

Welcome to the COM 3000 Narrative & Documentary Course Website!

If you've been able to access this course website, you're officially enrolled in this course. Check out the info on the links to the left to find out more about this course.

Dr. Hueth

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Office Location Cabrillo 203

Office Hours Tuesday & Thursday, 11-noon
(all preferably by appointment)

Okay to drop in--but with projects and other responsibilities, there's no guarantee when I'll be in my office. Best is to email me for an appointment.

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.

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 Assumptions, Content, & Format

We will screen all or part of over 40 films in this course. They are, for the most part, considered to be "classic" films. And the film selections are primarily based upon their artistry (for their time) and the influence they have had in the film-making industry. So, we need to view and focus our thinking of these films as vivid **"artifacts"** of film history AND American cultural history. Their contents reveal the social and political cultures of their day, along with the **art** and **science** of these films. The goal: that you can have a more detailed and enriched **appreciation** of film and documentary--as both a consumer and prospective producer, writer, director, etc., of films.

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

1. Narrative and documentary films exert **powerful sociological, psychological, and political forces** 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 the influential people and forces** in the film industry;
3. Film stories engage both the **affective/emotional** and **rational** parts of our being and, therefore, affect our **feelings, thoughts, values, worldviews, and beliefs**. Therefore, they invite reflection and criticism from a Christian **theological perspective**.

Course Format

1. Textbook readings and discussion of film history, theories, and production techniques;
2. In-class (ONLY) textbook chapter quizzes from the Movies and Meaning... textbook. These will occur at 6:00 p.m. SHARP...so bring your phone or laptop to class for all class sessions that have a quiz--see course schedule on this website, and you should see them on your course canvas portal;
3. 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 and the world;
4. Introductions to (and screenings of) selected classic, industry-shaping films (full screenings or clips), followed by short in-class discussions about the films...as time allows. 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!;

5. You'll have the opportunity every class-night to make comments about your "film reflections" about the film(s) that we saw and what you learned that evening; and

6. We'll have some analysis, discussions, and critique on the theological perspectives of select films throughout the semester. And, we'll have a more heavily-focused sessions on that realm of thinking during the last third of the course with readings and postings of the Reel Spirituality... book.

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 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.

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 10, 2019

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
- Scan & discuss: *Birth of a Nation*, by D.W. Griffith

SESSION #2: Tuesday, September 17, 2019

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 24, 2019

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, October 1, 2019

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 8, 2019

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 15, 2019

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 22, 2019

Movies... quiz: Chapter 2

COM 300 session 7.ppt

- Quiz: cinematography
- View documentary: *The Battle Over 'Citizen Kane'* (25 minutes)
- View & discuss *Citizen Kane*, by Orson Welles, 1941 (119 minutes)

SESSION #8: Tuesday, October 29, 2019

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, November 5, 2019

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 12, 2019

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

COM 300 Session 10

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

SESSION #11: Tuesday, November 19, 2019

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 26, 2019

Movies... quiz: Chapter 10

READING & POSTINGS: Reel Spirituality, Chapter 8 (Questions posted on *Discussions*); also, read Ch. 7, but no posting on that chapter required.

COM 300 Session 12.ppt

- Quiz: At the Crossroads of Art & Business
- 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, December 3, 2019. Read attached items in preparation for this screening:

READING & POSTINGS: Reel Spirituality, Chapters 9 & 10 (Questions posted on *Discussions*); see *A Filmmaker's Progress* Essay assignment posting--essay portion of final exam

Schindlers List Online Readings & Reports.doc

- View *Schindler's List* (1993)

SESSION #14: Tuesday, December 10, 2019

Movies... quiz: Chapter 11

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

READING REPORTS

Film Session 14 Presentation

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

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2019, noon

Film Analysis Paper POST DUE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2018

"A Filmmaker's Progress" Final Exam Essay DUE BY/BEFORE: NOON.

"A Filmmaker's Progress" Final Exam Essay Peer Response DUE/BEFORE: 2:00 p.m.

Final Exam Objective portion: In-class online test

Grading Policies

ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES:

The due dates (and times) for all quizzes, postings, reading reports, 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>Film Reflections Posts</i> (14 @ 5 points each)	70
<i>Reel Spirituality...</i> Discussions Postings (6 @ 30 points each)	180
<i>Reading Reports</i>	14
Film Analysis Paper	260
Final Exam (objective portion)	150
<i>A Filmmaker's Progress</i> Essay (subjective portion)	26
Attendance & Participation	100
TOTAL POINTS:	1000

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....time TBA.

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. 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 26 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 the post deadline. I will post the essay on Discussions and provide you with some questions or comments to respond to in this essay.

The final exam is worth a total of 176 points (about 18% 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 3-page, typed, double-spaced essay on what you learned from the film(s)--based on assigned chapter reading. 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!

