

Course Syllabus



Course FILM 2332.501
Course Title Understanding Film
Professor John Petty
Term SPRING 2024
Meetings Tuesdays, 7:00 pm – 9:45 pm
Location FN 2.102

Professor's Contact Information

Office Phone N/A
Other Phone N/A
Office Location N/A
Email Address John.Petty@utdallas.edu
Office Hours I do not keep regular office hours. If you need to meet with me, please feel free to email and we'll set up a time to talk.
Teaching Assistants Ahmad Khoshniat (Ahmad.Khoshniat@UTDallas.edu); Yan Zhang (Yan.Zhang@UTDallas.edu)

Instructional Mode	FACE-TO-FACE: Students meet at the scheduled class day, time and location.
Expectations	By the end of this class, you should have developed a critical language with which to discuss film, a deeper understanding of film history with which to contextualize movies from both the past and present, and the ability to become an active, rather than simply passive, consumer of media in all its forms.
Course Description	This course is intended to introduce you to the field of film studies in a way that will allow you to more actively engage with, and appreciate, the films that you watch. During the course of this class, we will examine the technical aspects of filmmaking (cinematography, lighting, editing, sound, etc.), the theoretical perspectives by which we can “unpack” film (auteur theory, genre theory, critical race theory, feminist theory, etc.), and the historical and cultural contexts in which films have been made. By the end of this course, you should be able to look at a film as more than a simple piece of entertainment, and begin to take it apart to understand how it has been constructed and what meanings it communicates.
Asynchronous Learning Guidelines	At this time, there are no accommodations for asynchronous learning for any reason.

Class Attendance

The University of Texas at Dallas expects regular and punctual class attendance, regardless of modality. Students who fail to attend regularly are unlikely to do well in this class. Please keep in mind that these attendance requirements will be counted for a portion of your course grade (see Class Participation below for grading information). However, I reserve the right to enter a failing grade for any student who is absent from an excessive number of classes.

In-person attendance requires consistently adhering to University policies. Failure to comply with any University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

The *Rules on Student Services and Activities* of the University of Texas System will be strictly adhered to. For information on the administration's rules and policies regarding student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, email use, withdrawal from class, student grievance procedures, incomplete grade policies, disability services, and religious holy days, consult the material generated by the administration, available in the relevant folder on eLearning or in the University catalog.

Class Participation

Regular class participation is expected regardless of course modality. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. Class participation is documented by faculty. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

I value your participation, so feel free to share your thoughts on the films, on the readings, or on my lectures, albeit in a polite and respectful way. You are not only allowed to, but encouraged to, disagree with me during class, albeit in a polite and respectful way. With that being said, however, please note that arguing with me simply to be argumentative is strictly discouraged, as it wastes my time and the time of your classmates.

Since this class is all about actively engaging with film, it's appropriate that you actively engage with the class. When you do, I promise you'll find the entire experience far more enjoyable and much more fulfilling. As well, it's been my experience that those students who engage most actively in the class wind up with the best grades.

In-Class Electronics

This class has a strict no laptop, no tablet, and no phone policy. Please do not bring laptops or tablets to class unless prior arrangements have been made. Please keep your phones on silent/vibrate and out of sight during class.

Communication

Very often, it's important that I be able to communicate with you outside of our regularly scheduled class time. There are two vehicles through which this is accomplished:

1. **Our eLearning Page:** This is a repository for all course materials needed for this class, and also a place to post special announcements and required readings outside the textbook, if any. Most of the material you'll need to successfully navigate this class can be found here. Please locate and become familiar with this page as soon as possible.
 2. **Campus email:** It is vitally important that you get in the habit of checking your campus email early and often, as this is the way that I will inform you about changes to our schedule, updates to the syllabus, alterations in test dates, or other matters of great importance. I will never contact you outside of campus email unless you and I have made special arrangements for me to do so, so this is the place to look for important updates.
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Class Recordings

Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation.

Required Textbook

***Understanding Film* by John E. Petty (Great River Learning, 2018)**

This is an electronic text designed to follow and enhance the course syllabus and can be accessed on your laptop or tablet. You will purchase an access card, either from the bookstore or from the publisher's website (www.greatriverlearning.com), that will provide a personal code allowing you to access the textbook. Please be aware that this text is required, and includes end-of-chapter exams that will be factored into your final grade. Please see me with any questions.

At the end of each chapter, you will see the following:

For questions or concerns please contact [web support](#).

