

COM300-1 FA17 - Narrative And Documentary Film

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Meeting Times & Places

Our weekly, in-class meetings will occur on Tuesdays, from 6-9:00 p.m. in RLC108. However, we will also be meeting online. The online meetings will include in-class chapter quizzes based on the *Movies and Meaning...* textbook. You'll also be doing some posting on *Discussions* throughout the semester. The *Discussions* activities will consist of online meetings involving voluntary (extra credit) participation in our "late night" (post-class-session) extra-credit postings--where you can write a short analysis about the films that were screened during each session, AND you'll be doing some required postings based on the assigned readings in the *Reel Spirituality...* textbook during the last five weeks of the course. Guidelines and deadlines for these postings are included on the *Assignments* and *Discussions* pages.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

As a result of this course, the student will display an understanding of, and/or be able to do the following:

1. Identify formative moments in the history and evolution of film technology in narrative & documentary films;
2. Identify the history of filmmaking eras (star and studio systems, etc.), the emergence of genres, the evolution of film content, marketing, and distribution, and an understanding of where the filmmaking industry is headed;
3. Identify techniques of writing, cinematography, directing, production design, acting, sound, and editing;
4. Identify how particular fictional and non-fictional films have displayed the conventions, have advanced the techniques, and exhibited trends in the motion picture industry;
5. Identify prominent filmmakers' (producers, directors, actors, etc.) styles and their particular contribution to the art and business of filmmaking;
6. Display an appreciation for--and understanding of--the relevance of film as both an art form and social phenomenon; and
7. Demonstrate an ability to formulate a critical Christian response to film as both art and social phenomenon--based on biblical principles.

Course Assumptions, Content, & Format

The course content and learning objectives derive from the following assumptions:

1. Narrative and documentary films exert **powerful social, psychological, and political force** in America and around the world;
2. The film industry has had an evolutionary development and can be better understood through examining their **history and influential people and forces** in the film industry;
3. Classic films are vivid "**artifacts**" of film history. Their contents reveal the social and political cultures of their day, along with the evolutionary progress of writing and production technologies and techniques;
4. Viewing and studying the **art** and **science** of these films can lead to a more enriched **critical appreciation** of film and documentary--as both a consumer and prospective producer, writer, director, etc., and critic of films; and
5. Film stories engage both the **affective/emotional** and **rational** parts of our being and, therefore, affect our **feelings, thoughts, values, and beliefs**. Therefore, they invite reflection and criticism from a **theological perspective**.

Course Format

1. Textbook readings and discussion of film history, theories, and production techniques;
2. Mini-lectures and screening selected films which reveal the history of the filmmaking industry--including economics, technological innovations, content and production techniques, social influences, and selected films and documentaries, and their roles in shaping the film industry;
3. Introductions to (and screenings of) selected classic, industry-shaping films (full screenings or clips), followed by short in-class discussions about the films. In addition, I will often arrive to class early (5:30 p.m.) and show documentaries on "the making of..." films, interviews with filmmakers, and other material. Come early and enjoy!;
4. You'll have the opportunity every class-night to make comments about your reflections about the film(s) that we saw and what you learned that evening; and
5. We'll have discussions on theological perspectives on film-content and film criticism, and applying a Christian worldview in the analysis and critique of films and documentaries.

Textbooks & Presentations

Required purchases:

Movies and Meaning: An Introduction to Film (6th edition), by Stephen Prince (Allyn & Bacon)

Reel Spirituality: Theology & Film in Dialogue (revised and expanded ed), by Robert Johnston (Baker Academic)

There will also be some additional selected readings on some of the films -- along with topical and issue-oriented readings related to the film industry.

Accessing In-Class Powerpoint presentations:

You have access to all Powerpoint presentations via links on the *Course Schedule* page in *Modules*

Course Schedule & Presentations

This page contains the textbook's assigned readings and chapter quizzes for each session -- along with the topics and films to be screening for each session. This schedule is subject to change -- so, be sure to check back to this website each week.

