

Missouri Western State College

Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences

ENG 210-07 Approaches to

Literature: Film Literature

Class meets Tuesday 12:30-3:20 MC205

Spring 2001

Basic Information

Instructor Information

Dr. Karen U. Fulton, Professor

Communication

Tel: 271-4317(work)1-660-582-8830 (home)
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Office Hours

Office: 204A JGM (beginning of semester)
9-10MW, 2-4M, 2-3W; other times by appointment

Required Texts

Dick, Bernard. *Anatomy of Film*, 3rd edition. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
Wharton, Edith. *The Age of Innocence*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1997.

Other Required Supplies

Access to word processor with spell-checker or a typewriter and a good dictionary
A 3 ring-binder and a supply of punched 8-1/2" x11" notebook paper for class use. Materials
will be distributed to you already punched. Class assignments, responses, or other work
completed on torn, spiral bound or ripped paper will be penalized.

Course Objectives and Means

English 210 fulfills Category IV General Studies requirements. These goals can be found on
<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/genstud.asp>. All English 210 sections provide practice in
reading poetry, prose fiction, and drama.

General 210 Objectives:

- Recognize the major characteristics of literary genres.
- Discuss literature, orally and in writing, with assurance.
- Appreciate literary works that are encountered.
- Understand the different ways in which literary themes may be treated in texts.

Objectives for Film Literature:

- Recognize major characteristics of the various film genres and the literature on which the films are based as well as the literature the films generate.
- Discuss films and film literature orally and in writing with assurance.
- Appreciate filmed literary works that you encounter.
- Understand the different ways in which a literary theme may be treated in film.

General 210 Means:

- Read poetry, fiction, and drama.
- Investigate various methods of approaching and understanding literature.
- Write papers, including themes and essay examinations.
- Read a variety of literary works in which a chosen theme is dominant.

Film Literature Means:

- View various film productions, read works on which films have been based, read a variety of criticism generated by film.
- Investigate various methods of approaching and understanding films and their literature.
- Complete written responses and quizzes on films viewed, as well as papers and essay examinations.
- Read a variety of critical and creative works on film or from which films have been made.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be recorded at each session. Class work is distributed and usually completed during the same class session. This work is graded (see grading policies); the resulting points make up one third of the final total. When written work is not completed during the class period, students will complete and sign a rating sheet at the end of the hour. There is no *good* way to make up a missed session.

Academic Honesty Policy

It is required that students submit their own work. Students who are guilty of plagiarism or cheating in any form will automatically receive a zero for the assignment involved and will place themselves in jeopardy of failing the course.

Student Disability Policy

Students having a disability that might prevent their maximum performance in the class should make this known to the instructor immediately so that provisions may be made for any assistance needed.

College Behavior Policies

- No cell phones, pagers, beepers or other electronic equipment are allowed in this classroom.
- Class begins at 12:30. Students who are not here when work is distributed will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.
- A sleeping student must leave and will receive an absence for the day.
- Conversation and whispering during the film is distracting to other students; a student engaging in either behavior must leave and will take an absence for the day. During the instructor's presentation of material, students should be listening and taking notes; it is rude (as well as distracting) to talk, whisper, etc. during this part of the class.
- When questions are asked, all students should listen carefully so that material does not need to be repeated.
- All work is due on time and in the format specified. If it does not conform to specifications or is late, it will be penalized.
- Class is not over until it is dismissed. It is your responsibility to pick up the material for the next class.
- You are responsible for any material handed out in class by the next class--you must be able to recall it and apply it.
- You are expected to take notes during the film to aid your ability to recall significant points. Lights are kept on at low level.

False Assumptions about this Class

Assumption 1: There is no reading in the class; we only watch films.

False. There is actually quite a bit of reading in this class. *Anatomy of Film*, a film text, provides terminology and film background. You are responsible for the reading assigned and will be quizzed over it.

The class will read a novel (*The Age of Innocence*) prior to seeing the film based on the novel. Other material will be handed out at class.

Assumption 2: All work is done in class; there is no homework.

