FILM STUDIES 1101: Film Narrative  
M/W 1:00 – 2:25pm Sills-Smith Auditorium  
Film Screenings: Mondays 6-8:25pm OR 8:30-10:55pm in Sills-Smith Auditorium

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Dudley Coe 208 Office Hours: M/W 2:30 – 4:00pm and by appointment

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Required Texts
David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, Film Art, 10th ed.  
Tom Schroeppel, The Bare Bones Camera Course for Film and Video  
Other required readings will be available via Blackboard

Course overview
This course will introduce you to the formal elements of film and how those elements create meaning.

We will explore…

how the visual, aural, and narrative techniques films employ create meaningful narratives that participate in or comment upon significant social and cultural experiences

how to use the principles of film form and story construction and the four categories of cinematic techniques – mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound – to analyze individual films

how genre influences cinematic techniques and vice versa

how to use your analytical skills to construct unique, contentious, and supported arguments about films and filmmaking, in class discussions, writing, and short video projects

General Notes
1. This course requires you to view films outside of class each week. Film screenings are mandatory.
2. Readings should be prepared for the day they appear on the calendar. Please bring the reading(s) to class. And please come to class ready to work with the material, and to discuss and ask questions.
3. Take notes on every film you watch for this course. Keep in mind the topic we’re focusing on for that week to guide your note taking and analysis.
4. This is a Writing Project course. You’ll hand in two of your longer papers twice: once to the Writing Assistant for suggestions on how to enhance your essay, and then, after revision, to me. Peer readers are general readers. They will likely not know the film you’re writing about and will not help you with specific details. They will help you achieve a well-organized and supported argument.
5. To save paper, all assignments will be posted on Blackboard for your reference.
Assignments

Etudes (4)
When we move into our study of mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound, you’ll work with a partner to explore each of these formal elements by creating a short clip of 45-60 seconds. This is your chance to see how these tools work by using them yourself. What do they involve? How do they function? How can they be creatively manipulated? How do they contribute to meaning? You should derive these “studies” from your readings in Film Art and The Bare Bones Camera Course and your field experiments with the formal elements. Paul and I will supply you with app-equipped iPads to facilitate your creation, but you can also use your smartphone or personal camera equipment. You will upload your etudes via Blackboard to Ensemble and you should come to class prepared to share them and talk about your experiences in making them.

Response Papers (4)
You will be responsible for writing four 250-word essays that respond to the films we view for class. Please turn in your first two responses before the midterm and the second two before the last day of class. Each essay should include a thesis proven through analysis grounded in the topic for that week and they are due in class on the Wednesday after the film screening. Grades will be determined by the insightfulness of your thesis and how well you support that thesis with analysis. Because these papers are so short, you’ll find it’s best to focus on ONE simple theme and analyze how ONE formal element works in ONE exemplary scene to develop that theme. Response papers may not be submitted via e-mail.

Quizzes
Quizzes will be unannounced and cannot be made up so please be sure to prepare for each class by completing and thinking about the reading and film assigned for each week.

Film Culture Activities (4)
You will need to attend four extracurricular film events and write a 250-word response that reflects upon your experience and discoveries at these events. Qualifying events include on-campus screenings and cinema-related lectures, Bowdoin Film Society screenings (1), screenings at the Eveningstar, Frontier, other theaters (in Maine or away), film festivals, etc. Films screened for a class in which you are currently enrolled do not qualify as film-culture activities. All film-culture responses due by Dec. 9.

Papers (3)
In Paper 1, you will complete a detailed segmentation of an assigned film. In Paper 2, you will investigate how mise-en-scène contributes to thematic development. And in Paper 3, you will analyze a film using at least three of the formal properties we study. You will only be writing on films screened for this class. I am delighted to consult with you as you develop your papers.

Midterm and Final Exams
The two-part midterm will cover the films and concepts we have studied up to that point. The first part (Mon) will include T/F, multiple choice, and short essay questions. The second part (Wed) will ask you to write short essays in which you analyze 3 clips. The cumulative final will assess your knowledge regarding: 1) the tools, skills, and vocabulary required for film analysis, 2) your understanding of how a film’s formal elements work together to create a meaningful whole, and 3) your visual analytical prowess. The final will consist of multiple choice and T/F questions, short essay responses, and clip analysis.