SESSION #1: Tuesday, September 5, 2017

No Movies and Meaning.... quiz

[COM300 Session 1-Silent Era.ppt](#)

- Course overview, syllabus, brief introductions
- Early filmmaking: people, events, forces, etc.
- Early short films: *Eadward Muybridge Shorts*, *Thomas Edison Shorts*, *Lumiere Brothers Shorts*, *A Trip to the Moon*, by Georges Melies, *The Great Train Robbery*, by Edwin S. Porter.
- Early screen comedy: Chaplin and others
- 1st American feature film: *Birth of a Nation*: background, content, influence, and impact on American filmmaking
- Scann & discuss: *Birth of a Nation*, by D.W. Griffith

SESSION #2: Tuesday, September 12, 2017

Movies... quizzes: Chapters 1 & 6

[COM 300 Session 2-Nanook & Jazz Singer.ppt](#)

- Quizzes: film structure and principles of sound design
- "The Documentary is Born: Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*
- Clips: *Nanook of the North* (1922)
- The 'Talkie' Takes Over Filmmaking: *The Jazz Singer* (1927) and its influence
- View and discuss: *The Jazz Singer* 1927 (89 minutes)

SESSION #3: Tuesday, September 19, 2017

Movies... quizzes: Chapters 3 & 5

[FilmSession3NEW.ppt](#)

- Quizzes: production design and editing
- "Storytelling & Editing: Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)
- Clips: *Battleship Potemkin*
- "The Hollywood Musical: Background, Techniques, and Influences"
- View clips: musicals of the 1930's-'40's and discussion
- Background: *Singin' in the Rain* by Gene Kelly, 1952

- Viewing & discussion: *Singin' in the Rain* (103 minutes)

SESSION #4: Tuesday, September 26, 2017

Movies... quiz: Chapter 7

[COM 300 Session 4.ppt](#)  

- Quiz: nature of narrative in film
- 1920s-1940's: Studios, Moguls, Genres, & Stars
- Horror & Special Effects: Clips and discussion of *Frankenstein (1931)*, & *King Kong (1933)*
- Gangster films: Clip and discussion of *Scarface (1931)*
- The Western: Clip and discussion of *Stagecoach (1939)*, by John Ford
- Featured director: Frank Capra
- "The Romantic Comedy: *It Happened One Night (1934)*, by Frank Capra
- Viewing & discussion: *It Happened One Night* (105 minutes)

SESSION #5: Tuesday, October 3, 2017

Movies... quiz: Chapter 8

[COM 300 Session 5](#)  

- Quiz: visual effects
- Dreams & Visions: Selection of Experimental Films
- Discussion: Hollywood, Independent, and International Films
- Viewing & discussion: *Run Lola Run* (1998)

SESSION #6: Tuesday, October 10, 2017

Movies... quiz: Chapter 9

[COM 300 Session 6](#)  

- Quiz: modes of screen reality
- Realism, Expressionism, Fantasy, Self-Reflexivity, and Animation
- "The 'Problem Picture' and Social Action: *The Grapes of Wrath*, by John Ford (1940)-- clips
- Intro to Documentary: Purposes and Styles
- Discussion: Propaganda Tactics
- Pare Lorentz' *The Plow That Broke the Plains (1934)*
- Documentary as Art & Propaganda: *Olympia (1936)* and *Triumph of the Will (1935)*
- Screen-scan and discuss *Triumph of the Will*, by Leni Riefenstahl
- Screen and discuss *WWII: The Propaganda Battle*, with Bill Moyers (52-min.)

SESSION #7: Tuesday, October 17, 2017

Movies... quiz: Chapter 2

[COM 300 session 7.ppt](#)  

- View documentary: *The Making of 'Citizen Kane'* (25 minutes)--before class session
- Quiz: cinematography
- View & discuss *Citizen Kane*, by Orson Welles, 1941 (119 minutes)

SESSION #8: Tuesday, October 24, 2017

Movies... quiz: Chapter 4

[COM 300 Session 8](#)  

- Quiz: acting
- Late 1940's-1950's: Motion Picture Industry Changes & Factors Driving Changes
- View portion of documentary: *American Cinema Series: Film Noir*
- The Method and Brando
- James Dean: An American Icon
- Clips: *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, *The Blob*, *The Ten Commandments*, etc.

