



Máster en Estudios Textuales y Culturales en Lengua Inglesa **60701 - Issues in Film Studies**

Course 2014 - 2015

Curso: 1, Semestre: 1, Créditos: 7.5

Basic information

Teachers

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Recommendations to attend this course

Basic knowledge of the workings of film narratives and of film analysis is advisable but not indispensable. Students who have never done Film Studies will be provided with a basic bibliography on request.

Course Schedule and Deadlines

Presentation and discussion of the theoretical approaches included in the programme and analysis of film texts from the various perspectives provided by these approaches (cif. course schedule). Group analysis of a selection of film texts from the perspective of the critical approaches and methods presented in the theory sessions (cif. course schedule).

Presentation of a 3,000 words essay: last day of the first semester.

Home

Learning outcomes that define this course

The student, in order to pass the course, will have to show her/his competence in the following skills:

- 1:** The student can use the basic critical tools to understand and analyse films and audiovisual texts in English.
- 2:** The student can contextualize the study of film texts within the most relevant critical and theoretical approaches in Film Studies.
- 3:** The student can use the English language in a scholarly and critical environment.

4: The student can provide a critical response to audiovisual texts.

Introduction

Brief presentation of the course

The main aim of this course is to provide students with the necessary critical tools for the academic study of films and other audiovisual texts within the context of Film Studies. Together with the subject "Approaches to the Study of the Literary Text" (also a compulsory subject in the first semester) it introduces students to relevant critical approaches and the critical analysis of texts in English, and seeks to develop students' critical response to these texts. Together with the subject "How to Write a Research Article: Empirical and Applied Insights into Academic Writing" (also a compulsory subject in the first semester), it introduces students to the application of the basic critical tools to the understanding and analysis of texts in English and to the development of skills in the use of English in a scholarly and critical environment. This subject also provides the basis for the study of the following optional courses in the Film Studies Module ("Cinema, Culture and Society", "Issues in Representation" and "Film Genres").

Bibliografía

Bibliografía

Competences

General aims of the course

The expected results of the course respond to the following general aims

The main aim of this subject is to provide students with an introduction to some of the most relevant approaches used in Film Studies and to test their explanatory power through the close analysis of a selection of films in English. The specific aims of this subject are the following: i) to provide the students with basic critical tools to understand and analyse film texts in English, ii) to familiarise the students with the most relevant approaches to film texts in Film Studies, iii) to test the explanatory power of these approaches through the analysis of a selection of film texts, iv) to improve the students' skills in the use of English in a scholarly and critical environment, v) to reinforce the students' critical response to audiovisual texts.

Context/Importance of the course for the master degree

This subject is the compulsory component of the Film Studies itinerary and is therefore linked with the three optional courses related to Film Studies: "Genre, Culture and Society", "Film Genres" and "Issues in Representation".

After completing the course, the student will be competent in the following skills:

- 1:** Developing and applying original ideas in a professional as well as in a research context.
- 2:** Understanding and applying acquired knowledge to solve problems related to professional and social contexts as well as to broader multidisciplinary contexts.
- 3:** Being able to relate knowledge from different subjects, handle complex information, apply the proper methodology and frameworks, express informed critical views and provide conclusions in the form of written essays and oral presentations, in clear and proper English, aimed at both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- 4:** After acquiring the required critical and methodological skills, students are expected to possess the ability to carry out a piece of research in an autonomous way.

Relevance of the skills acquired in the course

The proposed aims of this course are crucial to provide students with a sound theoretical and methodological background that will allow them to conduct research in English successfully. Similarly, the specific aims of this subject are essential skills to carry out the research process (i.e. using critical tools to understand and analyse film texts in English, applying critical approaches to film texts and developing a critical response to these texts).

The ability to develop and apply original ideas in a professional as well as a research context is a fundamental skill to conduct successful research in the field of English studies. The same applies to the ability to interrelate knowledge from different subjects, handle complex information, apply the proper methodology and frameworks, express a critical view and provide conclusions in both written essays and oral presentations, in clear and appropriate English, aimed at both specialised and non-specialised audiences, and the ability to conduct work (research) in an autonomous way.

Evaluation

Assessment tasks

The student will prove that he/she has achieved the expected learning results by means of the following assessment tasks:

1:

I. FIRST OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

A) ONGOING ASSESSMENT

B) GLOBAL EXAMINATION (to be determined in the academic calendar):

Assessment task 1. Students are required to write **short critical essays** on literary works or films and present them orally in the class. In these essays students are expected to understand theoretical concepts and apply them to the texts under analysis. Correct use of academic spoken and written English (at a C1 level) is expected. These activities will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. Short essays will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **10%** of the final score of the student.