This is the site you should visit if you are having technical difficulties with the textbook. Typically, I cannot help with these issues, unless you have a question or concern about content. Anything of a technical nature should be addressed here.

Having trouble viewing something on the page? Make sure you have the correct [plug-ins](#).

The needed plug-ins to run and display the textbook properly are available on this page. Again, if you have any problems or concerns of a technical nature, please contact web support at the address above.

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Yes, they are.

View the Great River Learning [Privacy Statement](#).

If you're interested, this is a document explaining what personal information is collected by Great River Learning, how it is used, to whom, if anyone, it is disclosed, etc. You may read it, or not, at your leisure.

The textbook is built in such a way that it takes advantage of the possibilities provided by a digital platform. For some sections, you will have to click a drop-down box to access that portion of the text. As well, there are words that are [highlighted in light blue](#) that indicate more information is available. Hovering over, or clicking on, that text will bring up a box with additional material. Images and video clips are also available, but must be clicked on to be accessed, as they are not embedded in the text. PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE ANY OF THESE ITEMS OR ASSUME THEY ARE UNIMPORTANT. They are not, and they represent potential material for exams.

Another note: in many cases, a chapter may go beyond one screen. If that is the case, you will see a "Next" button in the lower right corner at the bottom of the page. This indicates that the chapter continues. Please don't make the mistake of assuming that just because you got to the end of a page that the chapter is finished.

The Final Quizzes in each chapter will be available during the week that the chapter is assigned, as noted in the schedule later in this syllabus. After that, you will not be able to access them without special permission from me. Keep up with them throughout the semester, as I will not grant permission for extensions lightly. **Please understand that completion of these quizzes represents part of your final grade, and you must purchase the text to be able to access them.**

PLEASE NOTE: You are responsible for all of the material in each chapter, whether we review that material in class or not. Lectures are designed to cover much of the information in each chapter, but length of discussion and other factors may affect that. My intention is that having read each chapter before class, you will be better prepared for the discussions we will have in class. DO NOT assume that just because we did not talk about something in class, it will not be on one or more of the exams.

Additional Class Materials

Additional class materials, if necessary, will be made available to all students registered for this class on our eLearning page. As they are intended to supplement the classroom experience, these materials may be downloaded during the course. However, these materials are for registered students' use only and may not be reproduced or shared with those not in this class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Screenings

Watching the weekly films, which are considered required texts, is mandatory. All of the films included in the syllabus are available at the UTD Media Library, although you are free to watch them in any way that is convenient (although please note that for several films, I have noted a specific recording of the film that should be watched). It is entirely your responsibility to watch these films in a timely fashion, as we will not be viewing them in class.

Some of the films listed in the syllabus are available on Kanopy.com. Kanopy is a free streaming video service that can be accessed through the UTD library system. To sign up, simply go to Kanopy.com and sign up using your UTD ID and password. Films currently available on Kanopy will be noted in the schedule, although availability may change throughout the semester. As Kanopy's lineup changes frequently, it's often worth checking their site even for films not marked as available in this syllabus.

As well, some of the films on our list are available for streaming through the campus media library. On our Course Homepage, you'll find a link to Library Course Reserves. Clicking on that link will pull up a list of all the movies we'll be watching this semester, and will specify which can be streamed and which are available for viewing in the library. You may view these films in whichever way best suits you.

Promptness

You should arrive promptly for class, and to be ready to start the lecture/discussion promptly at 7:00 pm, unless you have made prior arrangements with me or with our TA. We have a lot to cover in a relatively short amount of time, so please plan to be here on time. As well, I expect that you will stay through the entire class, and not attempt to leave early, unless you have spoken to me earlier. Those leaving early without permission will be marked absent for the entire class.

Cell Phones and Other Matters of Common Courtesy

As mentioned above, cell phones MUST be turned off, placed in Airplane Mode, or set to vibrate during class time. Taking calls during class time is likewise prohibited. If you have an emergency of some kind that might require you to take a call during class, please see me before class begins and alert me to this situation.

I personally don't mind if you bring food or drinks to class, but please be mindful that others use the room we're in, so make sure you clean up after yourself, dispose of trash properly, and leave the room as clean and neat as you found it.

Group Project

At the beginning of the semester, you will organize into groups for the Power Point presentations that will begin in Week 3. At the end of the first and second class, you will have an opportunity to sign up for a film to work on. You can see a list of films, and the dates of presentations, later in this syllabus. I will then post the completed sign-up sheets on our eLearning page. If you do not sign up by the end of the second class, I will assign you to a group.

