Film 2332 Spring 2026 Syllabus

Course Information

Course Number/Section	FILM 2332.0w2
Course Title	Understanding Film
Term	Spring 2026

Professor Contact Information

Professor	Dalton Cooper
Email Address	Dalton.Cooper@utdallas.edu
Online Office Hours	2-3 pm Thursday, via MS Teams, and by appointment

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Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions
There are no pre- or co-requisites or other restrictions for this introductory course.

Course Description
Explores the history and stylistic elements of cinema as a mass medium and an art form. The course analyzes visual language and film style, cinematic codes, and the ways that films can embody or criticize popular ideas and attitudes. Emphasis is on film analysis, film in relation to the other arts and mass media, films as artifacts, and understanding the ways that films are put together and how they function expressively.

Course Modality
This is a fully online asynchronous class. It is not entirely self-paced. Students are required to complete assigned work by deadlines listed in the course calendar, this includes group work that will require collaboration with other students within assigned windows.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

- Identify the viewing habits encouraged by mainstream commercial filmmaking and evaluate how the course has influenced your engagement with screen media.
- Analyze the significant components of film form, separating and correctly identifying the functions of mise-en-scène, editing, cinematography, sound design, and narration.
- Apply specialized vocabulary to describe precisely (verbally and in writing) patterns we observe (and hear) in films.
- Understand how film operates within historical and cultural contexts.
    - Summarize key concepts and methods used to relate films to their historical and cultural contexts (e.g., group style, genre, ideology, and stardom).
    - Identify key traits distinguishing alternatives to Hollywood filmmaking including documentary, experimental, and major art film movements (e.g., German Expressionism, Italian Neo-Realism, Nouvelle Vague); situate these alternatives historically.
    - Identify the production practices and forms of industrial organization characteristic of "Hollywood" at key phases of its historical development; assess the role of technology in establishing these practices and forms of organization.
- Apply course concepts and methods to develop written arguments about specific film examples.

Core Competencies

- Critical Thinking (CT)-to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- Communication (COM)-to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- Teamwork (TW)-to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.
- Social Responsibility (SR)-to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Required Texts

Pramaggiore, Maria, and Tom Wallis. *Film: A Critical Introduction*. Fourth Edition. Laurence King Publishing, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1786275776. The textbook is available to students **for free** as an eBook through the McDermott Library. (Indicated in the calendar as P&W.)

Both digital and print versions of the fourth edition are acceptable. The textbook can be ordered online or purchased at the UT Dallas Bookstore.

Additional required short texts will be provided in eLearning and indicated in the calendar.

Required Materials

Many required films are online available for free (through the library), but others may need to be streamed via a streaming site. All titles will also be on reserve for in-library viewing. Specific streaming advice will be listed at the end of each Module's Video Lecture.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920) (Kanopy)
The Wizard of Oz (1939) (HBO Max)
Citizen Kane (1941) (Internet Archive)
Rashomon (1950) (Kanopy)
Singin' in the Rain (1952) (HBO Max)
Tokyo Story (1953) (Kanopy)
Gojira (1954) (Kanpoy)
The Searchers (1956) (Library)
12 Angry Men (1957) (Tubi)
Vertigo (1958) (Library)
Breathless (1960) (Kanopy)
Psycho (1960) (Library)
The Conversation (1974) (Amazon Prime)
The Texas Chain Saw Massacre (1974) (YouTube)
Star Wars (1978) (Disney +)
Pink Floyd: The Wall (1982) (YouTube)
Perfect Blue (1997) (HBO Max)
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001) (HBO Max)
Spider-Man (2002) (Disney +)
Grizzly Man (2005) (YouTube)
No Country for Old Men (2007) (Pluto TV)
The Wind Rises (2013) (HBO Max)
Mad Max: Fury Road (2015) (Library)
The Witch (2015) (HBO Max)
Arrival (2016) (Tubi)
Blade Runner 2049 (2017) (Library)

Ghostbusters: Afterlife (2021) (Library)

Note: Required materials may include adult themes and content that may be offensive or unsettling to some viewers. Enrolling in this class suggests that you are willing to view, discuss, and write about such material with the same kind of detail and intellectual concentration you would give to any other genre or cultural form examined in a college course. If you have any concerns about such matters, please contact the professor immediately.

Suggested Course Materials
Suggested Readings/Texts
Recommended reading will be linked in eLearning.