SESSION #9: Tuesday, October 31, 2017

Reel Spirituality, Chapters 1 & 2 (Questions posted on *Discussions*)

[COM 300 Session 9](#)  

- "The Master of Suspense: Alfred Hitchcock"
- *Psycho* (1960): Background and Technique
- View & Discuss *Psycho* (109 minutes)

SESSION #10: Tuesday, November 7, 2017

READING & POSTINGS: Reel Spirituality, Chapters 3 & 4 (Questions posted on *Discussions*)

[COM 300 Session 10.pptx](#)  

- Reel Spirituality Postings
- Framework for Christian Responses to Media
- Introduction to *The Graduate* (1967)
- View & discuss *The Graduate* (106 minutes)

SESSION #11: Tuesday, November 14, 2017

READING & POSTINGS: Reel Spirituality, Chapters 5 & 6 (Questions posted on *Discussions*)

[COM 300 Session 11.ppt](#)  

- Discussion: Canvas Postings
- The 1960's: Social Upheaval and Film
- Introduction to *Easy Rider* (1969)

- View & discuss *Easy Rider* (94 minutes)
- The Documentary Tradition Continues
- View and discuss clips of *Woodstock*

SESSION #12: Tuesday, November 21, 2017

READING & POSTINGS: [Reel Spirituality](#), Chapter 8 (Questions posted on *Discussions*); *A Filmmaker's Progress* Essay postings; also, read Ch. 7, but no posting on that chapter required.

[COM 300 Session 12.ppt](#)  

- View segments of documentary: *American Cinema Series: The Film School Generation*
- Introduction to Steven Spielberg & George Lucas
- View and discuss selected George Lucas film

SESSION #13: Tuesday, November 28, 2017. Read attached items in preparation for this screening:

READING & POSTINGS: [Reel Spirituality](#), Chapters 9 & 10 (Questions posted on *Discussions*)

[Schindlers List Online Readings & Reports.doc](#)  

- View *Schindler's List* (1993)

SESSION #14: Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Movies... quiz: Chapter 11

READING & POSTINGS: [Reel Spirituality](#), Chapter 11 (Questions posted on *Discussions*)

[Session 14 Online Readings & Reports.doc](#)

[Film Session 14 Presentation](#)  

- Discussion: *Schindler's List*
- Discuss articles on the current situation of Christians in secular and religious film
- Viewing and discussion of selected Christian films

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2017, noon

Film Analysis Paper POST DUE

Final Exam Objective portion: Tuesday, December 12, 2017, 7:30-10:00 p.m. (in-class online test)

Grading Policies

ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES:

The due dates (and times) for all quizzes, postings, criticism paper, and final exam are all posted on the "Course Schedule" page of this website. The *Reel Spirituality...readings* and online posting due dates are also noted on *Discussions'* each individual posting assignment. NO LATE POSTINGS OR ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSIONS ARE ACCEPTED.

ASSIGNMENTS, WEIGHTING & POINTS:

<i>Movies and Meaning...</i> Chapter Quizzes (11)--15-25 Q's/chapter	200
<i>Reel Spirituality...</i> Discussions Postings (6 @ 40 points each)	240
Film Analysis Paper	260
Final Exam	200
Attendance & Participation	100
TOTAL POINTS:	1000

EXTRA CREDIT:

Film Reflections postings (14 postings worth up to 3 points/post): 42 points total

CUMULATIVE POINT RANGES & GRADE:

921-1000= A

900-920= A-

880-899= B+

821-879= B

800-820= B-

780-799= C+

721-779= C

700-720= C-

680-699= D+

621-679= D

600-620= D-

Quizzes & Test Information

Quiz Info

You'll have an online quiz on every chapter in the *Movies and Meaning...* textbook. The quizzes will occur during the first part of each class session--starting at 6 p.m. SHARP. Be sure to bring your laptop or smart phone to class with you to take these quizzes. The quiz questions will be based on the "Key Terms and Concepts" section at the end of each chapter. Each quiz will include 15-25 questions per chapter, and you'll have 10-20 minutes

(total) to complete one (1) or two (2) chapter quizzes for each course session. The quiz chapters and dates are included on the Modules-Course Schedule page.

Test Info: The Final Exam

The final exam will consist of an online objective test with T/F and multiple choice questions, a take home essay that you will post onto Canvas, and a peer response/critique post (on Discussions) about one of your peer's final exam essay.

