

Eastern Oregon University Course Syllabus

Number of Course:

ENGL 207

Name of Course:

Applied Film Criticism

Catalog Description:

An introduction to a wide range of critical traditions, including popular journalistic and academic film criticism.

Credit Hours:

3

Required Texts or Suggested Materials:

Link to the EOU Bookstore: [Eastern Oregon University Bookstore \(opens in new tab\)](#)

Prerequisites:

ENGL 195 or 199, and college-level reading and writing skills.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the quarter, you should be able to:

- Know and use basic film terminology
- Understand and discuss major trends in film criticism and theory
- Analyze films using different critical approaches
- Determine how films work to shape our values and culture by examining form, context and craft of filmmaking and writing about film.
- Better understand your own ideas and assumptions about the media.
- Experience an overview of Hollywood film history, industry, genres, and auteurs

Course Requirements:

- Class Description:
 - I will post notice of weekly assignments on the “Announcements” home page of the course site. The assignments themselves will be posted under “Assignments”. The Discussion Board will have weekly prompt questions for you to participate in as your attendance/participation/discussion.
 - Lecture material will be posted under “Course Documents”.
 - There will be lecture material many weeks for you to read (in addition to textual reading assignments) which will help you analyze reading material, contextualize films and/or offer ideas to think about on the “Discussion Board”. The class will “meet” twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This does not mean we will have virtual classes in real time.

- It means that we will have a Tuesday and Thursday assignment or class-related activity. Generally, on Thursdays I will post a lecture for the assigned chapter of the following week. I will assign the film, post the questions for the Discussion Board, and give you a “take home” viewing assignment on Thursdays as well.
- This means you can read the lectures and watch the next week’s film anytime from Thursday-Monday. On Tuesdays, your screening response writing for a film screened will be due, emailed to me directly.
- Chapter reading quizzes will be due on Tuesdays. Discussion board posts are also due on Tuesdays.
- You should then post at least two responses to two different class members’ discussion posts by Thursday of that same week. Therefore, you will have work due on both Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week.
- Discussion Board posts need to be timely—any posts after the week they are due will be disregarded and will not count toward attendance, homework, or participation at all.
- The class will have moved on by then. It would be like showing up to a class when nobody is there.
- Class Routine:
 - This routine of weekly due dates will also be made clear on the course home page “announcements” as assignments are posted.
 - Thursdays:
 - Lectures posted on chapter material under “Course Documents”
 - Film assigned
 - Questions for next Discussion Board posted
 - Take home viewing assignment posted under “Assignments”
 - 2-3 responses to fellow classmate “Discussion Board” posts from previous Tuesday due
 - Tuesdays:
 - Film viewing written assignments due
 - Film Discussion Board Comments due
 - Quizzes due
- Film Screenings:
 - It is important to attend carefully to these films, taking copious notes on them: the films play a similar role in a film studies class that novels do in a literature class. That is, you must study the films to understand most of the other material of the course.
 - Many of these films will probably not be immediately available at your local rental store so you need to plan ahead and order them on-line. We will be looking at one film a week.
 - PLAN AHEAD BY LOOKING AT THE SYLLABUS. It will be important for you to keep up with the weekly screenings as there will be lectures, assignments, discussions and quizzes assigned for each weekly film.
 - If you are an on-campus student you might want to coordinate with each other to rent a single copy of a film and watch the film together.

- Lecture
 - Lecture material will be posted under “Course Documents”.
 - There will be lecture material many weeks for you to read (in addition to textual reading assignments), that will help you analyze reading material, contextualize films and/or offer ideas to think about on the “Discussion Board”.
 - You will be responsible for ascertaining the lecture material as well as material in the textbook and films studied.
- Attendance Policy/Late Work
 - The material presented in this course is chronological and cumulative. Hand your work in on-time. One point per day late will be subtracted from late written homework. (This gets pretty serious pretty quickly if, say, the total points available per assignment is ten.)
 - As noted above, late contributions to the Discussion Board will not obtain credit. This is your weekly course attendance. Late quizzes will not be available or accepted (for obvious reasons).

Grading Policies:

This is not an easy class. The information I'll be presenting and films we'll be discussing are often theoretical, difficult, challenging. Read the textual material carefully. Use our discussions boards to work through this new material. That confusion is invigorating and is the fuel that will drive your education. I've attempted to structure the course so that it will be challenging, yet accessible, to students of varying levels and abilities. Only in the rarest of circumstances do I offer an “Incomplete” and then only to a student who has completed the majority of the work in a timely manner. I do not offer “Incompletes” for students who simply stop participating in class.