ADDITIONAL NOTE: ALL ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE FED THROUGH TURNITIN, NO EXCEPTIONS. Due to the online nature of this course, the temptation and opportunity to plagiarize is heightened when compared to a standard course. This requirement will serve as a method to ensure all university policies regarding cheating are upheld.

Technical Requirements
In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements on the Getting Started with eLearning webpage.

Course Access and Navigation
This course can be accessed using your UT Dallas NetID account on the eLearning website.

Please see the course access and navigation section of the Getting Started with eLearning webpage for more information.

To become familiar with the eLearning tool, please see the Student eLearning Tutorials webpage.

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The eLearning Support Center includes a toll-free telephone number for immediate assistance (1-866-588-3192), email request service, and an online chat service.

Communication
This course utilizes online tools for interaction and communication. Some external communication tools such as regular email and a web conferencing tool may also be used during the semester. For more details, please visit the Student eLearning Tutorials webpage for video demonstrations on eLearning tools.

Student emails and discussion board messages will be answered within 3 working days, absent emergency.

Distance Learning Student Resources
Online students have access to resources including the McDermott Library, Academic Advising, The Office of Student AccessAbility, and many others. Please see the eLearning Current Students webpage for more information.

Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties
The University is committed to providing a reliable learning management system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which

prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact the online eLearning Help Desk. The instructor and the eLearning Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Activities and Assessments

***Group Discussions and Film Commentary* (20% of final grade)**
You will participate in threaded small-group discussion of an assigned film. These discussions will enable you to develop your understanding of weekly topics in collaboration with your classmates.

Each week (12 total) students will participate in a threaded small-group discussion of an assigned film. These discussions will enable you to develop your understanding of weekly topics in collaboration with your classmates, allowing me to assess and guide the class's progress.

I will provide a specific prompt, which your group will investigate through three distinct phases:

1) concrete description of the film example (150-200 words)

2) evaluation/interpretation of descriptions (150-200 words)

3) Comment/Respond to one entry from a group participant (100 words).

Students will be assessed individually based on the seriousness of their engagement with the assigned film and course materials. Everyone in the group will receive a single score based on the clarity and depth of the insight.

In order to receive full points, students MUST comment on at least one of their group's postings.

***Quizzes* (15% of final grade)**
During most weeks there will be one to two short quizzes designed to help you recall key details from assigned reading and course lectures (12 total).

***Sequence Analysis* (20% of final grade)**
To apply the skills of observation and description you've cultivated in the first half of the semester, you will submit a sequence analysis. I will select short sequences from films we've studied in the first half of the semester. You will choose one to analyze in depth.

This assignment has two parts:

1) submit a shot-by-shot breakdown of the sequence in a provided chart

2) submit a short (750-1000 word) essay in which you explain how the various formal elements of the sequence come together to advance thematic concerns or problems of

the film. Students will be assessed based on the accuracy and thoroughness of their description, as well as the persuasiveness and depth of their insights.

***First & Second Exams (20% each*):** Students will complete an open materials first exam and second exam outside of class on eLearning. These exams are multiple choice and serve to assess your knowledge of the concepts, vocabulary, readings, and films from the course. Each exam will be approximately 75 questions. Students may use any materials from the course to complete their exams but may not work with their peers. Please use library space to complete exams if your personal space is unsecured or presents distractions that could negatively impact your ability to complete the test. **You must complete the exams as indicated; there will be no late submissions and no exceptions.**

***Deadlines*:** Assignments are **due by 11:59pm on the due date (check the schedule of assignments for due dates)** listed on the course calendar within this syllabus.

Class Materials
The instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class 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. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in 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.

Class Participation
Regular class participation is expected. 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 group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures. In addition, you are expected to review at least 80% of assigned course materials to pass. 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.

Class Recordings
Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. 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. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

The instructor may record meetings of this course. These recordings will be made available to all students registered for this class if the intent is to supplement the classroom experience. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of

the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law.

Grading Policy
Assessment criteria are included with the description of each assignment. Both individual assignment grades and weighted final grades will be indicated as percentages of possible points earned. Percentages will be converted to letter grades according to the following scale:
A+ (97-100%), A (94-96%), A- (9193%), B+ (87-89%), B (84-86%), B- (80-83%), C+ (78-79%), C (7476%), C- (70-73%), D+ (6769%), D (6466%), D- (60-63%), F (059%).