If you receive this syllabus prior to the first class session, please feel free to send your film choice to me early and I will enter your name on the list.

On the day of your presentation, during the first twenty to thirty minutes of class, you will briefly present three or four interesting points you learned from watching the film for the week, as well as the assigned reading(s) and your own independent research. Please make sure your presentation does not exceed 30 minutes in length. I would prefer that the entire group take part in delivering various sections of the presentation, but that's up to you.

I'm not looking for a synopsis of the film or presentation of trivia here, but an exploration of themes, analyses, and/or critical readings that both deepen and broaden our knowledge of the film in question. For example, were you to present on the science fiction classic *Robot Monster* (1953), mentioning that the main shooting location in Bronson Canyon was the same as the location of the Batcave in the 1966 *Batman* TV show is clearly trivia. Fun to know, but it contributes nothing to our understanding of the film. However, you might compare the structure of the film to the works of Italian Neo-Realists such as Roberto Rossellini or Vittorio de Sica, and explain why that is important, or you might want to examine the film in terms of its place within the apocalyptic/paranoia film genre of the 1950s and in the context of the Cold War that was raging during that time.

PLEASE NOTE: I repeat: I'm NOT looking for a synopsis of the film in your presentation. Please assume that everyone in the class has seen the film you're discussing and structure your presentation accordingly.

You may use film clips in your presentation as appropriate to illustrate a point, but please do not use more than a few minutes of clips in total.

Please submit the presentation to me no later than the evening before it is due. This gives me time to review your work, and to make sure everything is ready to go.

Several groups in the past have begun their presentation with quizzes on Kahoot! and other platforms. Let me discourage you from doing this in the strongest possible terms. These presentations are academic exercises, not games, and although Kahoot! is a lot of fun, it adds little, if anything, to an understanding of film. Please focus your efforts on helping us approach and see deeply into the film in question rather than playing party games.

Your presentations will be graded by you and by your peers; the grading forms, which will be available at the beginning of each class, will be turned in at the end of class and will serve as attendance for that day as well, so do not fail to turn in a grading form, as that will result in your being marked absent from class. Grades on the grading forms will be averaged, and all students in the group will receive the same grade. Any student who requests to do so may read the comments generated by his or her classmates that day after class, or the week following the presentation (when the grade will be available as well).

In spite of the above, if it is determined that you, as an individual participant, have not contributed equally to the presentation, I will adjust your individual grade as I feel necessary.

Exams

FINAL EXAM DATE, TIME, AND PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED.

FINALS WEEK FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER IS MONDAY, MAY 6 – FRIDAY, MAY 10.

Please do not be late for the exams, as that is distracting for those who have already begun.

All exams will be 100 questions, multiple choice. Material will come from the assigned readings, our in-class discussions, film screenings, and any supplemental material supplied during class. In other words, anything is fair game. I don't believe in "trick" questions, but I will ask questions designed to probe your knowledge and assimilation of the material covered.

Please be aware that all exams are cumulative, and cover all material taught, assigned, and discussed up to that point.

All exams will be held during our regular class period. There will be no lecture scheduled during Exam Days, so when you're done with the exam, you are free to leave.

Make-up exams will only be administered due to extraordinary circumstances and/or when arranged in advance. Medical excuses for missing an exam **MUST** be accompanied by a doctor's note.

Learning Outcomes

There are three levels of learning objectives specific to this course:

- **"Student Learning Objectives"** are what I expect you to take away from this course. These objectives are specific to this particular class, and reflect my goals in teaching this material.
- **"General Education Core Objectives"** are those overall skills that the State of Texas expects you to gain from this course. These are not subject specific, but should transfer to other areas of study.
- **"FILM 2332 Course Objectives"** are where the above objectives meet. These are the State objectives viewed through the lens of the material we will cover in this class. This section also details the way in which the achievement of those objectives will be assessed.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Develop a critical film "language" regarding analytical terminology and concepts, and be able to discuss film and the way in which meaning is conveyed through cinematography, editing, sound, narrative, genre conventions, etc.
- Become an "active" viewer who can look beyond the simple entertainment value of a film and unpack its deeper messages in a culturally-appropriate manner, and develop a sense of media literacy that extends beyond the examples presented in this class.
- Gain an understanding of the historical context in which films exist, and the manner in which history and popular culture intersect and influence each other.

