

UNST 239: Thinking, Conversing, and Writing about Film*Instructor: Dr. John Slade**For more information: 209A Hodgin Hall, 336-285-4468, jrslade1@ncat.edu*

This course focuses specifically on critical thinking and writing development through the analysis of film content, themes, and components such as scene composition, symbols, and sound. Combinations of films from various categories and genres (features, shorts, documentaries, westerns, thrillers, dramas, science fiction, animated films, and others) provide the context for further development of learning objectives introduced in UNST foundation courses.

Required Course Materials

- Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, Seventh Edition
- A writing handbook (*The Little Penguin Handbook* from the UNST 110 is recommended; however, any handbook that includes documentation styles will suffice. Online access to a handbook is acceptable.)

Recommended Internet Links

- amc filmsite (reference section) <http://www.filmsite.org/references.html>
- Internet Movie Database (index) <http://www.imdb.com/a2z>

UNST Goals Further Developed in this Course

Communication:

1. Effectively use information technology to find, interpret, evaluate, and use information discerningly.
2. Effectively communicate in diverse settings and groups using written, oral, and visual means.
3. Effectively employ critical thinking skills in written and oral communication.

Analytical Reasoning:

5. Use analytical thinking skills to evaluate information critically

Learning Outcomes for the Course

Students will be able to

- Write about and discuss films and film content using basic film terminology
- Identify and describe the function of the main components of a film
- Present in essay form an organized general analysis of a film (the review)
- Present in essay form an organized in-depth analysis of a component of a film
- Research, evaluate, and incorporate secondary sources into written and oral analysis
- Present and defend an oral analysis of a film or set of films in a paired discussion

Proposed Schedule

Week 1

- Pre-assessment
- Lessons on film terminology

Weeks 2 - 10

- Screen and discuss films
- Lessons and discussions on film components
 - genre, narrative origins, characters, point of view, plot, theme, structure, special effects, style and tone, acting, dialogue, directing, cinematography, costuming and make up, sound effects, mis-en-scene, editing, setting
- Lessons on approaches to film analysis
 - sweeping review, in depth analysis of a component, contextual
- Lessons on writing conventions appropriate to film analysis
 - word choice, concrete language, tone, effective sentences, sentence structure, coherent paragraphs, introductions, conclusions, acknowledgment and documentation of sources
- Written analyses based on films and topics discussed in class

Weeks 11 - 14

- Lessons on paired discussions of a film or a set of films (two or three) based on a theme or component
- Preparation of paired discussion as final project

Weeks 15 - 16

- Presentation of paired discussions
- Post-assessment

****Selected scenes as well as full screenings of films will be distributed throughout the course. Some viewing selections will be made in consultation with the class to balance exposure to films both familiar and unfamiliar to students.***

Grade Distribution

This course emphasizes reading comprehension, writing strategies, and oral skills adaptable to multiple disciplines. Over the course of the semester, students will locate, evaluate, and use appropriate learning resources; demonstrate effective verbal and written communication skills; develop habits of self-assessment; work collaboratively in teams and in small groups; and use content knowledge and intellectual skills to become life-long learners. Students will be evaluated on the following:

- Essay: Movie review, minor documentation (25%, Objectives 1, 3, 5)
- Essay: In-depth analysis of a film's components, major documentation (25%, Objectives 1, 3, 5)
- Presentation: Paired discussion of a film or set of films on a common theme, minor documentation (20%, Objectives 2, 3, 5)
- Brief written responses to films and scenes (15%, Objectives 3, 5)
- Class discussion and quizzes (15%, Objectives 2, 3, 5)

Partial Film List

The focus of this course is the further development of thinking and communications skills introduced in previous course work. The approach will be close study of selected scenes and several films screened in their entirety to allow ample time for discussion and analysis aimed at building deep understanding. The purpose is to create synthesis of knowledge that leads to substantive discussion through oral and written presentation. The in-depth analysis essay, brief responses, class discussion, and quizzes will be based upon the scenes and films viewed. Films for the review essay and the paired discussion will be student choices approved by the instructor.

