Dr. Buckman, Humanities and Religious Studies 180: The Film (C2), Fall 2014
Office: Mendocino 2020/ Office Phone: 278-5335/ I am only on campus on Tuesdays this semester.
Office Hours: Tuesdays in MND2020 from 4:30-5:30 and by appointment. Online: Tues and Thurs 9-10am on Google Hangout. This “location” may change as needed due to logistics. You will need to set up a gmail account in order to utilize these hours.
e-mail: mailto:abuckman@csus.edu (Please do not use SacCT e-mail. Essays should be submitted in the designated assignment area on SacCT. Backups copies may be sent to my SacCT e-mail account, but this backup is not a substitute for proper submission.)

Required Texts and Materials:
- Subscription to Netflix. Watching movies prior to class enables us to discuss the films more thoroughly and/or discuss more films. You also may purchase or rent the actual DVDs if you wish, of course. The Sacramento Public Library system is also a good source for video/DVD. I do recommend viewing the films for class more than once. Planning ahead is the key to doing this cheaply. Please do not watch films on a mobile phone!
- 2 scantron sheets (#882)
- Access to SacCT for discussion list, notes, and quizzes (online.csus.edu)

Catalog Description: Introduction to the aesthetics of cinema with special attention to the evolution of critical theories of cinema within the framework of 20th century arts and ideas. 3 units.

Course Description and Expectations: An introduction to the aesthetics of cinema; as such, the course is designed for those who have little or no background in film as an art form. In this course we will be discussing the history and aesthetics of film; this discussion will be enhanced through both readings and screenings. We will be focusing on a body of information and concepts to be learned and applied to film. Included in this focus will be an emphasis on the components of film as a visual text and as art, on the director as author of the film, and on film critique. A variety of films will be shown in this course, and, most likely, no student will like all the films that will be shown in this class. The point of the course is not to entertain you or to show you only the sorts of films you are already used to watching. Rather, the point is to expand your ability to appreciate and analyze a variety of film types. Such an increase in understanding can increase your pleasure in viewing films. We also will be viewing some television programs to provide counterpoint, to use as examples of techniques, and to enable a discussion of auteur theory.

Watching unfamiliar films is one aspect of the course. Students are expected to have reading assignments (as well as other assignments) prepared as indicated in the syllabus or otherwise noted. Although this is an enjoyable class (or so I hope), it is also a serious academic one. You will not do well in the class unless you regularly attend the entire class, pay close attention to the films, and complete reading and writing assignments, exams, and quizzes. Although we will not be able to cover a discussion of all the material in the text fully, you will be responsible for comprehension of the information presented in the text: make note of questions you have and bring them to class. If you have a question or problem with class, please come and talk to me. Waiting till the end of the class helps no one.

BE PRO-ACTIVE!
Learning Goals: Upon completion of HRS 180, successful students will be able to:
- Appreciate and analyze a variety of film types and genres
- Compare and contrast different modes of filmmaking
- Demonstrate visual literacy
- Apply the techniques of formal analysis to film
- Understand and analyze the ways in which film contributes to and reflects the representation of diverse peoples.

Class Policies and Procedures:
E-mail: E-mail has exploded in the last decade, and it has become a major challenge to keep up with it. Please ask questions that you have regarding class content or assignments in class, if possible – often, they’re useful for everyone to hear. Personal issues should, of course, be reserved for e-mail or office hours visits. If your e-mail to me does not require a response, then I will not provide one. Please use standard written English in any correspondence and do not expect an immediate response. However, if you have an important question and have not heard from me within 48 hours, please do resend/remind me -- politely. It’s easy for mail to get lost in the shuffle.
Behavior: Respect for both one’s classmates and professor is appropriate to the college environment. This includes being on time, polite, making a positive contribution to the course, and not distracting from the learning of others: turn off all electronics, pay attention, be respectful, and be present in class. Tardiness and leaving during class are not acceptable since 1) it disrupts both other students and the professor as well as showing disrespect and 2) you may miss valuable information. Therefore, please do not enter the classroom if you are more than 5 minutes late. You may enter at break. Students should not leave class early unless they have a compelling reason and should, if at all possible, notify the professor prior to class and sit near the doors. Please use the bathroom prior to class. If you leave, wait till break to come back. Students who use electronics in class or are otherwise disruptive may be asked to leave. **Failure to follow these general principles of civilized behavior will result in grade reductions.**

Your behavior will factor into the participation grade as well as into decisions regarding the grade you receive.

Coursework: There will be two exams, one paper, and multiple quizzes. There will also be a discussion list on the SacCT site set up for this course. There is no extra credit for the course.

Participation: See above. This class works best with the full, regular, and informed engagement of students with the material and the class itself. Simply being in attendance does not qualify as participating in the class; nor do short responses or summaries on SacCT. You can receive a failing participation grade even if you attend every class. Disruptive (and rude) behavior works against you in your participation grade and in deciding your final grade. See above for examples. This includes use of electronics during class.