GENERAL EDUCATION CORE OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will demonstrate competency in the following core objectives:

- **Critical thinking skills** – Students will engage in creative and/or innovative thinking, and/or inquiry, analysis, evaluation, synthesis of information, organizing concepts, and constructing solutions.
- **Communication skills** – Students will demonstrate effective written, oral, and visual communication.
- **Teamwork** – Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal, and consider different points of view.

- **Social responsibility** – Students will demonstrate intercultural competency and civic knowledge by engaging effectively in local, regional, national, and global communities.

FILM 2332 COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- **Critical thinking skills** – Analyze the artistic, industrial, and social-cultural dynamics of cinema (assessed via exams, group presentations, and class discussions).
- **Communication skills** – Create short film evaluations that demonstrate mastery of critical concepts and approaches that deepen engagement with cinema (assessed via exams, group presentations, and class discussions).
- **Teamwork** – Work together to sharpen analytical skills and to explore different points of view regarding assigned films (assessed via group presentations, and class discussions).
- **Social responsibility** – Demonstrate knowledge of how society and culture shape film aesthetics and reception (assessed via exams, group presentations, and class discussions).

Assignments and Academic Calendar	
January 16	Introduction to Class Review of Syllabus, Outline of Expectations What is Film? Why should we study it? Why does film matter? What is the difference between Film Analysis and Film Theory? Why are they useful? REQUIRED READING: Petty, Introduction and Chapter 1 Quiz #1: 1/16 – 1/22
January 23	An Overview of Film History Part I: 1896 - 1949 How did we get here, and where are we going? WATCH: <i>Casablanca</i> (Warner Brothers, 1942; 102 minutes) REQUIRED READING: Petty, Chapter 2 Quiz #2: 1.23 – 1/29
January 30	An Overview of Film History Part II: 1950 - Today The movies grow up WATCH: <i>Head</i> (Raybert Productions, 1968; 86 minutes) REQUIRED READING: Petty, Chapter 3 Quiz #3: 1/30 – 2/5 **GROUP PRESENTATION #1**
February 6	Cinematography, Editing, Mise-en-Scene The “how” of film WATCH: <i>Battleship Potemkin</i> (Goskino, 1925; 66 minutes) [There are many versions of this film available in various forms of media. Please make sure that you are watching the 2007 Kino International version, with the original Edmund Meisel orchestral score. This version is on reserve in the library.] AVAILABLE ON KANOPY REQUIRED READING: Petty, Chapter 4 Quiz #4: 2/6 – 2/12 **GROUP PRESENTATION #2**
February 13	Exam #1 (Covers material through Week 4)

February 20	Text and Narrative The building blocks of story WATCH: <i>Rashomon</i> (Daiei Motion Picture Company, 1950; 88 minutes) AVAILABLE ON KANOPY REQUIRED READING: Petty, Chapter 5 Quiz #5: 2/20 – 2/26 **GROUP PRESENTATION #3**
February 27	Film, History, and Culture How who we are influences what we produce WATCH: <i>Red Nightmare</i> (Warner Bros., 1962; 28 minutes); <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i> (Allied Artists, 1956; 80 minutes) REQUIRED READING: Petty, Chapter 6 Quiz #6: 2/27 – 3/4 **GROUP PRESENTATION #4**
March 5	World Film: Germany, Italy, and France The world of film doesn't begin and end with Hollywood WATCH: <i>The 400 Blows</i> ("Les quatre cents coups," Les Films du Carrosse/Sedif Productions, 1959; 99 minutes) AVAILABLE ON KANOPY REQUIRED READING: Petty, Chapter 7 Quiz #7: 3/5 – 3/11 **GROUP PRESENTATION #5**
March 12	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
March 19	World Film: Japan, China, and India Differences between Eastern film and Western film WATCH: <i>Gojira</i> (Toho Studios, 1954; 96 minutes) [Please be sure that you are watching the Japanese version of this film with English subtitles, NOT the American version from 1956 titled "Godzilla, King of the Monsters" starring American actor Raymond Burr. The correct version is on reserve in the library.] AVAILABLE ON KANOPY (as Godzilla) REQUIRED READING: Petty, Chapter 8 Quiz #8: 3/19 – 3/25 **GROUP PRESENTATION #6**
March 26	**EXAM 2 (Covers material through Week 8)**