Objective Part of Exam

The objective portion of the final exam will be comprehensive and will include questions derived from past quiz questions from the *Movies and Meaning...* textbook AND questions derived from the content of the Powerpoint lectures, handouts, and readings provided throughout the semester. This part of the test will include 150 questions and will be worth 150 points. You must take the test IN THE CLASSROOM, so **bring your laptop or smart phone to the classroom.**

The objective portion of the test will be available to take during the assigned test time in class: **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2016, 6-8:30 P.M.**

A final exam study guide will be provided to prepare you for the objective portion of the exam.

Essay Part of Exam

This part of the exam will include a take home essay assignment AND a peer response post on Discussions. The essay will be based on the article *A Filmmaker's Progress* by Scott Derrickson. Just click [here \(Links to an external site.\)](#) to see the article and do the reading. The essay post is due by/before: **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2016, NOON.** Post your essay as a Word document on Canvas. No tech excuses/problems for late postings will be accepted. The essay should be three (3) to four (4) pages long, typed, double-spaced. The Essay and Peer Response/Critique post is worth 50 points.

Essay Guidelines: *A Filmmakers Progress* was written by Scott Derrickson, a Biola grad and LAFSC program alum. The book is Derrickson's metaphorical comparison of his film industry experiences with the classic book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, (1678) by John Bunyan. Your task for this essay is to summarize and critique Derrickson's experience and, most importantly, his concluding comments/advice to Christians that want to be filmmakers. An outstanding essay is one that briefly summarizes the different groups that Scott experienced, but then provides a critique and either agrees with and expands upon his argument—providing more supportive reasoning, and/or disagrees with his conclusions (in minor or major ways) and includes supportive reasoning for this position. **WARNING:** although interesting and articulate, God is not done with Scott yet, and I challenge you to critique Scott's journey and conclusions (to date) and share why you think his journey is probably not over...God's not done with him yet on this subject. He has not "arrived" yet.

Peer Response/Critique Posting

I will read all of your essays, then select **the most compelling essay** BY/BEFORE Thursday, December 15, 2016, 7:00 p.m. I will post the essay on Discussions and provide you with some questions or comments to respond to in this essay. This peer-critique post is due by/before **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015, 11:00 p.m.**

The final exam is worth a total of 200 points (20% of your course grade).

Attendance & Participation Policy

From the Provost: Regular and punctual attendance at all classes in which a student is registered is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. Therefore, regular attendance and participation in each course are minimal requirements to be met. There are no allowed or excused absences except when absences are necessitated by certain university-sponsored activities and are approved in writing by the Provost.

Whenever the number of accumulated absences in a class, for any cause, exceeds ten percent of classes (this is equivalent to one and one-half weeks or longer in a 15-week semester course), the faculty member has the option of filing a written report to the Vice Provost for Academic Administration which may result in de-enrollment, pending any resolution of the excessive absences between the faculty member and the student. If more than 20 percent (three weeks) is reported as missed, the faculty member may initiate the student's de-enrollment from the course without advance notice to the student. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class, the student will be assigned a grade of "F" or "NC." There are no refunds for courses where a de-enrollment was processed.

From the instructor: I consider class attendance as a valid and important factor in my evaluation of you as a student. Working professionals (in communication and non-comm. professions) concur with this and suggest that consistent classroom attendance is a sign of a student's ability to establish priorities in their lives, and to commit to and follow-through with a task to its completion. Therefore, I expect you to make attendance a priority. This means that you will arrive by or before the class period starts, and not depart class until the end of the class session. I am willing to work with students who have extra or para-curricular activities or extreme illness or death in the family. All other absences will incur penalties. Absence from a single session (3 hours in length) in this course is equivalent to missing one week of school in a regular 3-credit hour, semester-long course.

Let this be your warning: each late arrival to class will incur an "L" note on my attendance sheet, and point reductions from your A & P portion of your course grade. Each absence will incur an automatic 20 point reduction from the "Attendance and Participation" portion of your course grade. If you have three unexcused absences, you will be dropped from the course without notification (as per provost policy). If you must be absent, I expect you to notify me in advance of the session.

Use of In-Class Phones or Computers

The use of phones, laptop computers or any other electronic devices are not allowed to be used during class time--after your quizzes. If you want to take notes in class, it must be with pen/pencil and paper. Everyone starts with 100 points for attendance in this course. If I see your head down with a device on your desk or your lap, I'll reduce ten (10) points from your attendance and participation grade for that evening. If this occurs in a future class sessions, I will mark you absent from class for each evening that I see this happening.