Assessment task 2. Students will also be required to write a **3,000 word essay** in correct academic English on a specific aspect of the course contents, on a topic previously agreed on with one of the teachers. With this essay the students are expected to demonstrate that they have assimilated the critical approaches presented by the teachers and to prove their ability to use those approaches in the analysis of specific texts. The textual analysis and critical discussion of the readings will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. This essay will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **90%** of the final score of the student in the course. A pass mark in this essay is a *sine qua non* condition to pass the subject.

Assessment criteria:

Definition of key concepts. Initial hypothesis. Use of a theoretical framework and a methodology. Use of primary sources. Literature review. Argumentation and conclusions = 70%

Independence, originality and critical examination = 10%

Information organization structure of the essay. Layout of the text. Accuracy in the use of language and appropriateness of style = 20%

2:

II. SECOND OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

GLOBAL EXAMINATION (to be determined in the academic calendar):

Assessment task 1. Students will be required to write a **3,000 word essay** in correct academic English on a specific aspect of the course contents, on a topic previously agreed on with one of the teachers. In this essay the students are expected to assimilate the critical approaches to literary texts, films or corpus of texts presented by the teachers and to prove their ability to use those approaches in the analysis of those texts.

The textual analysis and critical discussion will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. This essay will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **70%** of the final score of the student in the course. A pass mark in this essay is a *sine qua non* condition to pass the subject.

Assessment task 2. **Interview in English.** The student will debate with the teachers relevant aspects of the analysis and interpretation of the compulsory readings. In the interview, the students are expected to apply the theoretical approaches and the analytical methods studied to the analysis of various types of literary, filmic or linguistic texts. The textual analysis and the critical discussion of the readings will prove that the students have achieved learning objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4. The interview will be assessed following the established assessment criteria and the established level of exigency. It will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **30%** of the final score of the student in this subject.

Assessment criteria for Global Examination (both for essay and for the interview):

Use a C1 level of English (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically, in analyses, explanations and discussions of aspects and issues related to the subject/discipline = 30%

Use relevant theoretical frameworks critically and apply methodological approaches appropriately to a corpus of texts in English = 40%

Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustrations, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims and defend critically one's point of view = 30%

Guidelines

Guidelines for preparing the essay and participating in seminars

The students may find it useful to follow the following guidelines:

"Documento de referencia para la elaboración del ensayo"/"Guidelines for writing the essay"

1. Define appropriate key concepts and apply them appropriately to the field of research.
2. Prepare the literature review (i.e. what other scholars have stated about the topic of the essay, or about related topics).
Make sure that the literature review is sufficient in scope and relevant regarding the topic under investigation.
3. Define a thesis statement / Define the research questions.
4. State and justify the theoretical framework.
5. Define clearly the analytical categories (where appropriate, indicating overlapping or problematisation of those categories).
6. Describe the analytical methodology used for the study of the topic of the essay.
7. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
8. State a conclusion in accordance with your arguments and relate it to a wider context.
9. Show independence in reading and researching, originality and critical examination.
10. Follow the information and style conventions of the subdisciplinary field (literature, film studies, cultural studies or linguistics).

"Documento de referencia para el desarrollo de los seminarios teóricos y analíticos"/"Guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars"

1. The theoretical part of the seminar, imparted by the teacher, will provide an active learning environment in which students can develop the ability to read/view/analyze critically and conceptually, and therefore to speak and write in the classroom.
2. The seminar will provide general introductions to theoretical frameworks or an application of a given research methodology/framework to a selection of texts/films.
3. Students should bring to the seminar a draft or notes on the text or film under analysis and participate actively in the classroom discussion.
4. Questions can be posed to improve the quality of discussion.
5. Assignment of formal presentations and critical comment may also be requested for stimulating discussion.

(Adapted from www.oid.ucla.edu/students/cutf/cutfguidelines.doc)

Guidelines

The students may find it useful to use the following guidelines:

"Documento de referencia para la elaboración del ensayo"/"Guidelines for writing the essay"

1. Use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically.
2. Define appropriate key concepts and apply them adequately to the field of research.
3. Prepare the literature review (i.e. what other scholars have stated about the topic of the essay, or about related topics). Make sure that the literature review is sufficient in scope and relevant regarding the topic under investigation.
4. Define a thesis statement / Define the research questions.
5. State and justify the theoretical framework.
6. Define clearly the analytical categories (where appropriate, indicating overlapping or problematisation of those categories).
7. Describe the analytical methodology used for the study of the topic of the essay.
8. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
9. State a conclusion in accordance with your arguments and relate it to a wider context
10. Show independence in reading and researching, originality and critical examination.
11. Follow the information and style conventions of the subdisciplinary field (literature, film studies, cultural studies or linguistics).
12. Participants are expected to use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically.