Discussion list: To enhance participation and discussion of films, there will be a discussion board available on SacCT. Posts must be made within one week after viewing, or they will not be accepted as enhancing class participation. I will delete any messages posted after the due date. Students will be expected to respond in an intelligent manner to films shown in and/or readings assigned for the class. If you simply repeat what others before you have said or otherwise do not meaningfully interact with the films being discussed, you will not receive credit. Responses should show an understanding of class materials as well as some analysis of them. Brief summaries without analysis will not be counted, nor will responses that don’t follow the rudiments of grammar and mechanics: this is not text messaging. Go beyond stating whether you liked the film. Analyze a cinematographic aspect of the film – how did it work? This is good practice for the essay. Adequate responses should probably be at least a good-sized paragraph. Respect of other students is also mandatory, so flaming will be counted against your participation grade. Students should show original thought and depth in their response. All students should read these posts, since students often post excellent points about the films in question. More guidelines are available for the essay if you do not have MS Word on your computer. Give yourself time to do so. Essays should be typed, double-spaced, and have 1" margins with Times New Roman 12 font and black ink. At the top of the first page, include a descriptive title for your paper in addition to tagging information (your name/my name/the date). If a hard copy is turned in for extenuating reasons: please staple your essays PRIOR to class and turn in at the beginning of class. Don't use a cover or a folder.

Grading: The course syllabus indicates the dates of exams and due dates of papers. 100 points are available for the course. See below for grading rubric. If you are worried about your grade, you should come discuss it with me by midterm: THIS, not the end of the semester, is the appropriate time to take action. I am a professional and, as a result, should you come with a question or complaint offered respectfully, I will not hold this against you.

Midterm: 25 points; Essay: 30 points; Final: 25 points; Discussion: 10 points; Quizzes: 10 points
Due Dates:

Tests: Tests are scheduled as indicated on the class calendar. Make-ups are not permitted unless a compelling and verifiable emergency interferes, ex. death or severe illness, and official verification of such an emergency is required, ex. doctor’s note or official obituary. Make-ups are given at the convenience of the test giver. **CSUS IDs are required to take all exams in the course;** said exams will be signed in. The CSUS calendar, which lists exam week, is available far in advance of classes, and the final date and time are listed below. **DO NOT SCHEDULE VACATIONS DURING EXAMS.** If you have done so, please drop the class. Also, be sure that your employer is willing to work with you re: exams.

Papers:

1. See above, under formatting.
2. Late essays will not be accepted unless the instructor has approved an extension by the due date and in writing. (E-mail is acceptable.) Talk/write to me by the due date or do not ask for an extension (see extenuating circumstances, above.)

Paper Assignment: (see next page as well)

 Assignment Length: 5-7pp. An analysis of technique and NOT a summary of the film. In essay format, analyze how techniques are used in your film, showing comprehension of issues/terms we have discussed in class. (There should be no bulleting or subheadings for an essay of this length.) The realist-formalist continuum is a means to structuring your essay, including your thesis. The paper is neither a movie review nor an analysis of themes. In addition, it should not be merely a listing of techniques; it should be clear what the effect and/or importance of the techniques are to making meaning in the movie. Give a sense of the film’s techniques overall and then discuss particular examples in more depth. See sample essays on SacCT. Additionally, do not write your essay on a film discussed in class or one covered in a sample essay. If you watch a DVD commentary on your film, you **must** cite it every time you use ideas from it (parenthetical citation and Works Cited). If you use any other sources beyond your film, you **must** cite them in the body and at the end of the essay. However, since the purpose of this essay is to illustrate YOUR knowledge, I discourage the use of outside sources; if you use them, the paper as a whole should illustrate your knowledge sufficiently.

Elements that must be included in this paper are listed below. Terminology should be used as appropriate (ex. terms for different proxemic distances, key lighting). You’ll probably find that the cinematographic elements are used in support of the narrative of the film. Your demonstrated proficiency in writing will be taken into account in the grading of your papers. There may be a brief discussion of narrative as well, since the story is the reason many people like a particular film. A brief (1 paragraph) synopsis of the film should be included after the introductory paragraph.

Check-Off List: The best essays will discuss a variety of uses of each technique and tie them in to the thesis. Your thesis will be a statement about your chosen film’s position on the RFC, and you will support your thesis with evidence from the film. How does your film use the techniques below? How do these techniques create meaning in your film?