Thanks--in advance--for cutting the umbilical from these devices during class time. Given that I've just adopted smart phones within the past two years, I understand the attraction. But I've determined that **I** will master it AND **it** will not master me!! :-) I assume that you know what I mean on this.

If you must miss a class session, you must do the following:

1. Check out and screen the film(s) that you missed in class -- they are available for check out in the library.
2. Write a 2-3 page, typed, double-spaced essay on what you learned from the film(s)-- based on assigned chapter reading--if chapter reading was assigned for that evening. If no chapter reading was assigned, the essay can reveal other things that you learned -- perhaps based on past chapters. You must submit a report for every full film (scanned or screened) in the class session that you missed; and
3. You must submit your report by/before the following class session that you missed.

Punctual Arrival and Returns to Class

As stated earlier, I expect you to arrive on-time for the beginning of all class sessions, and also to arrive on time back to class after our short bathroom breaks. Although I take roll at the beginning of class, I also monitor attendance throughout the evening during film screenings--all the way to the end of class. If I notice that you left the class session during a screening (for other than a bathroom emergency) and do not return to class within a bathroom break time-frame (eg. 5 minutes or so), I will note this and count you as absent for the entire evening session.

This is not Nap Time!

Finally, although the room is dark during screenings, this is not nap time. If I see a student's head on their arms on the table (or leaning against a wall), I'll assume that you're taking a nap and, therefore, are psychologically and intellectually disengaged and "absent" from the class session. Therefore, you'll be counted absent...just so you know. So, DRINK COFFEE, TEA, EAT LOTS OF CHOCOLATE...whatever it takes to stay awake!

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation

by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

PLNU Campus Computer/Network Usage Policy

Careful and ethical use of computing resources is the responsibility of every user. Students will be held to a standard of accountability for how they use computers at PLNU.

Link to Computer Use Policy:

<http://www.pointloma.edu/discover/new-student-orientation/campus-life/computer-faqs>

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog.

See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU Academic Behavior Policy

See the university's new policy included in the PLNU undergraduate handbook:

Academic Behavior Policy

Both faculty and students at Point Loma Nazarene University have the right to expect a safe and ordered environment for learning. Any student behavior that is disruptive or threatening is a serious affront to Point Loma Nazarene University as a learning community. Students who fail to adhere to appropriate academic behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Although faculty members communicate general student expectations in their syllabi and disruptive student conduct is already addressed in the Undergraduate Student Handbook, the purpose of this policy is to clarify what constitutes disruptive behavior in the academic setting and what actions faculty and relevant administrative offices may take in response to such disruptive student behavior.

"Disruption," as applied to the academic setting, means classroom, instructor or classmate-related student behavior that a reasonable faculty member would view as interfering with or deviating from normal classroom, class-related, or other faculty-student activity (advising, co-curricular involvement, etc.). Faculty members are encouraged to communicate positive behavior expectations at the first class session and to include them in course syllabi. Examples of disruptive classroom behavior include, but are not limited to:

- persistent speaking without being recognized or interrupting the instructor or other speakers;

- overt inattentiveness (sleeping or reading the newspaper in class);
- inordinate or inappropriate demands for instructor or classroom time or attention;
- unauthorized use of cell phone or computer;
- behavior that distracts the class from the subject matter or discussion;
- unwanted contact with a classmate in person, via social media or other means;
- inappropriate public displays of affection;
- refusal to comply with reasonable instructor direction; and/or
- invasion of personal space, physical threats, harassing behavior or personal insults.

The policy applies if the behavior is reported by a faculty member or academic administrator and occurs exclusively or primarily in a student-faculty member interaction. Incidents which involve both academic and non-academic behavior may result in responses coordinated by the Vice Provost for Academic Administration and the Dean of Students.

Civil and polite expression of disagreement with the course instructor, during times when the instructor permits discussion, is not in itself disruptive behavior and is not prohibited.

Some students possess medical or psychological conditions that may affect functioning within the standards of the university. Although such students may be considered disabled and are protected under the Rehabilitation Act/ADA, they are required to meet the fundamental university academic and behavioral policy as described in the Student Handbook, Undergraduate Catalog and/or faculty syllabi.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.