What follows is a sample list only; this list will change by instructor and over time:

<i>12 Angry Men (1957)</i>	<i>King Kong (1933)</i>
<i>Above the Rim (1994)</i>	<i>Lean on Me (1989)</i>
<i>Babe (1995)</i>	<i>Little Foxes, The (1941)</i>
<i>Birth of a Nation, The (1915)</i>	<i>Love and Basketball (2000)</i>
<i>Boy in the Striped Pajamas, The (2008)</i>	<i>Madea's Family Reunion (2006)</i>
<i>Boyz N The Hood (1991)</i>	<i>Menace II Society (1993)</i>
<i>Cars (2006)</i>	<i>Napoleon Dynamite (2004)</i>
<i>Citizen Kane (1941)</i>	<i>No Way Out (1950)</i>
<i>Clockers (1995)</i>	<i>Psycho (1960)</i>
<i>Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977)</i>	<i>Pursuit of Happyness, The (2006)</i>
<i>Defiant Ones, The (1958)</i>	<i>Queen Bee (1955)</i>
<i>Dirty Harry (1971)</i>	<i>Rain Man (1988)</i>
<i>Do the Right Thing (1989)</i>	<i>Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975)</i>
<i>Double Indemnity (1944)</i>	<i>Rocky (1976)</i>
<i>E.T. -- the Extra-Terrestrial (1982)</i>	<i>Shawshank Redemption (1994)</i>
<i>Exorcist, The (1973)</i>	<i>Searchers, The (1956)</i>
<i>Finding Nemo (2003)</i>	<i>Sling Blade (1996)</i>
<i>Glory (1989)</i>	<i>Stagecoach (1939)</i>
<i>Goldfinger (1964)</i>	<i>Star Wars (1977)</i>
<i>Gone with the Wind (1939)</i>	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird (1962)</i>
<i>Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (1967)</i>	<i>Transformers (2007)</i>
<i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (2001)</i>	<i>Trip to Bountiful, The (1985)</i>
<i>High Noon (1952)</i>	<i>Usual Suspects, The (1995)</i>
<i>Holes (2003)</i>	<i>Walking Across Egypt (1999)</i>
<i>Imitation of Life (1959)</i>	<i>Warriors, The (1979)</i>
<i>In the Heat of the Night (1967)</i>	<i>West Side Story (1961)</i>
<i>Iron Man (2008)</i>	<i>Whatever Happened to Baby Jane? (1962)</i>
<i>I Want to Live! (1958)</i>	<i>Witness for the Prosecution (1957)</i>
<i>Jaws (1975)</i>	<i>Wizard of Oz, The (1939)</i>
<i>Jungle Fever (1991)</i>	

Rubrics and Student Checklists

The following rubrics and self-assessment checklists provide an idea of how the major written and oral assignments will be evaluated. These tools are revised as needed.