False. You will be doing outside writing in the two assigned papers, in the take-home portions of the final, in the take-home mid-term, in web/library researches, and in the extra credit assignments if you choose to do them.

Assumption 3: The films have been chosen entirely based upon student enjoyment; therefore I will like every film in this class.

False. While I hope you enjoy the majority of these films, I primarily choose films based on their learning value and for the range of the film experience they represent. Therefore, we will see silent films and several films in black/white. If you are taking this class because you are a big fan of "Dumb and Dumber" or "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" and expect class films to be similar, you may want to rethink your decision to take this section of ENG 210. Because this class is offered as an English offering (as opposed to a mass media one), the emphasis of this class falls on such things as narrative plot and dialogue (as opposed to special effects.)

Assumption 4: Every film we see will be a comfortable experience for me; all films will reinforce my moral (belief) system.

False. One of the goals of this class is to expose its members to films that may challenge your preconceptions. While I don't try to be "avant garde" or "cutting edge" in this class, I do try to select some films that expose you to cultural, religious, and sexual points of view that you may

not have considered before or be comfortable with. If you feel that you will have trouble being open to this kind of experience and reflecting that openness in your written responses, you may want to rethink your decision to take this section.

Grading Policies

The class grade is computed on the basis of 300 points divided into thirds.

- Class work (Responses, quizzes, information sheets) 100 pts total
- Two short papers 50 pts@ 100 pts total
- Tests 100 pts total
 - A take-home mid-term @30 pts
 - A final examination @70 pts
 - 10 points survey (all or nothing)
 - 50 point take-home portion
 - 20 point day of final written responses to clips
- Total points possible 300 pts

Final grades are determined on a 10% scale; above 270 total points constitutes an "A" (300 minus 30 = 270 etc.) This final score will be lowered because of absences or late work.

Opportunities to earn a maximum of 15 points extra credit are given during the second half of the semester.

Course components

Class written work

- Written work must be mechanically clean and formatted in structured paragraphs to receive full credit. Lack of paragraph form or errors in grammar and mechanics will result in deductions from the score.
- Individual written work can earn 5 to 10 points each; the possible points will be given on the assignment. At the end of the semester, each student will have had the opportunity to amass a total of 110 points. The lowest 10 point score will be dropped for each student at the end of the semester, resulting in a total of 100.
- Written work completed on torn, spiral bound, or ripped paper will be penalized by a 2- point deduction from the grade.
- Some written work will be due after we view the film. Sometimes a short scene or shot is replayed followed by you interpreting and analyzing specific components of the scene (usually covered in *Anatomy of Film*). Sometimes the prompts are distributed before viewing the movie so you can look for materials as you view the film. In either case, names of movies, actors, directors, characters, etc. must be spelled correctly to receive full credit. These cannot be made up.
- Some written work will take place at the beginning of the hour; these work sheets will ask you to recall material (terminology, etc.) from the *Anatomy of Film*. These quizzes will be short-answer or multiple choice. These cannot be made up.
- Some written work will be take-home in nature. At the film's conclusion, a response assignment will be given. These are due at the beginning of the next class period.
- When a specific kind of response (a paragraph) is indicated by the prompt, penalties will be taken if the response is three paragraphs rather than one or if the paragraph is underdeveloped.

Short papers

- You will write two short papers (maximum 1000 words). These writings will give you a chance to reflect upon what you have viewed and to compose a full-length statement of your ideas.
- Topics for these papers will be assigned, but there are at least two options to choose from.
- Papers must be word processed or typed. Preparing your work on a computer with spell checker makes for an easier job; however, a cleanly typed copy is acceptable.
- These papers are expected to be in essay format with complete sentences, correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. When you are quoting, summarizing or paraphrasing reviews or other material, you must properly source such material within the paper and document such material in MLA style at the end.
- Each short paper is worth 50 points; a total of 100 points is possible.
- Due Dates:
Paper 1: February 20, 2001
Paper 2: April 10, 2001

Examinations

- The mid-term exam will be a take-home examination due at the beginning of the hour on March 6, 2001. The midterm will be worth 30 points.
- The final exam will consist of three parts:
 - A take-home component based on reading and viewing *The Age of Innocence*.
 - The question will be distributed on April 24, 2001.
 - The essay will be due May 1, 2001 at the last class.
 - An in-class short answer examination in response to clips of various films, and
 - An all-or-nothing survey of the class (worth 10 points)
 - Distributed April 24 due May 1.

