

LIT 114
Film as Literature

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Required Text

Boggs, Joseph M., and Dennis W. Petrie. *The Art of Watching Films*. 8th Edition.

Boston: McGraw Hill, 2012.

Note

The LLCC Catalog notes that this course carries skill level advisories for both reading and writing. This means that students must possess college level skills to do well in this course. Possessing college level writing skills means that you are capable of reading college level material and writing college level essays and that you understand what constitutes plagiarism and other academic dishonesty. I strongly recommend that you have completed at least COM 111 before taking this class.

Course Description and Purpose

In this course the film is approached through almost the same formal methods of analysis and study as those commonly used for the novel. The primary emphasis will be interpretive.

Course Policies

All assignments must be turned in to pass this course. Attendance, which is solely your responsibility, is essential to doing well in this course, so attend every class if you want to succeed. Lack of attendance will show in the diminished quality of your work, and your work will be rewarded accordingly; I will lower your grade at my discretion for poor class attendance and participation. **Students who miss three or more classes before midterm will be dropped at midterm.** However, when absences are unavoidable, you are solely responsible for finding out what you missed, and in-class writings and quizzes cannot be made up. **If you must miss more than one class in the same week, contact your professors. If you miss two or more classes in a row, I will not accept your work until we discuss the situation; I don't distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.** Furthermore, you will arrive on time and be ready for class when it begins, and you will stay the entire class period. You will prepare for class as instructed, or you will be dismissed for the day and counted as absent. If you must come late or leave early, discuss it with me beforehand. Either way, late arrivals and early departures are rude and disruptive and count as half of an absence and will count toward absences for

midterm dismissal from the class and for lowering your semester grade as discussed below. If you arrive after the film has started, find a seat quietly and immediately. Do not drop an essay off or look for the sign-in sheet. You may sign the sheet after class, but it is your responsibility to remember to do so. **The sign-in sheet is the only method I use for taking attendance in this class, so if you don't sign the sheet, you will be marked as absent for the day.** Additionally, frequent late arrivals, early departures, or excessive absences will be grounds for dismissal from the class. **Furthermore, each absence after the fifth, at any time in the semester, will cost you one full letter grade on your final grade for the semester.**

Conduct

SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES BEFORE ENTERING THE CLASSROOM.

DO NOT TALK OR WHISPER WHILE WATCHING FILMS IN CLASS!

You will conduct yourselves as adults in this class. To remain in this class, you must behave maturely, courteously, and responsibly. Bring your text to class, be attentive, take notes, and actively participate. If you engage in the following activities, **you will be dropped from this class:**

- hold a private conversation
- sprawl out on your desk
- doodle
- read outside materials
- use your cell phone for any purpose
- treat other class members rudely
- pack to leave before I dismiss class
- sleep
- pass or read personal notes
- study for other classes
- groom yourself
- wear earphones or ear buds (even in one ear or around your neck)
- wear sunglasses
- act in any other childish way

I reserve the right to extend this list if an unanticipated form of unacceptable behavior arises. I hope we will have some fun in class, but I will not tolerate the above behaviors. **This is the only warning on this matter.** Furthermore, I am not going to put up with immature people who don't want to do assigned work, so if you fall into that group, you will be better off dropping this class today. Finally, do not turn to look at the clock. I know how to tell time and will let you know when class is dismissed. If you are bored, drop the class.

Course Work

In LIT 114 we will watch and discuss films, both theatrical releases and others, and these films will be presented as they were originally released. They will neither be edited nor censored in any way, and some of these films contain violence, language that might offend some students, nudity, sexual situations, or other elements that might cause some students to feel uncomfortable. Remaining in class after today indicates that you

have made it your responsibility to watch these films. **Additionally, because watching films for academic purposes requires a higher level of attention, you will watch each film at least one time in addition to our classroom viewing.** Again, due to the necessity for paying attention to details, take notes and refrain from talking while we view each film. **If you talk during a film, you will be warned, and if it happens a second time, you will be dropped from the class permanently.** Save all graded materials when returned.

You will write one five-page paper this semester—a separate assignment sheet will be given to you. The due date for this paper is April 5, 2012; however, I will accept it if you choose to submit it early. You will also write a brief (400-word—minimum length) response for each theatrical film we watch (no essays for the films you view from the independent viewing list). These responses must **focus on a single literary element** of the films (such as theme, character development or character types, how characters are made interesting, foreshadowing or symbolism, one of the elements of a good story, setting, and many others), **must use appropriate literary terms**, and must be presented in the form of a **complete essay**. Do not write about the same topic more than twice. Neither the five-page paper nor the film responses will include information from outside sources; your ideas will always control your writing. If you receive grades that are unacceptably low by your standards on your essays, see me immediately so we can correct problems. As with any writing assignment, take advantage of the Writing Center on the lower level of the campus library. Writing Center staff members are skilled teachers—a resource that shouldn't be overlooked. **When you write essays, proofread and check spelling—this includes checking imdb.com for proper spelling of character names and film titles.** In-class writings, reading assignments from our text, quizzes, and tests make up further elements of coursework for this class, and in-class writings and quizzes cannot be made up. Active participation in class discussions is required. This class lives or dies based upon the expression of your ideas, and expressing those ideas will help you clarify your understanding of course materials, which will help on quizzes and tests. Besides, if you guys don't speak up, you have to listen to me—that would be boring for all of us!

