



Department of Communication Studies
COM 3000: Narrative and Documentary Film, 3 units
Fall 2025
Section 1 Tuesday, 6-8:45pm, Salomon
Final Exam: Tuesday, Dec. 16, 6:00 pm

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Catalog Description

A survey of narrative and documentary motion pictures, from Edison and Lumière to the present. Course covers the historical, structural, technological, and aesthetic trends of motion pictures through the viewing and analysis of selected classic films that exemplify these trends. Course also includes readings and discussion about issues of Christian faith and film.

Required Texts

Bordwell, David, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith. 2024. *Film Art: An Introduction*. Thirteenth edition. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

Additional reading assignments TBD + *Various handouts distributed by the professor*

Required films (see Course Schedule) -- pay for streaming fees as required

Media Communication Program Learning Outcomes

1. Examine past and present media communication strategies across publishing modalities.
2. Demonstrate individual creativity in the process of designing, constructing, and producing media projects within a team dynamic.
3. Create film, media content, and multimedia projects according to industry-specific standards.
4. Apply critical thinking when interpreting and evaluating diverse media content.

Course Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, students 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 aesthetic techniques of film, including: 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. Begin to demonstrate an ability to formulate a critical Christian response to film as both art and social phenomenon--based on biblical principles.

PLNU Mission: To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send: Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

State Authorization: State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

Course Policies and Requirements

Attendance: *Attendance is required. Missing class for other than medical emergencies or excused absences will affect your grade, as per the University Catalog.* **PLNU Attendance and Participation**

Policy: Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of 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 an "F" grade.

Class Preparation: All assignments must be completed prior to the assigned due date and time. Some assignments will be discussed in class while others will be completed individually but not discussed.

Class Participation: *Regular* contributions to class discussion are expected, including but not restricted to discussions of weekly readings, related experiential exercises, and open dialogue. Despite the size of the class, I want everyone to feel compelled to share their thoughts on course assignments. Enthusiastic and responsible participation in assigned group projects (in-class and outside of class) is expected of all.

E-Mail: Please use e-mail (not Canvas email) for simple, logistical questions or clarifications. Write: "COM3000" in the subject line. Allow 24 hours/ 1 business day for a reply.

Canvas Messages: Please use Canvas messages (not Canvas email) for all information regarding assignments submitted to Canvas.

Smart phones and laptops: may be used for classroom related activities only.

Public Discourse: Much of the work we will do in this class is cooperative, by nature of the class discussions and general feedback given to written work and/projects; thus you should think of all your writing and speaking for and in class as public, not private, discourse. By continuing in this class, you acknowledge that your work will be viewed by others in the class.

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. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy: You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) in this course. Any work that utilizes AI-based tools must be clearly identified as such, including the specific tool(s) used. Please use the following sources to guide your citations when using AI.

[Chicago Manual of Style: Citing Content Developed or Generated by AI](#)

Spiritual Care: Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy: PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request. PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes. Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

Language and Belonging: Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community.

By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more

information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination: In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias

Final Examination Policy: Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

Content Warning: I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In COM 3000 all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. These topics include optional rated “R” content. Students may select an alternative film if they so choose. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of media communication, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Trigger Warning: I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive several types of information. In COM 3000, we will cover a variety of topics, some of which you may find triggering. These topics include optional rated “R” content. Students may select an alternative film if they so choose. The experience of being triggered versus intellectually challenged are different. The main difference is that an individual must have experienced trauma to experience being triggered, whereas an intellectual challenge has nothing to do with trauma. If you are a trauma survivor and encounter a topic in this class that is triggering for you, you may feel overwhelmed or panicked and find it difficult to concentrate. In response, I encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving class while the topic is discussed or talking to a therapist at the Counseling Center. Should you choose to sit out on discussion of a certain topic, know that you are still responsible for the material; but we can discuss if there are other methods for accessing that material, and for assessing your learning on that material. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of media communication, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

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.

PLNU Recording Notification: In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

Grading Scale

90-100	A	74-77	C
88-89	B+	70-73	C-
84-87	B	60-69	D
80-83	B-	0-59	F
78-79	C+		

Grading

- 20% Class participation: arrive to class on time; use smart phones and laptops for classroom use (or receive a "0" for the week); complete unannounced assignments; work with peers in small groups; ask and respond to questions in class; pay attention to presentations, lectures, and films; take notes; perform student presentations; attend the entire class.
- 10% Contextual Summaries
- 15% In-class quizzes. Quizzes can be both announced and unannounced "pop" quizzes. In order to be eligible to receive a score on your quiz, the entire class must be attended.
- 5% Student Presentations
- 5% Midterm Review
- 35% Film Responses and outside of class written work. See course syllabus for assignments. These assignments are submitted to Canvas on assigned due dates.
- 10% Final Exam Written Project

Assignment Descriptions

Due before class assignments are due at the beginning of class time and require attendance for the entire class period in order to be given a score.