1. Angles (high, low, eye level, bird’s eye view, oblique/Dutch tilt)
2. Lighting (low key, high key, high contrast, natural/available)
3. Proxemics (intimate, personal, social, public). Discuss the physical proximity of characters, or you will not receive credit. **Do not confuse with shot length.** The two are analogous, not synonymous.
4. Framing (position in frame, tight and loose framing, open and closed form)
5. Realist-formalist continuum (RFC): how does each technique listed here relate to the RFC as it’s used in your film?
6. Editing (cutting to continuity, jump cuts, parallel editing, etc.; dissolves, wipes, split screen). Pacing (the length of takes) might be discussed as well. How are shots joined? How does this create meaning?
7. Shot lengths (extreme close, close, medium, long, extreme long/establishing)

Additionally, essays will be judged upon:

Correct and appropriate use of terminology (ex. in discussing lighting, use key terminology)

Quality of grammar, mechanics, sentence structure, spelling, paragraphing (1 idea per paragraph)

See next page for basic grading rubric.
Basic parameters for grading:** (see bottom of next page)
A: Excellent. Paper should be well written, with clear prose and a clear sense of purpose and unity. Will demonstrate clear knowledge and understanding of cinematography without error and be able to tie this knowledge into a discussion of the film itself. Will consider each of the cinematographic elements listed above, as well as their roles in the film, using examples from the film as support. Different types of each technique will be discussed (ex. high, low, and natural lighting), illustrating depth of knowledge. Will use correct terminology and definitions without error. At least 3 different examples of variations on each technique will be discussed accurately.
B: Above average. Paper will be generally a bit less successful than the above, with perhaps less comprehensive discussion, clarity, accuracy or thoroughness. The paper still will be well written with clear prose and a clear sense of purpose and unity. Will demonstrate clear and more than basic knowledge and understanding of cinematography and be able to tie this knowledge into a discussion of the film itself. Discusses all required elements in a way that illustrates above average understanding. At least 2 different examples of variations on each technique will be discussed accurately.
C: Satisfactory. Will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of cinematography and be able to tie this knowledge into a discussion of the film itself. Will consider most of the cinematographic elements listed above, their function, and use examples from the film to support the thesis. Will show satisfactory understanding of cinematography. At least 1 example of each technique will be discussed accurately.
D: Less than satisfactory. Will likely demonstrate a bit of knowledge (i.e. less than basic) about cinematography. May have too much plot summary, incorrect understanding of cinematographic elements, missing elements, and/or too little analysis. Writing also may lack clarity.
F: Fail. Does not show understanding of cinematography. Fails to use key concepts to discuss film. Incomprehensible prose will earn this grade.
0: Plagiarized or not turned in.

A few pet peeves: 1. Keep it real. Avoid talking about how this class has changed your perception of film. 2. When talking about the character, use the character’s name (not that of the actor). The actor is playing a character. Keanu Reeves did not do the things Neo did in The Matrix. 3. You should know and use the names of characters and of the director. 4. Film titles should be italicized.
Schedule of Readings and Films (may change at discretion of instructor). All assignments refer to Giannetti unless otherwise noted. NB: Some of these films/TV shows contain adult themes and situations. I recommend viewing these films at home as well as in class. Dependent upon time constraints, we may not watch films in their entirety in the class. Due dates, scheduled by surname, are listed below. NB: Not realizing your essay was due is NOT an acceptable reason for a late essay. Put the date your essay is due in your calendar/planner!

- 9/2 Introduction. Discussion of syllabus, SacCT, realist-formalist continuum (discussion will continue throughout course). Early Narrative Film/ early shorts: Bitzer’s Actualities, Edison’s “The Kiss,” Keystone Kops, Lumiere shorts, Muybridge motion studies and “Serpentine Dances,” Méliès’ “Voyage to the Moon,” and Porter’s “The Great Train Robbery.” See notes on SacCT for week one.
- 9/9 Chapter 1: Photography: The Graduate. (watch in class) Take quiz prior to 6pm next week (and each week).
- 9/16 Chapter 2: Mise-En-Scene. Watch The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari before class (avl free online @ <http://archive.org/details/DasKabinettdesDoktorCaligariTheCabinetofDrCaligari>). Quiz 1 due: ch1 and The Graduate
- 9/23 Chapter 3: Movement. Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. Q2: ch2 and Cabinet due
- 9/30 Chapter 4: Editing: The Godfather Q3
- 10/7 Finish Godfather in class. Watch the following prior to class: Firefly: “Serenity, Part 1&2”; “Out of Gas” and “Objects in Space” (see below) Q4
- 10/14 Chapter 5: Sound: Buffy: “The Body” and “Hush” (view both prior to class). Also: discuss TV v. Film (Hulu has some episodes available for free, and HuluPlus and Netflix have all of Buffy and Firefly available for viewing. There also is a DVD available in the library media center with our Buffy and Firefly viewing on it.) Discuss auteur theory; Q5
- 10/21 Midterm
- 10/28 Chapter 6: Acting. TBA. A-F papers due** (see below)
- 11/4 Chapter 7: Drama: Rashomon; G-L papers due** Q6
- 11/11 Chapter 8: Story: TBA M-R papers due**Q7
- 11/18 Chapter 9: Writing: Pan’s Labyrinth S-Z papers due**Q8
- 11/25 Chapter 10: Ideology: Antonia’s Line Q9
- 12/2 Chapter 11: Theory: Citizen Kane Q10
- 12/9 Chapter 12: Synthesis: Kane, Q11
- 12/16 Final Exam. 6-8pm

**Papers may be turned in as early as 10/21. I cannot read drafts due to large enrollments, but I am happy to discuss your essay in office hours prior to your due date.