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Rubric for Analysis Essays

Requirements	A	B	C	D	F
Audience and Tone (5)	Diction and tone are appropriate (5)	Diction and tone are mostly appropriate (4)	Diction and tone are inconsistent (3)	Diction and tone are consistently inappropriate (2)	No thought given at all to diction or tone (1-0)
Thesis and Context (10)	Thesis is focused Context is clear (10-9)	Thesis is somewhat focused and basic context is provided (8-7)	Thesis could be more focused; some context is provided (6-5)	Thesis is vague with little context given (4-3)	No thesis or context provided (2-0)
Organization (10)	Moves from a brief summary or establishment of context and/or basic claim through a detailed analysis of main points (10-9)	Delivers a thoughtful and careful analysis of main points (8-7)	Shows general understanding of main points, occasionally confusing terms or missing an important idea (6-5)	Moves randomly from one point to another, skimming the surface (4-3)	No evident regard for organization or structure (2-0)
Content (30)	Includes original and relevant content that demonstrates integration and mastery of course concepts and topics (30-26)	Includes some original and relevant content that demonstrates good understanding of course concepts and topics (25-21)	Includes some original and relevant content that demonstrates some understanding of course concepts and topics (20-16)	Includes relevant content that shows a working knowledge of course concepts and topics (15-10)	Content mostly irrelevant and demonstrates little to no understanding of course concepts and topics (9-0)
Language and Clarity (20)	Clear, precise language throughout with no grammatical errors (20-18)	Language is clear; text is readable with one or two trouble spots (17-15)	Language is occasionally unclear; text is mostly readable with a few unclear passages (14-12)	Language is frequently unclear or imprecise; text is partly readable with several trouble spots (11-9)	Text is barely readable with trouble spots throughout (8-0)
Grammar, Mechanics, and Correctness (10)	Uses proper punctuation, correct spelling, and grammatically correct phrasing throughout (10-9)	Uses proper punctuation, correct spelling, and correct grammar with one or two recurring or incidental errors (8-7)	Mixes proper punctuation, correct spelling, and correct grammar with several recurring and incidental errors (6-5)	Shows a general lack of understanding about punctuation, spelling, and grammar with many errors that affect clarity (4-3)	Uses irregular, random punctuation, spelling, and grammar throughout (2-0)
Synthesis (10)	Sources thoughtfully compared and contrasted with one another and with student's own ideas; quotations are well-chosen and meaningfully integrated into body of paper (10-9)	Some comparison and contrast between sources and student's own ideas; quotations are adequately integrated into body of paper (8-7)	Connections made between sources could be clearer; quotations are present but do not contribute strongly to the paper's argument (6-5)	Few connections made between sources; quotations do not contribute to the paper's argument (4-3)	Integration of ideas and quotations from outside sources is rare or non-existent (2-0)
MLA Documentation (5)	Documents all borrowed material clearly and correctly (5)	Documents all borrowed material with occasional stylistic errors (4)	Documents most borrowed material with repeated stylistic errors (3)	Documents some borrowed material incompletely, with errors and omissions (2)	No documentation of borrowed material (1-0)

Comments:

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST FOR FILM ANALYSIS ESSAY

	Analysis appropriately titled.
	Meets length requirement.
	Introduction grabs attention.
	Sufficiently discusses subject/text being analyzed.
	Language and tone are audience appropriate.
	Terms/concepts are well defined.
	Thesis is clear and focused
	Context is provided.
	Author's own original thought/perspective is apparent.
	Essay is well organized with clear transitions.
	Includes sufficient support: details, examples, source work.
	Sources are well chosen and properly cited.
	Sentence structure is varied.
	Language is clear and precise.
	Essay makes proper use of grammar and punctuation.

Notes:

UNIVERSITY STUDIES 239: Thinking, Conversing, and Writing about Film

Rubric for Paired Discussion Presentation of Film Project

Requirements	A	B	C	D	F
Audience and Tone (5)	Diction and tone are appropriate (5)	Diction and tone are mostly appropriate (4)	Diction and tone are inconsistent (3)	Diction and tone are consistently inappropriate (2)	No thought given at all to diction or tone (1-0)
Organization (5)	Strong introduction, conclusion, and logical organization of ideas (5)	Above average introduction and conclusion with mostly logical organization of ideas (4)	Average introduction and conclusion with some flaws in the organization of ideas (3)	Below average introduction and conclusion with some confusion resulting from organization of ideas (2)	Missing or poor introduction or conclusion with little attention given to organization (1-0)
Development (10)	Clear thesis with evidence provided for claims (10-9)	Clear thesis with evidence supporting most claims (8-7)	Thesis is less than clear with occasional unsupported claims (6-5)	Thesis is less than clear with numerous unsupported claims (4-3)	Thesis is unclear with little evidence supporting claims (2-0)
Content (25)	Includes original and relevant content that demonstrates integration and mastery of course concepts and topics (25-21)	Includes some original and relevant content that demonstrates good understanding of course concepts and topics (20-16)	Includes some original and relevant content that demonstrates some understanding of course concepts and topics (15-11)	Includes relevant content that shows a working knowledge of course concepts and topics (10-6)	Content mostly irrelevant and demonstrates little to no understanding of course concepts and topics (5-0)
Language and Clarity (15)	Clear, precise language throughout with no grammatical errors (15-13)	Language is clear with one or two trouble spots (12-10)	Language is occasionally unclear with a few unclear areas (9-7)	Language is frequently unclear or imprecise with several trouble areas (6-4)	Language is unclear to the point that presentation is barely comprehensible (3-0)
Research and Citation (10)	Integrates and cites credible research throughout (10-9)	Acceptably integrates and cites credible research (8-7)	References made to credible research with some integration of sources (6-5)	Refers to research with little integration of sources into presentation (4-3)	Cursory references to research with little or no integration (2-0)
Presentation (15)	Outstanding voice projection with frequent eye contact, collaboration, and professional tone and attire (15-13)	Above average voice projection and eye contact, collaboration, and professional tone and attire (12-10)	Some issues with voice projection or eye contact, collaboration, or professional tone and attire (9-7)	Recurring issues with voice projection, eye contact, collaboration, or unacceptable tone or attire (6-4)	Audience has trouble hearing; no eye contact, poor collaboration, or unprofessional tone or attire (3-0)
Time Requirement (5)	Meets full time requirement (5)	Meets 80-90% of time requirement (4)	Meets 70-79% of time requirement (3)	Meets 60-69% of time requirement (2)	Meets less than 60% of time requirement (1-0)
Written Components (10)	All components meet requirements with no issues of clarity or grammatical errors (10-9)	all requirements met with very minor issues of clarity or grammatical errors (8-7)	Most requirements met with some issues of clarity or grammatical errors (6-5)	several requirements not met with recurring issues of clarity or grammatical errors (4-3)	Several requirements not met, missing written components, and recurring issues of clarity and grammatical errors (2-0)

Comments:

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR PAIRED DISCUSSION PROJECT

	Partners meet out of class to share ideas and distribute work equally.
	All members contribute equally to in-class presentation.
	Introduction engages and prepares.
	Research has been conducted to instructor's specifications.
	Research is thoughtfully and thoroughly integrated into presentation.
	Ideas are logically organized.
	Thesis is focused and clearly stated.
	Evidence is provided for all claims.
	Conclusion summarizes presentation and adds perspective.
	Presenters project voices and make eye contact with audience.
	Presentation falls within time requirement.
	Written components meet requirements of instructor with no grammatical errors.

Notes:

Information General to UNST Courses

The rationale for University Studies and an interdisciplinary approach to general education stems from the acknowledged complexities of the contemporary world. The problems facing modern humanity are rarely if ever understood using the perspectives and tools of a single discipline. Given that, University Studies maintains that critical thinking, logic, writing, humanistic and artistic inquiry, as well as the social and natural sciences are best understood via interdisciplinary methods. Indeed, many interdisciplinary fields, such as African American Studies, Science and Technology Studies, Cultural Studies, and Women's Studies, developed due to either the unwillingness or the inability of the traditional disciplines to address the issues posed in these bodies of scholarship.

All University Studies courses are interdisciplinary. This means that they combine the intellectual methods and subject matter from a variety of disciplines in order to help students learn critical thinking and problem solving. UNST courses are interconnected in such a manner that they can guarantee that a student will be exposed to specified learning objectives that address real-life concerns. During the first year, students will learn skills for critical engagement; during the second and third years, students will apply these newly honed skills in theme-based courses; in the senior year, students will exercise the skills and knowledge they have gained in a capstone experience and service-learning activity. If undertaken seriously and with intentionality, UNST students can expect to emerge with a set of useful intellectual tools that will allow them to engage effectively a dynamic and complex world.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is absolutely essential. Cheating, plagiarism, sharing of clickers or other academic misconduct will not be tolerated. If you are caught cheating, you will not pass this course and will be subject to any and all penalties specified in the student honor code.

Attendance Policy

University Studies strives to professionalize its students; therefore, regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory in all UNST courses. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Tardiness will not be tolerated. Absent or tardy students are responsible for any missed class work, including any changes to the syllabus or assignments announced in class. In short, absences and tardiness can/will diminish your grade. If you suffer prolonged illness or misfortune, you should consider dropping the course. Persistent tardiness and failure to observe established classroom etiquette will lead to failure of the course. Student athletes must submit a schedule of days they will be absent within the first week of classes.

