

COM 3000: Narrative and Documentary Film
Fall 2021
Section 1 Tuesday, 6-9pm
Classroom: RLC 108

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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

Prince, Stephen. 2014. *Movies and Meaning an Introduction to Film*. Harlow: Pearson.

Stam, Robert. *Film Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. Print.

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

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

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.

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.* 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 has the option of filing a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class, the student will be assigned a grade of W or WF consistent with university policy in the grading section of the catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) in the (undergrad/graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

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.

Inclusive Language: All public language used in this course, including written and spoken discourse, will be inclusive. This standard is outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and is the norm in university-level work. These academic style guides provide background information and good examples of how to maintain non-sexist language use in your writing.

Academic Honesty/ Policy on Plagiarism: Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. As explained in the university catalog, 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. Violations of university academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding the academic dishonesty of others, or malicious misuse of university resources. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for a) that particular assignment or examination, and/or b) the course following the procedure in the university catalog. Students may appeal also using the procedure in the university catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for further information.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy: PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. 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 issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

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 and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

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.

Final Examination: *The published time for the final examination is one of the considerations when enrolling for a course. Students are expected to arrange their personal affairs to fit the examination schedule. Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.*

FERPA Policy: In compliance with federal law, neither PLNU student ID nor social security number should be used in publicly posted grades or returned sets of assignments without student written permission. Also in compliance with FERPA, you will be the only person given information about your progress in this class unless you have designated others to receive it in the "Information Release" section of the student portal. See [Academic Policies](#) in the (undergrad/ graduate as appropriate) 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.

Grading Scale

94-100	A
90-93	A-
88-89	B+
84-87	B
80-83	B-
78-79	C+
74-77	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F

Grading

20%	Preparation for class. See course syllabus for assignments required for completion before attending class. Due at the moment class begins.
20%	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.
30%	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; attend the entire class.
20%	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

Preparation for 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.

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/cmospa_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html

All assignments due outside of class time must be submitted to Canvas by **11:59pm** on assigned due date.

Film Responses and outside of class written work: We will write 1 page (325-375 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.

Place in **bold** at least one key term from the week's reading chapter/topic from *Movies and Meaning* and one key term from the week's lecture in your film response.

Since this is an upper-division course, we have higher expectations than describing whether or not you liked the film—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%.

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

Week	Schedule // Assignments Due
2 (9/7)	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 1: Film Structure; Watch: <i>The Farewell</i> (Wang, 2019)</p> <p>Class Session: Take Chapter 1 Quiz; Course Introduction; Lecture: Film Structure & the Heroic Journey; Watch: <i>The Rider</i> (Zhao, 2017)</p> <p>Write: Film Response: compare and contrast the heroic journeys in our two films (due Friday)</p>
3 (9/14)	<p>Preparation: Watch <i>Kusama: Infinity</i> (Lenz, 2018); Create a Quiz: <i>Film Theory</i>: 10-37</p> <p>Class Session: Lecture: Art and Popular Culture; Watch: <i>Exit Through the Gift Shop</i> (Banksy, 2010)</p> <p>Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>
4 (9/21)	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 2: Cinematography; Watch: <i>Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles</i> (Zhang, 2005); <i>Film Theory</i>: 37-64</p> <p>Class Session: Take Chapter 2 Quiz, Lecture: Cinematography; Watch: <i>Café Lumière</i> (HHH, 2003)</p> <p>Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>
5 (9/28)	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 3: Production Design; Create a Quiz: <i>Film Theory</i>: 64-92</p> <p>Class Session: Take Chapter 3 Quiz; Lecture: Production Design; Watch <i>The Ascent</i> (Shepitko, 1977)</p> <p>Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>
6 (10/5)	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 4: Acting; Create a Quiz: <i>Film Theory</i>: 92-123</p> <p>Class Session: Take Chapter 4 Quiz; Lecture: Acting; Watch <i>Biutiful</i> (Iñárritu, 2010) -- finish on your own outside of class before writing your film response.</p> <p>Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>
7 (10/12)	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 5: Editing; Create a Quiz: <i>Film Theory</i>: 123-169</p> <p>Class Session: Take Chapter 5 Quiz; Lecture: Editing; Watch: <i>Persona</i> (Bergman, 1966)</p> <p>Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>
8 (10/19)	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 6: Sound Design; Create a Quiz: <i>Film Theory</i>: 169-201</p> <p>Class Session: Take Chapter 6 Quiz; Lecture: Sound Design; Watch: <i>Daisies</i> (Chytilová, 1966)</p> <p>Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>
9 (10/26)	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 7: Narrative; Create a Quiz: <i>Film Theory</i>: 201-229</p> <p>Class Session: Take Chapter 7 Quiz; Lecture: Narrative; Watch: <i>The Mirror</i> (Tarkovsky, 1975)</p> <p>Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>
10 (11/2)	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 8: Visual Effects; Create a Quiz: <i>Film Theory</i>: 229-262</p> <p>Class Session: Attend San Diego Asian Film Festival + additional assignments TBD</p> <p>Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>
11 (11/9)	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 9: Screen Reality; Create a Quiz: <i>Film Theory</i>: 262-298</p> <p>Class Session: Take Chapter 9 Quiz; Lecture: Postcolonialism; Watch: <i>La noire de...</i> (Sembène, 1966)</p> <p>Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>
12 (11/16)	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 10: Business and Art; Create a Quiz: <i>Film Theory</i>: 298-331</p> <p>Class Session: Take Chapter 10 Quiz; Lecture: Business and Art; Watch: <i>Fruitvale Station</i> (Coogler, 2013)</p> <p>Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>

<p>13 (11/23)</p>	<p>Preparation: Read: "A Folklore for My Generation" + "New York Mining Disaster" by Murakami; Watch: <i>Monterey Pop</i> (Pennebaker, 1968) Class Session: Quiz on the Reading; Lecture: Modernism & Postmodernism; Watch: <i>Meeting People is Easy</i> (Gee, 1998) Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>
<p>14 (11/30)</p>	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 11: Film Theory (first half) Class Session: Take Chapter 11 (first half) Quiz; Lecture: Cinema and Desire; Watch: <i>Stories We Tell</i> (Polley, 2012) Write: Film Response (due Friday)</p>
<p>15 (12/7)</p>	<p>Preparation: Read <i>M&M</i> Chapter 11: Film Theory (second half); Jacob and Esau Story Class Session: Take Chapter 11 (second half) Quiz; Lecture: Lacan; Watch: <i>Cléo from 5 to 7</i> (Varda, 1962) Write: 15 bullet points of highlights (quotation, summary, or paraphrase) based on a selected theory from five (5) cited library database sources in addition to our two (2) assigned textbooks presented in Chicago Style--bring with you to the Final Exam</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Final Exam Written Project: Tuesday December 14, 2021, 6-9pm</p>	