April 2	Genre What makes a Western a Western? WATCH: <i>Little Caesar</i> (Warner Brothers, 1931; 79 minutes) REQUIRED READING: Petty, Chapter 9 Quiz #9: 4/2 – 4/8 **GROUP PRESENTATION #7**
April 9	Gender and Race Issues of representation and how movies reflect/create reality WATCH: <i>Coffy</i> (American International Pictures, 1973; 91 minutes) REQUIRED READING: Petty, Chapter 10 Quiz #10: 4/9 – 4/15 **GROUP PRESENTATION #8**
April 16	Animation Cartoons aren't just for kids WATCH: <i>Grave of the Fireflies</i> (Shinchosha Company/Studio Ghibli, 1988; 89 minutes) NO QUIZ **GROUP PRESENTATION #7**
April 23	Ideology What is this movie really about, anyway? WATCH: <i>Triumph of the Will</i> (Leni Riefenstahl-Produktion, 1935; 110 minutes) REQUIRED READING: Petty, Chapter 11 Quiz #11: 4/23 – 4/29 **GROUP PRESENTATION #9**
April 30	Mediating Reality Who decides what “reality” is? WATCH: <i>This is Spinal Tap</i> (Spinal Tap Prod., 1984; 82 minutes) REQUIRED READING: Petty, Chapter 12 Quiz #12: 4/30 – 5/6 **GROUP PRESENTATION #10**
DATE TBD	**Final Exam (Cumulative – Exam covers all material through end of term).

NOTE ABOUT POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE CONTENT

Some of the content covered in this class, whether in readings, screenings, or discussion, might contain material that could be considered controversial or offensive to some. I understand that some people, for various reasons, are uncomfortable with depictions, or discussions, of violence, sexual assault, race, or sexuality, for example, and I respect that, but I cannot tailor this class for each individual. If you feel that you do not wish to expose yourself to such material, please consider enrolling in another class. No further warnings will be given, and no exemptions from specific films will be granted to anyone for any reason.

Course Policies	Your final grade will be calculated based on the following factors: Group Project: 15% End of Chapter Exams: 10% Attendance/Participation: 10% Exam 1: 20% Exam 2: 20% Final Exam: 25% My grading scale is as follows: 97-100 = A+ 94-96 = A 90-93 = A- 87-89 = B+ 84-86 = B 80-83 = B- 77-79 = C+ 74-76 = C 70-73 = C- 67-69 = D+ 64-66 = D 60-63 = D- 0-59 = F
Grading (credit) Criteria	
Make-up Exams	Make-up exams must be scheduled in advance, or, in emergencies, supported by acceptable documentation (doctor's note, airline ticket, etc).
Extra Credit	Not available
Late Work	Not accepted
Special Assignments	Not available

Comet Creed	This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same: “As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”
Academic Integrity and Plagiarism	I have every expectation that any material that you turn in or submit for a grade will be your original work. Plagiarism – which includes buying or otherwise obtaining material from others and passing it off as your own, as well as copying or paraphrasing the work of another without proper attribution – will not be tolerated. This includes material found on Wikipedia or on the Internet. As a writer myself, I take this matter very seriously. Any assignment submitted to me and found to contain plagiarized material – in whole or in part – will receive a grade of zero and could lead to further action on the part of the University. End of discussion. Please familiarize yourself with UTD’s policy on plagiarism (http://www.utdallas.edu/library/help/PlagiarismTutorial/Textonlytutorial.htm) and take it to heart, as it is fully your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. There is no excuse for plagiarism, or for any form of academic dishonesty. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please feel free to see me. <u>Consider this your first and final warning on the subject.</u> For a detailed discussion of UTD’s policy on academic integrity, plagiarism, and other subjects, please see http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies.
Academic Support Resources	The information contained in the following link lists the University’s academic support resources for all students. Please go to http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources.
UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures	The information contained in the following link constitutes the University’s policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies for these policies.

Students with Disabilities	It is the policy and practice of the University of Texas at Dallas to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. However, written notification from the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me and allow one week advance notice. Students who have questions about receiving accommodations, or those who have, or think they may have, a disability (mobility, sensory, health, psychological, learning, etc.) are invited to contact the Office of Student AccessAbility for a confidential discussion. OSA is located in the Student Services Building, suite 3.200. They can be reached by phone at (972) 883-2098, or by email at studentaccess@utdallas.edu .
Additional Resources	The Office of Student Success offers a number of resources to assist students in a number of academic disciplines, including writing, communication, reading, and study skills. Please visit http://www.utdallas.edu/studentssuccess for more information on these helpful services.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Over the years that I've taught UNDERSTANDING FILM, I've gathered several pieces of advice that I hope will help you to succeed in this class. I offer them here for your consideration.