Late Assignment Policy: Be sure to hand in your assignment on time, or make a prior arrangement to submit the assignment before the assigned due date. Otherwise, a late submission will be penalized by one letter grade if handed in after the due date and time, and by an additional letter grade for each day late following the assignment due date. Unless pre-arranged, assignments more than a week late will not be graded. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

Contextual Summaries: 5 points // Canvas: due by class time on due date

Contextual Summary Objective: create a single-spaced summary of the historical context, the culture depicted, information about the film, director biography, and/or relevant film reviews. Cite your sources in Chicago style ([see Purdue OWL website for examples](#)).

Form: Length: 1 page single-spaced. See Canvas template.

Grading: 10: superior resources cited (not Wikipedia, etc.)
9: one source or average sources cited

7-8: nearly full page contextual summary with Bibliography

0-6: less than one page, no Bibliography, or improperly formatted Bibliography

Film Responses and outside of class written work: We will write 1 paragraph (1/2 page minimum, i.e. 200 words including heading) essays in academic argumentation format. Each one will be *on a clearly defined, focused topic* based on your assessment of the readings and films each week. This assignment requires attendance for the entire class period in order to be given a score.

In order to be graded, each film response requires a double-underlined thesis statement, two (2) **bold** terms from the previous week's reading (1) and lecture (1), and three underlined sentences in the formats described in class.

Since this is an upper-division course, we have higher expectations than describing whether or not you liked the film—so the film response is not a film review in which you describe whether or not you liked the film/s. Additionally, if the answer to the following questions is “yes,” then the thesis of your film response is too broad so the highest possible grade would be 70%:

- Is my claim applicable to every film ever made? i.e. “The editing in this film is important...” *Instead, be more specific.*
- Would it be possible to write this response 2 weeks ago? i.e. “Here’s a long plot summary of the movie...” *Instead, use current and relevant course terminology.*

20% Chicago format/Follows syllabus and in-class writing instructions

20% Thesis Statement: demonstrates an awareness of how the argument being proposed fits into the larger set of claims in our course content

20% Argument Presentation: includes relevant evidence/ does not omit relevant evidence, considers counter-arguments as necessary, includes qualifiers

20% Analysis of Evidence: offers sophisticated commentary on the texts

20% Writing Clarity/Sentence Mechanics: the paper is professional so it reads smoothly

Note: If the word count is not achieved, the highest grade possible is 70%.

Paper Format: Please submit in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format in Chicago Style, typed and double-spaced. Submit assignments in black ink on 8.5”x11” white paper. Use a non-decorative 12-pt. font, such as Times New Roman. Use the Chicago Manual of Style for style, grammar, format, and citation issues.

- <https://writingcenter.uagc.edu/chicago-manual-style>
- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html

Final Exam Written Critical Analysis Project: requires preliminary preparatory work to be brought to the final exam. Completed in class during final exam according to handouts and information to follow.

Evaluation of Assignments

The following questions will be considered when assignments are evaluated and graded. All questions may not be relevant to each assignment.

- Does the assignment fulfill the assignment objective?
- Does the assignment make an academic argument?
- If a claim is required, is it clear and plausible? Is it stated and contextualized effectively?
- Is there sufficient and relevant evidence to ground the claim?
- Does the assignment effectively select and use material from the course materials to support and validate the analysis? Does it summarize, paraphrase, and quote effectively?

- Does the assignment use all relevant details from course texts both to support the claim and to provide a context for the case being made? Does it ignore material that should be taken into account?
- Does the assignment demonstrate an awareness of how the argument being proposed fits into the larger set of claims made about the topic in our course readings?
- Does the assignment work through the complexities of the material (as opposed to oversimplifying or overgeneralizing)?
- Is the assignment well organized?
- Does it cite material from the sources using Chicago Style?
- Are there sentence structure problems or grammatical errors that interfere with the meaning?

Evaluation Standards

- An “A” assignment demonstrates excellent work. It has something to say and says it well. It develops its point of view clearly and consistently, demonstrating a complex understanding of the assignment, and does so using a variety of perspectives. It often rises above other assignments with particular instances of creative or analytical sophistication. There may be only minor and/or occasional structural errors.
- A “B” assignment demonstrates good work. It establishes a clear point of view and pursues it consistently, demonstrating a good understanding of the assignment. There may be some mechanical difficulties, but not so many as to impair the clear development of the main idea. While a “B” assignment is in many ways successful, it lacks the originality and/or sophistication of an “A” assignment.
- A “C” assignment demonstrates adequate work. It establishes an adequate grasp of the assignment and contains a point of view. In addition, the assignment may rely on unsupported generalizations or insufficiently developed ideas. It may also contain structural errors.
- Work that earns a grade of “D” or “F” is often characterized by the following problems: it fails to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the assignment; it fails to articulate an adequate point of view; and/or it contains significant structural problems.