"Documento de referencia para el análisis y la discusión de las lecturas obligatorias" / "Guidelines for the analysis and discussion of compulsory readings"

1. The theoretical part of the seminar, taught by the teacher will provide an active learning environment in which students can develop the ability to read/view/analyse critically and conceptually and, therefore, to speak and write in the classroom.
2. The seminar will provide general introductions to theoretical frameworks or an application of a given research methodology/framework to a selection of texts.
3. Students should bring to the seminar a draft or notes on the text or film under analysis and participate actively in the classroom discussion.
4. Questions can be posed to improve the quality of the discussion.
5. Assignment of formal presentations and critical comment may also be requested for stimulating discussion.
6. Participants are expected to use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically.

(Adapted from www.oid.ucla.edu/students/cut/cutguidelines.doc)

"Documento de referencia para el desarrollo de los seminarios teóricos y analíticos"/ "Guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars"

1. Use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically, in analyses, explanations and discussions of aspects and issues related to the subject/discipline.
2. Deal effectively with the most relevant critical approaches through their application to a corpus of texts in English.
3. Address and apply critical theories and methodologies relevant to the analysis of texts in English.
4. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
5. Approach the analysis of different texts critically.

"Documento de referencia para el desarrollo de entrevistas" / "Guidelines for interviews"

1. Use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically, in analyses, explanations and discussions of aspects and issues related to the subject/discipline.
2. Deal effectively with the most relevant critical approaches through their application to a corpus of texts in English.
3. Address and apply critical theories and methodologies relevant to the analysis of texts in English.
4. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
5. Approach the analysis of different texts critically.

Activities and resources

Course methodology

The learning process that has been designed for this course is based on the following activities:

This course has been specifically designed to train researchers in the basics of Film Studies. For this reason, the proposed activities (the critical analysis of films and the comments on, presentation of, and reflections on these analyses from various theoretical perspectives) are aimed at the application of the fundamental principles of the most relevant critical and theoretical approaches to the analysis of various sorts of representative literary texts in English.

The course is organized in three stages: 1. Learning of the critical approaches and analytical tools; 2. Application of the learnt concepts through the analysis and collective discussion of the selected films in English; and 3. Writing of an individual critical essay, applying the theoretical approaches and methods learnt, as well as the specific tools employed for the development of the selected topic of research.

Outline of the Programme

The programme offered to the students to help them achieve the learning results includes the following activities :

1: Seminars on “Issues in Film Studies” 0.4 credits. Onsite.

Theoretical and analytical seminars aimed at introducing the main theoretical approaches in the field of Film Studies. These seminars will be conducted following the “guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars”

2: Tasks/activities. 3 credits. Onsite.

Classroom activities will provide students with models for film analysis. Students will discuss both individually and in group the textual and critical analyses of a selection of films. The aim of the tasks/activities is to learn how to use/apply the critical and textual analytical tools and theoretical approaches dealt with in the course. These activities will be conducted following the “guidelines for the analysis and discussion of compulsory and recommended readings”.

1. *Eyes Wide Shut* (Stanley Kubrick, 1999).
2. *The Big Heat* (Fritz Lang, 1953), *Human Desire* (Fritz Lang, 1954).
3. *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941), *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles, 1958).
4. *The Little Mermaid* (Walt Disney, 1989), *Basic Instinct* (Paul Verhoeven, 1991).
5. *Babel* (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2006), *Auf der anderen Seite* (Fatih Akin, 2007).

3: Individual and group tasks. 5.8 credits. Onsite.

Analysis of a selection of films, which will be later discussed in class from the perspective of the theoretical frameworks proposed. These activities will be conducted following the “guidelines for activities on the analysis and discussion of compulsory and recommended readings”.

4: Tutorial activities. 0.6 credits. Onsite and online.

Assessment tasks/activities and self-assessment of classroom work. 0.2 credits. These activities will be conducted following the “guidelines for activities on the analysis and discussion of compulsory and

recommended readings”.

5: Assessment tasks/activities and self-assessment of classroom work. 0.2 credits. Offsite.

These activities will be conducted following the “guidelines for preparing the essay”.

Course planning

Calendar of actual sessions and presentation of works

1. Introduction. Basic concepts in the analysis of film narratives. The methodology of academic research in Film Studies. The importance of mise en scène analysis.

2. Star texts: The study of the film star. The origins and history of Hollywood film stars. Stars as semiotic and cultural signs. Star approaches to the analysis of film texts.

3. The author and the text: Film directors and authorship. 1950s and 60 *auteur* theories. The death and rebirth of the author. Authors as texts and as marketing strategies. Postmodern authors.

