 80%) starting immediately after the class session for which they are due. NO papers will be accepted by E-MAIL! Any plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment.

* Please refer to AUB Student Code of Conduct: <http://www.aub.edu.lb/pnp/generaluniversitypolicies/Documents/StudentCodeConduct/StudentCodeConduct.pdf> , in particular section 1.1, which concerns academic misconduct including cheating, plagiarism, in-class disruption, and dishonesty. Please be aware that misconduct is vigorously prosecuted and that AUB has a zero tolerance policy. Course policy is that credible evidence of cheating will result in course failure.

* In order to make this learning experience as accessible as possible, please inform me if you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to any kind of disability. If so, we can immediately and privately discuss options. If need be, we can also contact Accessible Education Office: accessibility@aub.edu.lb; +961-1-350000, x3246; West Hall, 314.

* AUB is committed to facilitating a campus free of all forms of discrimination including sex/gender-based harassment prohibited by Title IX. The University's non-discrimination policy applies to, and protects, all students, faculty, and staff. If you think you have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. If you speak to a faculty or staff member about an issue such as harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, the information will be kept as private as possible, however, faculty and designated staff are required to bring it to the attention of the University's Title IX Coordinator. Faculty can refer you to fully confidential resources, and you can find information and contacts at www.aub.edu.lb/titleix. To report an incident, contact the University's Title IX Coordinator at 01-350000 ext. 2514, or titleix@aub.edu.lb . An anonymous report may be submitted online via EthicsPoint at www.aub.ethicspoint.com .