Means of Assessment:

- Screening Responses:
 - These will be weekly response exercises on the film we study for the week. They will take a variety of forms: A series of short, observational and interpretive questions for the film or a longer essay question (1-2 pages) for the film. Your viewing of the film should be attentive and careful. The weekly screening response assignment handouts will help guide you through this process and collate your ideas.
- Viewing Disclaimer:
 - Some of the films we'll be watching are definitely “R” rated and may contain objectionable material: sexually explicit, graphically violent, morally corrupt, illegal drug use, etc. If you are not used to such things, brace yourself. If you object violently to such things, perhaps this isn't the course for you; please consider another. None of the films shown actually advocate or promote objectionable behavior but rather provide an opportunity to discuss, analyze and/or criticize these elements in our culture at large. You will be asked to analyze and respond to the films screened.

- Quizzes will cover the reading material, lecture material and the filmmakers and films assigned. They will generally consist of on line, timed, objective quizzes.
- On-Line Discussions
 - Will be a means for you to share your ideas about the film being studied or topics in our text material. To be “in attendance” and receive credit for attendance you must post thoughtful, engaged comments at least twice per week:
 - on Tuesdays with your own observations or comments (which could well be a selection from your Screening Response Sheets) and on Thursdays which respond to two posts from other members of the class for that week. This way, you will generate discussion items as well as participate/respond to another’s discussion items.
 - Consider these posts as equivalent to a comment you might offer in a live classroom. Other discussions and “getting to know you’s” such as conversations about careers, the weekend, likes and dislikes, etc. will not contribute to your attendance/participation grade (except during the first week of class).
 - These are not discussions about whether you “liked” or “hated” the film.
 - The on-line discussion board should be focused on applying material from the week’s reading assignment to your understanding of the film.
- Your grade in this class will be based on the following:
 1. Class participation and attendance (Discussion Board)
 2. Critical Response assignments on films viewed
 3. Textbook and lecture-based quizzes (late quizzes will not be accepted)

Brief Outline of Course:

This course develops an understanding of film as a complex cultural medium through the discussion of key theoretical and critical approaches including realist/expressionist theory, narrative theory, genre criticism, auteur theory, feminist theory, ideological interpretation and journalistic criticism. Finally, we will assess and analyze criticism as a useful, functional way of engaging in dialogue with classic and contemporary films. The course combines weekly feature-length viewings with lectures, on-line group discussions, and written assignments. This course will also introduce students to some landmark moments in Hollywood cinematic history. We will be trying to look more deeply at the nature of film itself, its social and psychological roles, and the interrelationship of individual films and filmmakers with viewers. Some of the questions that we will deal with include:

- How are narrative films structured?
- What is “cinema”?
- Who is the artist behind the film (or is there one)?
- How do films express ideology, both implicitly and explicitly?
- How do audiences react to and interpret what they see?
- How are race, gender, class and other factors represented in film?
- How do we categorize films? How has genre theory influenced filmmaking practices and spectator expectations and reception?
- How are films reflections of their culture?

General Education Category and Outcomes:

NA

University Writing Requirement Outcomes:

NA

Writing Center Statement:

The EOU Writing Center provides a place — physical or virtual — where every EOU student can find an interested, responsive reader. Writing tutorials are free of charge for EOU undergraduate and graduate students and are available for writing at any course level and for writing resumes, job letters, and graduate applications. For drop-in hours or to schedule in-person, synchronous online, or asynchronous online tutoring, please visit the EOU Writing Center: [Writing Center – Eastern Oregon University \(opens in new tab\)](#).

Classroom Decorum:

NA

Academic Misconduct Policy:

Eastern Oregon University places a high value upon the integrity of its student scholars. Any student found responsible for an act of academic misconduct (including but not limited to cheating, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication, facilitation, plagiarism or tampering) may be subject to having his or her grade reduced in the course in question, being placed on probation or suspended from the University, or a combination of these.

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities Policy:

Any student who feels they may need accommodation for any type of disability must contact the Disability Services Office in Loso Hall, Room 233. Phone: 541-962-3081.

Disclaimer:

This standard syllabus provides only general information on the course. For those enrolled in the course a detailed syllabus will be provided by the Instructor at the beginning of the term. Please keep in mind that not all courses are offered every year.

Syllabus Prepared By:**Date:**

Edited 03/09/2026