4. Contemporary Hollywood cinema: Issues and tendencies I. The New Hollywood: industrial rearrangements, the primacy of special effects, the return of the blockbuster. Independent cinema.

5. Contemporary Hollywood cinema: Issues and tendencies II. 21st century cinema. Hollywood and beyond. The new cultural context. Transnational and cosmopolitan cinema.

Practical activities

Film viewing

Bibliography

Bibliography

E-learning

virtual platform

virtual platform

Moodle Universidad de Zaragoza

<http://moodle.unizar.es>

Part of the contents of the programme and bibliography are available in this site.

Bibliography

a) Compulsory Readings:

Dyer, Richard. 'Introduction to Film Studies'. In John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, eds. *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Oxford: Oxford U.P. 1998, 3-10. (1)

Miller, Toby. 'Stars and Performance: Introduction'. In Robert Stam and Toby Miller. *Film Theory: An Anthology*. Oxford & Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2000, 595-602. (2)

Dyer, Richard. 'Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society'. In *Film Theory: An Anthology*, 603-617. (2)

Fuller, Graham. "Emotional Quicksand." *Sight & Sound*, vol. 14, issue 8 (August 2004), 30-34. (2)

Naremore, James. 'Authorship'. In Toby Miller and Robert Stam eds. *A Companion to Film Theory*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999, 9-24. (3)

Grant, Barry Keith. "Introduction" to *Auteurs and Authorship: A Film Reader*. Malden: Blackwell, 2008, 1-6. (3)

Nemes, Jill. From "Gender and Film." *An Introduction to Film Studies* (3rd ed). London and New York: Routledge, 1996, 248-257. (4)

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1989 (1975): Indiana UP, 14-26. (4)

Cowie, Elizabeth. "Fantasia". *M/f*. No. 9 (1984), 72-87. (4)

Klinger, Barbara. "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism" Revisited: The Progressive Text." *Screen*, 25. 1 (Jan-Feb 1984), 30-44. (4)

Ezra, Elizabeth and Rowden Terry. "Introduction" to Ezra and Rowden, eds. *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*. London & New York: Routledge, 2006. (5)

Benito, Jesús and Manzananas, Ana. "Border(lands) and Border Writing: Introductory Essay." Benito and Manzananas, eds. *Literatura and Ethnicity in the Cultural Borderlands*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 1-24. (5)

b) Supplementary films (by topic):

2. *It's a Wonderful Life* (Frank Capra, 1946), *Crossfire* (Edward Dmytryk, 1947), *In a Lonely Place* (Nicholas Ray, 1950), *Oklahoma!* (Fred Zinnemann, 1955), *The Bad and the Beautiful* (Vincente Minnelli, 1952).
3. *The Magnificent Ambersons* (Orson Welles, 1942), *Mr. Arkadin* (1955), *Chimes at Midnight* (1965).
4. *Titanic* (James Cameron, 1997), *Avatar* (James Cameron, 2009), *sex, lies, and videotape* (Steven Soderbergh, 1989), *Out of Sight* (Steven Soderbergh, 1998), *My Blueberry Nights* (Wong Kar-Wai, 2007)
5. *The Terminal* (Steven Spielberg, 2004), *Syriana* (Stephen Gaghan, 2005), *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* (Tommy Lee Jones, 2005), *The Visitor* (Todd McCarthy, 2008), *Gran Torino* (Clint Eastwood, 2008), *Sin nombre* (Cary Joji Fukunaga, 2009), *Cloud Atlas* (2012).

c) Supplementary readings:

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999 (1987).

Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Bazin, André. "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema." In *What is Cinema?* Vol. 1 (trans. Hugh Gray). Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1967 (1950-1955), 23-40.

Bordwell, David and Thompson, Kristin. *Film Art: An Introduction*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004 (1979).

Dyer, Richard. *Stars*. London: BFI, 1979.

Ezra, Elizabeth and Rowden, Terry, eds. *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*. London & New York: Routledge, 2006.

Fregoso, Rosa Linda. *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2003.

García Canclini, Néstor. *Culturas híbridas: Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*. Buenos Aires, Barcelona, México: Paidós, 2001 (1990).

McDonald, Paul. *The Star System: Hollywood's Production of Popular Identities*. London: Wallflower Press, 2000.

McDonald, Paul. *Hollywood Stardom*. Malden and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Naficy, Hamid, ed. *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*. New York & London: Routledge.

Naremore, James. *The Magic World of Orson Welles* (revised edition). Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1989 (1978).

Rosenbaum, Jonathan. *Discovering Orson Welles*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2007.

Bibliographic references of the recommended readings