

## ACM 255 Cinema and Digital Media Spring, 2006

**Marlene Booth**

**Email:** [boothm@hawaii.edu](mailto:boothm@hawaii.edu)

**Department Phone:** 956-7736 (you may leave messages for me)

**Office Hours:** By appointment (contact me by email, please)

**Classroom:** POST 126

**Meeting Times:** Tuesday/Thursday: 9:00-10:15

### **Course Description**

ACM 255 will be an in-depth study of the process and art of filmmaking. In this class, we will watch, discuss, analyze, and write about films with a critical eye to understanding visual storytelling. We will be particularly concerned with the intentions and designs of a film's key players: the writer, director, cinematographer, editor, sound designer, composer, to name but a few positions.

You will learn how to "read" and break down a film in the interests of becoming a skilled filmmaker, film viewer, and film critic.

In essence, this course is about three things: story, story, and story!

**Please note:** For those students interested in becoming majors in the ACM program, ACM 255 serves as the prerequisite to advanced courses. In order to qualify for the major, you must complete ACM 255 with a grade of "B" or higher.

### **Required Texts:**

*Understanding Movies*, Gianetti, 10<sup>th</sup> edition

Handouts

### **Course Work:**

- Readings in *Understanding Movies* should be completed by the dates indicated
- Screenings & Film Journals: In addition to the films we view in class, you will be required to watch eight additional films outside class which averages to one film every other week. The Wong Audiovisual Center of Sinclair Library has an extensive collection of outstanding films. You may check out videos/DVD's from there or you may watch videos/DVD's at the library. In either case, I want you to keep a journal – handwritten is fine – evaluating the films you watch, noting what you like or dislike, using film vocabulary and applying critical standards to discuss the films. We'll discuss in class how to do these journals which should include also a film's title, director, and year of production. Twice during the semester, I will collect and review your journals.
- Short quizzes: There will be 2-3 short quizzes throughout the term focusing on film vocabulary. I will give you advance notice about the dates of these quizzes.
- Midterm

- Group projects and in-class presentations – Guidelines will be handed out to you
- Final

**Attendance and Participation: PLEASE READ!**

Regular attendance and participation (completing work on time, coming to class prepared to contribute to discussion and learning) are critical to doing well in this course. Only two unexcused absences will be allowed. With a third unexcused absence and/or a pattern of late arrivals, your grade will be affected. “Below average” performance in attendance and on-time arrivals will result in a “below average” grade.

**Grading:**

Quizzes	20
Journal	15
Mid-term	15
Group projects	20
Final	20
Attendance/Participation	10

**Course Calendar:** (Subject to change)

- Jan. 10 Introduction to Course  
Elements of Visual Storytelling: Framing, composition, camera angles  
Begin Screening: *High Noon*, Fred Zinnemann (USA, 1952, 85 minutes)
- Jan. 12 Finish Screening *High Noon*  
Elements of Visual Storytelling: Shots, scenes, lighting
- Jan. 17 Mise-en-Scene  
Aspect ratio, classical composition, focus  
Begin screening: *Bicycle Thief*, Vittorio De Sica (Italy, 1948, 93 minutes)  
Outside reading: Giannetti, Chapter 1
- Jan. 19 Finish screening *Bicycle Thief*  
Traditions in Mise-en-scene  
Film journal writing
- Jan. 24 Cinematography  
Movement, shots, point of view  
Begin screening: *The Lady Vanishes*, Alfred Hitchcock (UK, 1938, 97 m)  
Outside reading: Giannetti, Chapters 2 & 3
- Jan. 26 Finish screening *The Lady Vanishes*  
Spaces, distances of the film image

- Jan. 31      Editing  
 The cut, shot transitions, changing pace  
 Screen selections from: *Birth of a Nation*, D.W. Griffith (USA, 1915);  
*The Seven Samurai*, Akira Kurosawa (Japan, 1954, 206 min)  
 Outside reading: Giannetti, Chapter 4
- Feb. 2      Editing  
 Montage, space and time in editing  
 Screen selections from: *The Battleship Potemkin*, Sergei Eisenstein  
 (Soviet Union, 1925, 66 min); *North by Northwest*, Alfred Hitchcock (USA, 1959, 136);  
*Goodfellas*, Martin Scorsese (USA, 1990, 145 minutes)
- Feb. 7      QUIZ #1  
 Sound  
 Screen selections from: *Nashville*, Robert Altman (USA, 1975, 159 min);  
*Yidl in the Middle*, Marlene Booth (USA, 1999, 57 minutes)  
 Synchronous, asynchronous, silent films, subtext, voice-over  
 Outside reading: Giannetti, Chapter 5
- Feb. 9      Music, Voice, Sound Effects  
 Screen selections from: *The Conversation*, Francis Ford Coppola (USA,  
 1974, 113 minutes)  
 Begin Screening: *Singin' in the Rain*, Stanley Donen & Gene Kelly  
 (USA, 1952, 103 minutes)
- Feb. 14     JOURNAL #1  
 Acting/Characters  
 Screen selections from: *Tokyo Story*, Yasujiro Ozu (Japan, 1953, 136);  
*Casablanca*, Michael Curtiz (USA, 1942, 102 minutes)  
 Outside reading: Giannetti, Chapters 6 & 7
- Feb. 17     Directing  
 The storyboard  
 In class exercise in storyboarding
- Feb. 21     Story/Writing  
 Narratives, plots, stories  
 Screen: *Rashomon*, Akira Kurosawa (Japan, 1950, 88 minutes)  
 Outside reading: Giannetti, Chapters 8 & 9
- Feb. 23     Points of View  
 Analyzing *Rashomon*
- Feb. 28     MID-TERM

- Mar 2            Documentary/Historical  
Screen: *4 Little Girls*, Spike Lee (USA, 1997)
- Mar. 7            Documentary/Quest  
Screen: *Sound and Fury*, Josh Aronson (USA, 2000, 80 minutes)
- Mar. 9            Finish documentaries/Begin Animation
- Mar. 14           JOURNAL #2  
Animation & Gaming
- Mar. 16           Genres  
Film Noir  
Screen: *Fargo*, Coen Brothers (USA, 1996, 98 minutes)  
Outside reading: Giannetti, Chapter 10
- Mar. 21           Genre  
Action  
Screen: *Run, Lola, Run*, Tom Tykwer (Germany, 1998, 80 min)
- Mar. 23           Discuss: *Run, Lola, Run*  
Experimental Cinema  
Giannetti, Chapter 11
- March 27-April 2    Spring Break!
- April 4           QUIZ #2  
Film History  
Clips from early films  
Lumiere Brothers, Melies, *The Great Train Robbery*
- April 6           Film History II  
Silent Film: Chaplain, Buster Keaton
- April 11           The Hollywood Studio System  
Auteur Theory: Hitchcock, Capra, John Ford, Orson Welles  
Screen selections that show auteur signature
- April 13           Auteur Theory  
American Independent Cinema  
Screen selections from: Scorsese, Altman, John Sayles
- April 18           Ideology & Propaganda  
Screen: *Do the Right Thing*, Spike Lee (USA, 1989)

- April 20      Finish screening: *Do the Right Thing*  
Screen selections from: *Olympiad*, Leni Riefenstahl (Germany, 1936)
- April 25      Story board group assignments  
In-class work
- April 27      In-class storyboard presentations
- May 2        In-class storyboard presentations
- May 11       FINAL EXAM