Course Procedures

Materials

Film-based materials are distributed one week ahead. At the end of our first class, material for next week's film will be distributed. You are responsible for mastering the background material. It may be the basis for quizzes.

Your reading of the assignment in *Anatomy of Film* must be completed prior to class.

Quizzes will be given to insure that you are keeping up with reading.

Agenda

Since we meet only once a week, our time together is likely to be very full. Therefore class will start on time.

At the beginning of the semester, we are likely to start with a short (5 pt) quiz over the material in *Anatomy of Film*.

The class will move to a lecture by the instructor on the reading and how it applies to the film as well as on the film itself. Depending upon the length of the film (and films*are* getting longer), question time will follow.

If a film's length is under 2 hours, we will view it with no break.

If a film's length is over 2 hours, we will take a short (no more than 5 minutes) break around the middle of the film.

All classes will end with you handing in your "rating" slip for the film.

You are expected to keep a rating journal over the course of the semester, listing your own rating as well as the class rating of the film (which will be posted on the overhead from week to week) and the IMDb rating.

Calendar

T 1/16/01 Introduction to class. Syllabus distributed and reviewed. View "Sherlock, Jr." (Keaton, 1924), practice response answers, view "Reflections on 'Citizen Kane'"

T 1/23/01 Read *Anatomy of Film (AOF)*, Chapter 1 "Film, Cinema, or Movie: Understanding the Medium" and Chapter 2 "Graphics and Sound" prior to class. View "Citizen Kane" (Welles, 1941)

T 1/30/01 Read *AOF*, Chapter 3 "Film, Space and Image" prior to class. View "Dead Again" (Branagh, 1991) or "Touch of Evil" (Welles, 1958)

T 2/6/01 Read *AOF*, Chapter 4 "Film Genres" pages 89 to 110 prior to class. View "Singin' in the Rain" (Donen & Kelly, 1952) OR "Little Shop of Horrors," (Oz, 1986). Options for Paper #1 distributed.

T 2/13/01 Read *AOF*, Chapter 4 "Film Genres" pages 110-128 prior to class. View "Frequency" (Hoblit, 2000)

T 2/20/01 Read *AOF*, Chapter 5, "Film Subtext" prior to class. View Paper #1 (50 points) due. View "Quiz Show" (Redford, 1994)

T 2/27/01 Read *AOF* Chapter 6 "The Film Director" (pages 162-184) prior to class. View "Sunset Boulevard" (Wilder 1950). Mid-term take-home essay topics (30 points) distributed. Paper #1 returned.

T 3/6/01 Read *AOF* Chapter 8 "Film as Film." View "Eve's Bayou" (Lemmons, 1997). Mid-term take-home essay (30 points) due.

T 3/20/01 Read *AOF* Chapter 7 "Film and Literature." View "William Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet'" (Luhmann, 1996)

T 3/27/01 Read *AOF* Chapter 9 "Film Criticism." View "Strictly Ballroom" (Luhmann, 1992) Options for paper # 2 distributed.

T 4/3/01 View "Shakespeare in Love" (Madden, 1998).

T 4/10/01 Film will be selected by class vote. Paper # 2 (50 points) due.

T 4/17/01 Film will be selected by class by vote. Paper #2 (50 points) returned.

T 4/24/01 View "The Age of Innocence." Survey (10 point all-or-nothing) distributed. Essay question for final distributed.

T 5/01/01 View film selected by class.

"Age of Innocence" essay due at the beginning of the hour.

10 -point survey due at beginning of the hour.

Thursday May 3, 2001 2 pm View clips and write short responses.