

Spring 2-1-2018

## FILM 447.01: Film Theory

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# FILM THEORY- FILM 447

Spring 2018

**Sean O'Brien**

**Office Hours:** M W 11:30-1:00 and by appointment in LA 110

**Course meeting times:** M,W from 9:00-11:20

## Readings:

- *Birth of Tragedy*
- Moodle Readings
- Handout

## Assignments:

- 8 review essays
- Class presentation
- 8-10 pg. film analysis
- In-class final comprehensive exam

**Course Content:** This course examines key approaches to film theory and criticism, and the theoretical roots of each. Classic and contemporary films will be assessed in the light of various aesthetic, psychoanalytic and political theories.

**Course Goals and Outcomes:** Students taking this course will be required to write clearly about the basic tenets of the various theories covered and to effectively analyze the films assigned in light of one or more of these theories. The particular film/theory pairings are intended to deepen the students' appreciation of each film's complexity as well as each theory's scope.

## Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. Please ask if you have a question about what constitutes plagiarism, but on the whole, if you consult another work for ideas, copy or paraphrase from another source, etc., then you need to acknowledge the source (including the work you consulted, the publication information, and the page number/s) in your paper with a footnote.

## Schedule:

### I. AESTHETICS

1/22 Intro

1/24 Conventions, Terminology, Realism/Formalism

Readings: Realism/Formalism handout

- 1/29 Realism/Formalism and neo-realism  
Readings: Arnheim, 2 Bazin readings  
*The Bicycle Thief*
- 1/31 *Once*
- 2/5 Discussion of *Once*/Nietzsche's aesthetics  
Readings: BOT, sections 1-9  
Essay on *Once* due
- 2/7 Nietzsche's aesthetics  
Readings: BOT, sections 10-18  
Nietzsche show and tell
- 2/12 *Thin Red Line*
- 2/14 Presentation #1 on *Thin Red Line*/discussion  
Essay on *Thin Red Line* due
- 2/19 Holiday – President's Day

## II. FILM AND THE PSYCHOANALYTIC TRADITION

- 2/21 Freud  
Readings: Freud readings
- 2/26 *Fight Club*
- 2/28 Discussion of *Fight Club*  
Lacan and Zizek  
Readings: Lacan and Zizek  
Essay on *Fight Club* due
- 3/5 *Solaris*
- 3/7 Presentation #2 on *Solaris*/discussion  
Essay on *Solaris* due
- 3/12 Mulvey  
Readings: Mulvey
- 3/14 *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*
- 3/19 Presentation #3 on *Eternal Sunshine*/discussion  
Essay on *Eternal Sunshine* due
- 3/21 Viewer's Choice

3/26-30 SPRING BREAK

III. POLITICS OF FILM

4/2 Materialist versus post-structuralist approaches to film

Readings: Materialist analysis readings

4/4 *Michael Clayton*

4/9 Presentation #4 on *Michael Clayton*

Essay due on *Michael Clayton*

4/11 Materialist versus post-structuralist approaches to film

Readings: Jamieson reading

4/16 *No Country for Old Men*

4/18 Presentation #5 on *No Country*/discussion

Essay due on *No Country*

4/23 A Buddhist Approach

Readings: 3 Buddhist readings

4/25 *Her*

4/30 Presentation #6 on *Her*/discussion

Essay on *Her* due

5/2 Summary and Review

There will be an in-class comprehensive final exam from 10:10-12:10 a.m., Tues 5/8.