Students will automatically receive an "F" for missing beyond the equivalent of two weeks of class:

- M, W, F Schedule: Six (6) unexcused absences
- T, R Schedule: Four (4) unexcused absences
- 1-Class Per Week Schedule: Two (2) unexcused absences

At half the allotted absences (three (3) absences for M, W, F schedule; two (2) for T, R schedule; and one (1) for 1-class per week schedule), students are required to meet with their instructor(s) for a mandatory one-on-one conference concerning his/her performance in class.

Absence or tardiness is only excused for emergency situations. Students are responsible for submitting acceptable documentation for the excused absence within one week of the absence.

Examples of acceptable documentation include:

- Written doctor's note specifically requesting an excused absence (with the specific time and date on the notification)
- Obituary or service notice
- An official written summons to court

Course Materials

Books

Serious scholarship requires procurement of essential course materials. Students will purchase all books and materials required for UNST courses within the first two weeks of the semester. Sharing of books thereafter is prohibited.

Clickers

Sharing of clickers is never appropriate and constitutes academic dishonesty. Students must replace lost or stolen clickers for class use. Replacements may be purchased at the university bookstore for \$35.00.

Educational Etiquette

Students will demonstrate collegial respect for their professors and peers. Any behavior that distracts (e.g. eating, talking while others are talking, etc.) or is disrespectful (inattention, personal attacks, studying for other courses during class, etc.) is unacceptable. Differences of opinion should be met with intellectual curiosity and rigor rather than insult, contumely, or discord.

All cell phones, pagers, and personal communication devices must be turned off for the duration of the class period. Students who fail to comply with this rule will be asked to leave the class and will be marked absent. Campus security will be asked to escort those students from of the classroom who fail to leave as requested.

There will be no eating or drinking in class (other than bottled water.)

Student success in this course depends upon the development of scholarly and collegial habits. Active participation in class discussion and group work is mandatory. Collegial responsibility and respect are also compulsory.

Email Policy

Instructors will reply to student email within 48 hours, Monday through Friday. In order to insure a reply, students must use NCAT email accounts and include student name (**no nicknames, please**), course number, and section in the subject line. All messages must be conveyed using standard English.

A Note on How to Email Me

I use a folder system for receiving emails; therefore, I need for you to observe the following conventions when emailing me:

- Begin the subject line with the course prefix, number, section, first initial and last name (no spaces), date, and reference.
- Separate each component with a period. A dash (--) follows the date. For instance:
UNST.110.12.hpotter.8.20.08--Conference Request.

Turnitin.com

All written assignments in UNST courses will be submitted to Turnitin.com before the final draft is submitted to the instructor. **Access to this website will be given to you by the instructor. Turnitin.com compares your writing with virtually every reference that exists on the internet as well as a bank of student papers that has been submitted from all over the world. Its purpose is to help students learn the difference between proper citation and quotation of other authors' work and plagiarism (copying others writing without citation.) Students who do not own a PC will submit their work via one of the computer labs on campus.**

The URL for Turnitin.com is: <http://www.turnitin.com>; a link has been created on our blackboard site. Create a user profile using the following information:

Class ID:		Class ID:		Class ID:	
password		password		password	

Timely Submission of Work

All assignments are due on the dates indicated in your syllabus. **No late work will be accepted in any UNST courses.** Exceptions will be made only in cases of documented medical or family emergency or religious observance. Please notify your professor by email *before the assignment is due* should an acceptable absence occur. Employment, childcare, or other academic pressures do not constitute a valid excuse for late work. There is no provision for additional papers or extra credit to substitute for missed course requirements.

Disabilities and Differences

Students with documented learning disabilities or differences should identify themselves to their professor and present appropriate documentation during the first week of classes. No accommodations will be made later in the semester for students who do not self-identify at the beginning of the course.

Students who need developmental support should ask their professors for extra help or referral. All students should seek the support services of the Writing Center (A-309 GCB; 334-7764) and the Center for Student Success (312 Hodgin Hall; 334-7855).