Unless otherwise noted, all essays will be composed on a computer and printed to hand in. Composing on computer requires the use of flash drives or other portable memory devices. **Save your files to at least two flash drives or other devices.** Computer, printer, disk problems, missing computer files or printed documents, and college activities do not constitute valid reasons for missing a deadline; your assignment will simply be late. Furthermore, if you type your assignments on a typewriter, be sure to make a photocopy of each assignment before you submit it to me. **Handwritten copies will not be accepted unless you have a condition that has been documented by LLCC staff and that prevents use of a keyboard. Emailed essays will not be accepted. If you fail to submit a paper because you haven't been coming to class, your best bet will be to drop the class. Furthermore, if you haven't been attending class regularly, I reserve the right to NOT accept your essay submissions. Late essays will be lowered in grade at my discretion if I choose to accept them, and the five-page paper will not be**

accepted late. All assignments must be turned in to pass this course. Additionally, a comprehensive final exam will be given on May 3, 2012.

Required supplies that must be brought to every class meeting include a notebook or loose leaf paper, pens (please, only blue or black ink for in-class writing and quizzes), and your text. This list is subject to revision if our needs change. You will also need access to a good dictionary. Have your notebook open and take notes when class begins. **You will take notes as we watch the films and during class discussions**, and those notes **will** be taken in writing with pen and paper—no laptops.

Plagiarism/Academic Integrity

Cheating, lying, attempted intimidation, and plagiarism have serious consequences in this course, and any one of these actions could result in your dismissal from the course. **Be sure to read Lincoln Land's policy concerning these issues as presented in the current catalog. Simply put, plagiarism consists of presenting someone else's work as your own. Don't do it! The consequences will be severe. If plagiarism or other academic dishonesty is proven, a grade of F will be assigned for the semester, and the college will be notified and might take further steps.** Copying and pasting from a source, for example, will automatically earn you an F for the semester. If you don't know what plagiarism is, see me in my office or find out some other way. Ignorance will not be an acceptable defense. Finally, I will retain the original copy of any paper for which plagiarism is proven.

Grading

Grading will be based on the written assignments, class participation, in-class writings, quizzes and tests, and other activities as described above. If we have an active classroom environment (this means everyone is contributing to the discussion), you will be graded on five elements:

Five-page Essay (100 points)

Film Response Essays (200 points)

Final Exam (100 points)

Quizzes (100 points)

In-class writing, and class participation—used to reward those people who work hard during the semester. If you don't plan on participating, why take the class?

What Students Should Learn in LIT 114

- To study the film as a popular art form
- To define a system of esthetics; to judge films by formal, reasoned standards
- To recognize and discover the language of film, its images and sounds, and its art and artists
- To analyze films for their tone, themes, and meaning
- To recognize the styles and artistic techniques of films

- To examine and come to know techniques of camera movement, transitions, shooting angles, editing, mixing, framing, focus, lighting, etc.
- To study exceptional directors, the various vocations of film art, the relationship of film to other arts, production methods, author theory, foreign films, the "Hollywood" novel, the intellectual climate of Hollywood, etc.
- And ultimately, to understand, to know, to be able to enter intellectual discourse about films.

Notice

If you have a condition that has been documented at LLCC and that requires special accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. I will help in any way I can. Also, problems sometimes arise which cannot be handled easily alone. If this happens to you, speak with someone who can help. Don't let things get out of hand before you look for assistance. If you want to speak with someone but don't know who to contact, see me, and I will assist you in making initial contact.

Staying in the Course

By remaining in the course, you acknowledge you have read and agree to follow all the policies covered in this document. If you cannot live with the class policy, you must drop the class or suffer the consequences.

Dropping the Course

You are responsible for understanding LLCC's procedure for dropping a class. If you stop attending but don't follow the proper procedure for dropping a class, you will receive a failing grade. Also consider your financial aid package and insurance matters before you withdraw from a class.

Important Dates

January 19, 2012	Weekday classes begin
January 12, 2012	Last withdrawal date for tuition refund
January 13, 2012	Last day for adding classes
January 16, 2012	Martin Luther King Day (no classes)
March 2, 2012	Mid semester
March 3-11, 2012	Mid-semester break (college closed)
March 12, 2012	Classes resume
March 27, 2012	Professional Development Day (no classes)
April 27, 2012	Last withdrawal date for W grade
May 1, 2012	Graduation application deadline for Spring
May 4, 2012	Classes end
May 11, 2012	Commencement

Last Word

Don't wait until the semester is half over to become concerned with what your final grade will be. If you aren't concerned from the beginning, you will probably not end up with the results you desire. My class is a whine-free zone, and I simply will not tolerate immature or rude behavior. If changes occur in my office hours, or if errors exist in this policy statement, you will be notified. Re-read this policy statement multiple times during the course of the semester.