P.S. all chocolate must be shared with the instructor ;-)

Film Analysis Paper

(260 points--26% course grade)

Description:

Your task for this assignment is to compose a critical analysis of a film of your choice. It can be a film that we have screened in the course this semester, or a favorite that you've

seen elsewhere. This analysis can employ the use of one-two of the following theories: realist, auteur, thematic, psychoanalytic, genre, ideological, feminist, and/or cultural criticism, and must include a complete theological analysis as well--based on the areas of theological analysis that are explained and discussed on our *Discussions* postings from the *Reel Spirituality*... readings. This includes the ideas of transcendence A and/or B, and the "theological partner" relevant to your film.

You should use appropriate chapters in *Movies and Meaning*... and *Reel Spirituality* as your basis for thinking and your approach in writing this paper. The paper should be a total of six (6) to seven (7) pages in length. Your paper must include a title page & bibliography, typed, double-spaced, and stapled. Please provide appropriate source attribution for using other writer's quotes and ideas, etc. from other sources that you include in your paper, and include a bibliography at the end.

NOTE: this paper must be, primarily, YOUR thoughts and insights and NOT, primarily, others' thoughts and insights copied and pasted or summarized into your essay. Be sure to review the university policy on "Cheating and Dishonesty" before you write this paper.

Grading Criteria:

Content & analysis (70%):

Evidence of comprehension and analysis skills in film criticism. This includes the type of criticism you're applying in your paper (genre, auteur, cultural, or thematic, etc.--discussed in both texts), along with concepts of "transcendence," "...movie itself" vs. "theological partner," etc. (in Reel...).

Form (30%):

This includes spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, and other technical writing factors.

"Reel Spirituality" Online Discussions

Your task for this assignment is to engage in five (5) postings during the second half of the course. The postings will be a combination of revealing your understanding of the readings, along with discussions of topics and issues raised in the assigned readings and posting topics. The postings will occur on the course website's *Discussions* section. The discussion will be based on readings in *Reel Spirituality*.

Your postings will consist of an individual essay/response to a question(s) posed by the instructor, then responses to one/several of your peer's postings (as directed).

The purpose of this discussion will be to deepen your understanding of narrative and documentary film, and the relevance of theology/Christian faith to film content. These discussions will also help you to clarify the different theological perspectives on this medium and its content. These assignments will also enrich your understanding of this subject--in preparation for writing your "Film Criticism" paper.

Film Reflections

Introduction

This course covers a lot of territory about films. And most of the course time is learning about these territories through screening films that display and reveal all of these different eras and factors relevant to film as both art form and cultural phenomenon. Since film screening takes up most of our class time, it's imperative that we provide you with a "space" and time that allows you to reflect and comment on what you're observing and learning about each session. *Film Reflections* provides a venue for expressing your thoughts, insights, and learning beyond the classroom screening and post-film screening discussion experiences. The purpose is to expand our very limited in-class post-screening discussions of chapter readings and films beyond the classroom. This is your chance to express what couldn't be expressed in class--due to time constraints, after-thoughts, etc.

Focus on One or Two Areas

Most of the students taking this course are media communication majors or cinema studies minor students who are especially interested in the aesthetic dimensions of film production. Many of you are preparing to work in film and/or television, and would benefit from an opportunity to practice your observational and analytical skills in one (or more) of the different production jobs/roles. These include directing, acting, director of photography (camera and lighting), production design, and editing. Since each of you have a varied level of knowledge, understanding, and skill in these areas, I've provided some links that deal with basic to advanced information for each of these areas...and I'm sure that there are many more out there....and do, please, let me know if and where you find others that might help make this more rich and complete. I suggest that you select one (1) or two of these areas (based on your academic and professional interests), and check out the websites below...then...focus your attention on this/these areas throughout the semester as you screen the films.

Post Lengths

Five (5) five-sentence (or so) well-written paragraphs--one (1) point per paragraph.

Some Cool Websites

So, here are the websites that will complement and supplement your foundation for your thinking and postings this semester! Happy reading, screening, etc.! Dr. H

Some General Websites:

[The Grammar of Film \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

[Telling Your Story: Using Film Language](#) (Links to an external site.)

Some Director Websites:

[Responsibilities and Job Skills of a Director](#) (Links to an external site.)

[Film Directing Tips](#) (Links to an external site.)

An Acting Website: (good for focus on acting AND directing)

[Michael Caine Teaches Acting in Film](#) (Links to an external site.) (six 10-minute lessons)—OUTSTANDING...nothing else like it online

Some Director of Photography (DP) Websites:

[The Role of the Director of Photography](#) (Links to an external site.)

[11 Essential Camera Techniques](#) (Links to an external site.)

Some Production Design Websites:

[Production Designer Duties and Responsibilities](#) (Links to an external site.)

[10 Films That Can Teach You Everything You Need to Know About](#)

[Production Design](#) (Links to an external site.)

Some Editing Websites:

[Movie Editing Techniques](#) (Links to an external site.)

[100 Great Moments of Film Editing and 5 Crucial Visual Punctuation](#)

[Marks](#) (Links to an external site.)

[Top 10 Most Effective Editing Moments of All-Time](#)