Participation
I will derive the participation grade from your in-class work and etude teamwork. I will also consider your attendance in class and at screenings. Which is why quizzes cannot be made up and response papers may not be turned in via e-mail.
Grade Breakdown:
Quizzes & Film Culture Activities 10%
Paper 1 (Segmentation) 10%
Paper 2 (Mise-en-scène) 10%
Participation, *Études* (4) and Response Papers (4) 15%
Midterm 15%
Paper 3 (Formal analysis) 20%
Final exam (cumulative) 20%

_I do not accept late work except in the case of College-approved holidays or documented emergencies._
_For each 24 hours a paper is late, I deduct 1/3 of a letter grade._

Academic Honesty
Plagiarism seriously compromises the integrity of the classroom and your educational experience and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person’s thoughts, words, judgments, ideas, etc. as your own. Direct quotations must always be identified with full reference to their sources according to MLA guidelines. You can find details on proper citation practices at: [http://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/academic-honesty/how-to-cite.shtml](http://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/academic-honesty/how-to-cite.shtml). You must also reference sources within your text if you paraphrase or summarize another person’s ideas or judgments and include a Works Cited reference. If you incorporate found footage or audio within one of your video projects or are assisted in your videomaking efforts by others, you must reference their contribution via end credits. Though you may refer to our assigned readings or others to contextualize your thesis or argument for any written analysis of films we view for class, _I expect your analysis of the films to derive from your own original interpretation._ Your analysis should not include references to scholarly resources (assigned or otherwise). Similarly, your film productions should exclusively involve footage of your own creation, unless the assignment calls for the use of found or appropriated footage.

Courtesy in the Classroom
Please be respectful of our time together by silencing and putting away your phone before class begins. Laptops may only be used with the permission of the instructor, and then only for the purpose of taking notes. Finally, please eat and visit the restroom before or after class, not during it.
~~ Course Calendar ~~

**Week 1: Film as Object of Academic Study**
**Screening:** Winter’s Bone (Debra Granik, US, 2010, 100 min)

What makes analytical writing different from film reviewing?
Sept 7: Course Introduction, review vs. analysis (from Corrigan *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*)
   Paper 1 Segmentation assignment (due 9/30)

Sept 9: Film Form & Theme: Film Art Chapter 2 and excerpt from Bill Nichols’ *Engaging Cinema* (Blackboard)

**Week 2: Narrative & Narration**
**Screening:** Before the Devil Knows You’re Dead (Sidney Lumet, U.S., 2007, 117 min)

Sept 14 (Rosh Hashanah): Film Art 72-99 and excerpt from McKee *Story* (Blackboard)

Sept 16: Discussion: Development in Before the Devil Knows You’re Dead
   Etude assignment

**Week 3: Mise-en-scène: The world before the camera**
**Screening:** The Shining (Stanley Kubrick, U.S., 1980, 142 min)

Sept 21: Film Art 112-154 and Bare Bones 21-42 & 72-79; mise-en-scène etude due

   Paper 2 assignment (draft due 10/7; final due 10/26)

**Week 4: Cinematography: Framing Meaning**
**Screening:** Manufactured Landscapes (Jennifer Baichwal, Canada, 2006, 86 min)

Sept 28: Film Art 160-195; Bare Bones 1-20

Sept 30: Segmentation due; Discussion: Composition & Ideology

Oct 1: Intersections: Making Connections, Moving Forward “Teach-in” on Social and Climate Justice

**Week 5: Cinematography: Sharing Insights**
**Screening:** Punch-Drunk Love (Paul Thomas Anderson, US, 2002, 95 min)

Oct 5: Film Art 195-216; Bare Bones 67-70; cinematography etude due

Oct 7: Paper 2 draft due; Discussion: Perceptive Cinematography

**Week 6: Fall Break & Midterm Review**
No screening this week

Oct 12: Fall Vacation

Oct 14: Midterm review; come prepared – bring questions!
   Final paper assignment (draft due 11/18; final due 12/9)

