

Syllabus



About the Course

COMM 319 Systematically studies the elements used in cinema to create meaning. On the basis of a selection of movies and movie sequences and scenes, students learn, first of all, the narrative function of time, space, *mise-en-scène*, dialogue, or sound. We explore the semiotic units and combinations that constitute the filmic grammar. Fictional characters are deconstructed in order to understand how they are created and how they fulfill their narrative function. Finally, we analyze recurrent narrative motives, themes and genres. Goal of the course is to create awareness of these narrative elements, so that student can both better understand the filmic narrative and actively use them to create meaning through filmic story telling. The course should further help students identify ideological contents behind and beyond the audiovisual discourse.

Literature

We will work with a series of articles and books chapters (as opposed to an official textbook). All the information you need will be available in the learning units.

Four movies that will be mandatory in this course.

Citizen Kane (Orson Welles, 1941) – one of the essay questions in the Midterm Exam will be about this movie.

Taxi Driver (Martin Scorsese, 1976) – the first written assignment will be based on this movie.

Nosferatu (Friedrich W. Murnau, 1929) – necessary for the second written assignment.

Apocalypse Now (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979) – the third written assignment will be about this film.

Of those films, only *Nosferatu* can be watched online for free.

The other three movies are easily accessible. You can find them in most of the public libraries in our geographic area. You can also rent them in any of the popular video platforms (iTunes or Amazon Video) for a moderate price (around \$3).

Grading Elements

Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	25%
1st Film Analysis Assignment	15%
2nd Film Analysis Assignment	15%
3rd Film Analysis Assignment	15%
Participation	10%

Exams

There will be a midterm and a final exam, which includes the contents of the whole course. Exams will cover the material you can find in the learning units of this Web-site. There will be no make-up exams (except for well documented medical emergencies).

The exams are a combination of true/false and multiple choice items and short essay questions.

Written assignments

In each paper, you will have to analyze an aspect of filmic narrative in one particular movie. Every individual paper cannot exceed 800 words. The written assignments must be delivered through the corresponding page in Blackboard Learn.

Participation:

The grade for participation will be based on an active and positive participation in the discussion forums posted in Blackboard Learn.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will be graded so you receive feedback, but will be worth only half credit (100 pt. paper receives 50 points). This is a severe penalty; it is not fair to others who met the deadlines if we accept yours late. The instructor will not accept any papers more than one week late. In the 21st century, printer troubles or computer problems are no longer reasonable excuses for late papers. The instructor suggests knowing the equipment well enough and allowing ample time in case of problems.

Course Policies

The instructor reserves the ultimate right to modify the

schedule of activities, assignments and tests for the class as it deems necessary. In addition, the professor reserves his right to assess the overall ability of the students to meet the expectations of the course and will exercise his right to pass or fail the student accordingly.

Incompletes

The University's policy on the awarding of incompletes is discussed in the catalog and will be followed in this class.

Academic dishonesty

CCSU has a zero tolerance policy on academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on homework or exams, and also plagiarism. Demonstrated cases of academic dishonesty can result in severe penalties including receiving an "F" in the class.

To learn more about this subject, please read CCSU's policy of academic misconduct at <http://web.ccsu.edu/academicintegrity/>

Accessibility Accommodations

Central Connecticut State University is committed to providing equal access to its programs, services, and activities in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Students with documented disabilities or significant medical, psychological, or temporary conditions that may warrant accommodations are encouraged to register with the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) as early as possible. OAS reviews impairment-related documentation, engages in an interactive process with students, and determines reasonable accommodations when appropriate. Although accommodation requests may be submitted at any time, accommodations cannot be applied retroactively. **To request accommodations, students**

should contact the **Office of Accessibility Services**, located in Willard-DiLoreto Hall, Suite 201, by phone: 860-832-1952 or by email: accessibilityservices@ccsu.edu. Additional information about eligibility, registration procedures, documentation requirements, and services is available at <https://www.ccsu.edu/accessibility/>.

Tentative Course Outline:

Week	Course Contents
Week 0 8/25 to 8/28	Introduction to the Course
Week 1 8/31 to 9/4	Narrative Defined
Week 2 9/7 to 9/11	Narrative Communication Model
Week 3 9/14 to 9/18	Film Syntax / The Story First Written Assignment due 9/18
Week 4 9/21 to 9/25	Mise-en-Scène I
Week 5 9/28 to 10/2	Mise-en-Scène II

Week	Course Contents
Week 6 10/5 to 10/9	Midterm Exam – Friday 10/9
Week 7 10/12 to 10/16	Events and Characters
Week 8 10/19 to 10/23	Narrative Space Second Written Assignment due 10/23
Week 9 10/26 to 10/30	Narrative Time
Week 10 11/2 to 11/6	Editing 1
Week 11 11/9 to 11/13	Editing 2 Third Written Assignment due 11/13
Week 12 11/16 to 11/20	Genres I and II
11/25 to 11/29	Thanksgiving Recess – No Contents

Week	Course Contents
Week 13 11/30 to 12/4	Narrative Communication Theory
12/7 to 12/13	Final Exams

Important Dates

Date	
8/24	Last day for full-time students to withdraw with 100% refund
8/31	90% tuition refund withdrawal deadline (full-time students) 100% tuition refund withdrawal deadline (part-time students)
9/7	60% tuition refund withdrawal deadline (full-time students) 60% tuition refund withdrawal deadline (part-time students)
9/14	Last day to drop full semester course without "W". Last day to change from full-time to part-time status. Last day to declare pass/fail and audit.
9/15 to 11/16	Withdrawal period (no permission required).
9/21	40% tuition refund withdrawal deadline (full-time students) 40% tuition refund withdrawal deadline (part-time students)
10/18	INC grades from Spring & Summer lapse to "F" (undergraduates)

Date	
10/19 to 10/30	Spring 2026 Advising period
10/21	Winter Intersession 2026-2027 Registration begins.
10/30	Spring 2027 Registration period for matriculated students.
11/17 to 12/13	Late course withdrawal period (permission required).

Contact

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Please, use the “Contact the Instructor” category in the course’s main menu for questions related to this course.