- TIP #1: SHOW UP.** This is the very minimum that is required for success in this class.
- TIP #2: PARTICIPATE.** Get involved with the class discussions, ask questions, challenge me. The latter is not only allowed, it is encouraged, as long as you do so politely and respectfully. I've noticed that in past classes, those that get involved and really take part in the class tend to get the best grades in the end.
- TIP #3: WATCH THE MOVIES.** Plan your time so that you can watch each film in advance of the class for which it's assigned.
- TIP #4: FORM STUDY GROUPS AND MEET OFTEN.** Meeting in small groups to study on a regular basis can help with both learning and retention, meaning that you'll be that much better prepared for each exam.
- TIP #5: MANAGE YOUR TIME.** This goes not just for this class, but for the rest of your life. The one big problem I see with students is that they haven't learned and perfected time management skills. Realize that there are only 24 hours in a day, and you have a lot to cram into each one. Learn to budget and control your time and you'll find everything gets a lot easier.
- TIP #6: DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE.** This goes along with #5, but it's particularly aimed at group projects. I expect a lot out of you with these and, frankly, so do your fellow students. It's easy to see which groups put time into their presentations, and which blew them off until the last minute, so prepare a presentation of which you can be truly proud.
- TIP #7 TAKE NOTES DURING LECTURES.** Taking notes is a good thing. Trying to transcribe my PowerPoint slides word for word is not. **DON'T TRY TO COPY THE POWERPOINT SLIDES WORD FOR WORD!** Take notes on the most important points, but realize you won't be able to get every word, nor should you try. You'll miss more than you gain that way, so don't burden yourself trying to copy down each word verbatim.
- If you need help with effective note taking, here are a few resources that offer some guidance:

<http://www.edudemic.com/effective-ways-to-take-notes-in-class/>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Take-Better-Notes>

<https://studyskills.com/students/how-to-take-notes-in-class/>

<https://www.oxfordlearning.com/5-effective-note-taking-methods/>

- TIP #8 TALK TO YOUR PROFESSOR.** If you're having a problem that's interfering with your ability to learn in class, come and see me. If you don't understand something, come and see me. If you have a question about assignments or expectations, come and see me. I'm happy to talk to you before or after class, or we can find a time to get together outside of class. The point is, don't let problems build throughout the semester. Talk to me and let's see if we can't work something out.
- TIP #9 ENJOY THE CLASS!** I want you to learn a lot about film this semester, but there's no reason that shouldn't also be fun. If you take the above to heart, we'll all have a good time in class and come out of it with a better understanding of film and media.



The Ultimate Cheatsheet for Critical Thinking

Want to exercise critical thinking skills? Ask these questions whenever you discover or discuss new information. These are broad and versatile questions that have limitless applications!



Who	... benefits from this? ... is this harmful to? ... makes decisions about this? ... is most directly affected?	... have you also heard discuss this? ... would be the best person to consult? ... will be the key people in this? ... deserves recognition for this?
What	... are the strengths/weaknesses? ... is another perspective? ... is another alternative? ... would be a counter-argument?	... is the best/worst case scenario? ... is most/least important? ... can we do to make a positive change? ... is getting in the way of our action?
Where	... would we see this in the real world? ... are there similar concepts/situations? ... is there the most need for this? ... in the world would this be a problem?	... can we get more information? ... do we go for help with this? ... will this idea take us? ... are the areas for improvement?
When	... is this acceptable/unacceptable? ... would this benefit our society? ... would this cause a problem? ... is the best time to take action?	... will we know we've succeeded? ... has this played a part in our history? ... can we expect this to change? ... should we ask for help with this?
Why	... is this a problem/challenge? ... is it relevant to me/others? ... is this the best/worst scenario? ... are people influenced by this?	... should people know about this? ... has it been this way for so long? ... have we allowed this to happen? ... is there a need for this today?
How	... is this similar to _____? ... does this disrupt things? ... do we know the truth about this? ... will we approach this safely?	... does this benefit us/others? ... does this harm us/others? ... do we see this in the future? ... can we change this for our good?

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