Course Schedule
Subject to Change

History, Analysis, and Narrative/Poetics

Week	Schedule // Assignments Due
1 (9/2)	<p>Class Session: Course Introduction then <i>Film History</i>: == Early Cinema 1895-1903, Development of Classical Hollywood Cinema, 1908-1927 German Expressionism, 1919-1926 + <i>Metropolis</i> (Lang, 1927) == Soviet Montage 1924-1930 + <i>Battleship Potemkin</i> (Eisenstein, 1925) == Hollywood Studio Era + <i>Citizen Kane</i> (Welles, 1941)</p>
2 (9/9)	<p>Due before class: watch <i>Citizen Kane</i> (Welles, 1941) and submit 1 page of film notes Class Session: <i>Film History</i> continued: == Italian Neo-realism 1942-1951 + <i>Bicycle Thieves</i> (De Sica, 1948) == German New Wave 1962-1982 + <i>Ali: Fear Eats the Soul</i> (Fassbinder, 1974) Student Presentations: == French New Wave 1959-1964 + <i>Jules et Jim</i> (Truffaut, 1962) == New Hollywood + <i>The Godfather</i> (Coppola, 1972) == South Korean Cinema of today + <i>Parasite</i> (Bong Joon Ho, 2019)</p>
3 (9/16)	<p>Due before class: Read <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 2 pgs. 52-70: Film Form; watch <i>Past Lives</i> (Song, 2023) and submit 1 page of film notes Class Session: Take <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 2 Quiz; Lecture: Film Form and Film Analysis/Writing</p>
4 (9/23)	<p>Due before class: Film Response 1: <i>Citizen Kane</i> or <i>Past Lives</i>; Read <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 3: Narrative Form pgs. 71-98; Contextual Summary: <i>Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry</i> (2012) Class Session: Take <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 3 Quiz, Lecture: Narrative Form; Watch: <i>Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry</i> (Klayman, 2012)</p>
5 (9/30)	<p>Due before class: Film Response 2: on <i>Never Sorry</i>; Read <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 4: Mise-en-Scene 112-158; Contextual Summary: <i>In the Mood for Love</i> (Wong, 2000); submit a link to an example of production design that you like Class Session: Take <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 4: Quiz; Student Examples of Production Design; Lecture: Film Poetics; Watch <i>In the Mood for Love</i></p>

Film Techniques

6 (10/7)	<p>Due before class: Film Response 3: <i>In the Mood for Love</i>; Read <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 10: Doc and Animated Films; Contextual Summary: <i>Your Name</i> (Shinkai, 2016) Class Session: Take <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 10 Quiz; Lecture: Poetics (again); Watch <i>Your Name</i> (Shinkai, 2016)</p>
7 (10/14)	<p>Due before class: Film Response 4: <i>Your Name</i>; Read <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 5: Cinematography; Contextual Summary: <i>Time</i> (Bradley, 2020) Class Session: Take <i>Film Art</i> Ch. 5 Quiz; Lecture: Cinematography; Watch: <i>Time</i> (Bradley, 2020)</p>
8 (10/21)	<p>Due before class: Film Response 5: <i>Time</i>; Contextual Summary: <i>Songs My Brother Taught Me</i> (Zhao, 2015) Class Session: Lecture: Film and Philosophy, Watch: <i>Songs My Brother Taught Me</i> (Zhao, 2015)</p>
9 (10/28)	<p>Due before class: Film Response 6: <i>Time</i>; Read <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 6: Editing; Contextual Summary <i>Perfect Days</i> (Wenders, 2023) Class Session: Take <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 6 Quiz; Lecture: Editing; Watch: <i>Perfect Days</i> (Wenders, 2023)</p>

10 (11/4)	Due before class: Film Response 7: <i>Perfect Days</i> & Student Presentations & Course Review
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Advanced Film Form and an Introduction to Film Theory

11 (11/11)	Class Session: Attend San Diego Asian Film Festival
12 (11/18)	Due before class: SDAFF Film <u>Reflection</u> 8; Read <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 8: Style and Film Form; Contextual Summary <i>Mirror</i> (Tarkovsky, 1975) Class Session: Take <i>Film Art</i> Chapter 8 Quiz; Lecture: Style and Film Form ; Watch: <i>Mirror</i> (Tarkovsky, 1975)
13 (11/25)	Due before class: Film Response 9: <i>Mirror</i> ; Class Session: Thanksgiving Recess-- Due watch <i>Minari</i> (Chung, 2020) a) describe your favorite scene and then b) describe the relationship between this scene and the film as a whole.
14 (12/2)	Due before class: Contextual Summary <i>Deaf President Now!</i> (DiMarco and Guggenheim, 2025) Class Session: Lecture: Film Theory Pt. 1; watch <i>Deaf President Now!</i> (DiMarco and Guggenheim, 2025)
15 (12/9)	Due before class: Film Response 10: <i>Deaf President Now!</i> ; Contextual Summary <i>Tree of Life</i> (Malik, 2011) Class Session: Lecture: Film Theory Pt. 2; Watch <i>Tree of Life</i> (Malik, 2011)
Final Exam Tues. Dec. 16, 6:00 pm	Due before class: Film <u>Reflection</u> 11 <i>Tree of Life</i> ; Class Session: <i>The Two Escobars</i> (Zimbalist Brothers, 2010) Final Exam Required Preparation: Write: a) 10 bullet points of highlights (quotation, summary, or paraphrase) totaling at least 2 pages, b) based on a selected theory, c) from five (5) cited sources in a bibliography in Chicago Style--bring with you in hard copy format to the Final Exam