   Please be sure you’ve turned in your first two response papers by this date!
**Week 7: MIDTERM**
Screening: Midterm clip reel (three film clips that you will be asked to analyze for Part 2)

Oct 19: Midterm Part 1 (T/F, multiple choice, short answer)

Oct. 21: Midterm Part 2 (Clip analysis)

**Week 8: Music: Composing for the Cinema**
Screening: The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Robert Wiene, Germany, 1920, 67 min)
*One screening only @ 7:30 – with live musical accompaniment by Les Sorciers Perdus!*

Oct 26: Special guest: Mark Tipton, Executive Director, Portland Conservatory of Music; to prepare for his visit, please read “Music” from Giannetti’s *Understanding Music* and watch the video of Paul Haslinger speaking on the role of the film composer (both on Blackboard) and bring three questions to class (to turn in to me and to ask Mr. Tipton)

**Final Paper 2 Due**

Oct 28: Discussion: The role of music in the cinema experience

**Week 9: Sound: Aural Affects**
Screening: The Conversation (Francis Ford Coppola, US, 1974, 113 min)

Nov 2: *Film Art* 266-298; sound etude due

Nov 4: Discussion: Sound: Environment, Emotion, and Perception

**November 2-6: World Cinema Festival!!**

**Editing**
*Choose one editing etude to tackle during this unit: 1. graphic & rhythmic sequence (artistic): due 11/9; 2. basic sequence (storytelling): due 11/16; OR 3. associational sequence (conceptual): due 11/23*

**Week 10: Editing: Making Connections**
Screenings: Regen (Rain, Joris Ivens & Mannus Franken, Netherlands, 1929, 12 min) and Man with a Movie Camera (Dziga Vertov, Soviet Union, 1929, 68 min)

Nov 9: *Film Art* 218 – 232, Bare Bones 71, and Vertov “Council of Three” (Blackboard); graphic & rhythmic or “Kuleshov” etude due

Nov 11: Special guest: Shawn Beaty on editing and ethics

Film culture screening: The Changing Face of Harlem (Shawn Beaty, 2015)

**Week 11: Continuity Editing**
Screening: Strangers on a Train (Alfred Hitchcock, U.S., 1951, 101 min)

Nov 16: *Film Art* 232-255; Bare Bones 43-66 and 80-85; basic sequence etude due

Nov 18: Discussion: Making Progress, Masking Cuts & Building Emotions; **Final Paper Draft due**
**Week 12: Alternatives to Continuity**

**Online and In-Class Screenings**

- *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (Maya Deren, US, 1946, 15 min) – Blackboard (view for Mon class)
- *Desistfilm* (Stan Brakhage, US, 1954, 7 min) – Blackboard (view for Mon class)
- *Report* (Bruce Conner, US, 1967, 13 min) – In class

Nov 23: *Film Art* 255-260, 369-379; “Poetry and the Film” symposium transcript (Blackboard); **associational étude due**

Nov 25: Thanksgiving Holiday

**Week 13: Genre and other contexts of cinematic meaning**

**Screening:** *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, US, 1982, 117 min)

Nov 30: Choose your own adventure! By working with Carmen Greenlee’s research guide on genre and genre characteristics to parse out what genre is, why it exists, how it’s used, and what characterizes specific genres like film noir, science fiction, Westerns, musicals, documentary, etc. (and why “genre” might not easily apply to all of these practices)

Dec 2: Discussion: Creating & Blurring Boundaries

**Week 14: Films About Film**

*The Wolfpack* (Crystal Moselle, US, 2015, 90 min)

**Special screening:** Tuesday Dec 8 @ 8pm @ Frontier (one screening only)

Dec 7: Nichols “Why Are Ethical Issues Central to Documentary Filmmaking?” (Blackboard)

Dec 9: **Last day of class.** Review day! Please bring questions to class. **Final Paper Due. And please be sure you’ve turned in all of your film-culture assignments and your last two response papers by this date.**

Final Exam: December 17 @ 9am-12Noon in Sills Smith Auditorium