Course Policies
Make-up exams
Exams are to be taken online within the window indicated in the calendar and eLearning. Per university policy, make-up exams due to conflicts for religious observance must be approved in advance; notify your instructor of anticipated conflicts within the first two weeks of the semester. Make-up exams for documented medical (or other) emergencies will be permitted by the approval of the instructor.

Extra Credit
This course does not offer extra credit.

Late Work
I do not accept late work without proof of an extenuating circumstance.

Classroom Citizenship
All course activities will be conducted in an atmosphere of friendly participation and interaction among colleagues, recognizing and appreciating the unique experiences, background, and point of view each student brings. You are expected to apply the highest academic standards to this course and to treat others with dignity and respect.

Please do not hesitate to correct me regarding your preferred gender pronouns or name.

AI Assistance
I do not allow AI usage at all in my courses. Any suspected use of generative AI will be turned over to the Office of Student Conduct.

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 Support Resources
The information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students.

Please go to Academic Support Resources webpage for these policies.

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 review the catalog sections regarding the credit/no credit or pass/fail grading option and withdrawal from class.

Please go to UT Dallas Syllabus Policies webpage for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor, but not without notice.

Course Calendar

WEEK/ DATES	TOPIC/LECTURE	READING/ VIEWING	ASSESSMENT / ACTIVITY	DUE DATE
1 01/20- 01/25	**00 Introduction**	Syllabus *The Wizard of Oz* P&W Ch. 1	Self-introductions	1/25
2 1/26- 2/1	**01 Film Analysis**	P&W Ch. 2 *12 Angry Men* & *Perfect Blue*	Analysis Quiz Analysis Group Discussion	2/1 2/1
3 2/2- 2/15	**02 Narrative**	P&W Ch. 4 Watch *Rashomon* and *Vertigo*	Narrative Quiz Narrative Group	2/15 2/15
4 2/16- 2/22	**03 Mise-en-Scene**	P&W Ch. 5 Watch *Blade Runner 2049*, *Citizen Kane*	Mise en Scene Quiz Mise en Scene Group Discussion	2/22 2/22
5 2/23- 3/1	**04 Cinematography**	P&W Ch. 6 *Tokyo Story* & *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*	Cinematography Quiz Cinematography Group Discussion	3/1 3/1
6 3/2-3/8	**05 Editing**	P&W Ch. 7 Watch *No Country for Old Men* & *Mad Max: Fury Road*	Editing Quiz Editing Group Discussion	3/8 3/8

WEEK/ DATES	TOPIC/LECTURE	READING/ VIEWING	ASSESSMENT / ACTIVITY	DUE DATE
7 3/9-3/15	**06 Sound**	P&W Ch. 8 *Singin' in the Rain* & *The Conversation*	Sound Quiz Sound Group Discussion **Midterm Exam**	3/15 3/15 3/13-3/15
8 SPRING BREAK				
9 3/23-3/29	**07 Documentary & Experimental**	P&W Ch. 9 *Pink Floyd: The Wall* & *Grizzly Man*	Documentary/ Experimental Quiz Documentary/ Experimental Group Discussion **Sequence Analysis Due**	3/29 3/29 3/29
10 3/30-4/5	**08 Ideology**	P&W Ch. 10 *Gojira* & *The Wind Rises*	Ideology Quiz Ideology Group Discussion	4/5 4/5

WEEK/ DATES	TOPIC/LECTURE	READING/ VIEWING	ASSESSMENT / ACTIVITY	DUE DATE
11 4/6-4/12	**09 Hollywood: A Global Cinema?**	P&W Ch. 11 *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* & *Breathless*	Global Cinema Quiz Global Cinema Group	4/6 4/6
12 4/13-4/19	**10 Stardom**	P&W Ch. 12 Watch *Star Wars* & *Spider-Man*	Stardom Quiz Stardom Group Discussion	4/19 4/19
13 4/20-4/26	**11 Genre**	P&W Ch. 13 *The Searchers* & *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*	Genre Quiz Genre Discussion	4/26 4/26
14 4/27-5/3	**12 Authorship**	Andrew Sarris Readings in eLearning Watch *Psycho* & *The Witch*	Authorship Quiz Authorship Discussion	5/3 5/3

WEEK/ DATES	TOPIC/LECTURE	READING/ VIEWING	ASSESSMENT / ACTIVITY	DUE DATE
15 5/4-5/10	**13 Future of Hollywood and Final Exam**	*Ghostbusters: Afterlife*	**Final Exam**	5/11-5/14