

West Virginia University
College of Creative Arts
School of Theatre & Dance

FILM 101
3 credit hrs.

ART OF FILM I

Winter Session
GEF 6

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Art of Film I is a survey of film history from the beginnings to c. 1960 (FILM 102 covers from 1960 to today; it is not necessary to have taken this course to take FILM 102, but it is ideal). Students will follow the narrative of film history in the textbook, which offers YouTube and other online pages and video links that serve as the “lecture” material with the added bonus of being able to repeat it, use accessibility tools such as closed captioning, and benefit from footage and clips that I would draw from the same sources (TBH) for the course anyway.

TEXTBOOK:

I created a new film history coursebook, titled *CUT TO: An Open-Access, Self-Guided Course in Film History*. FILM 102 covers the second half of the book, conveniently labeled “Part Two.” The book resides as a .pdf in the “Start Here” section of the eCampus home page for this course. Download it NOW and familiarize yourself with its parts and layout. This syllabus will help you bridge the differences between the book and the demands of this summer term. For example, we will be skipping several chapters to help you fit everything into six weeks. Still, you are basically covering a week of a fall or spring semester course every two days! See the breakdown at the end for which chapters to skip. There will be some differences between what’s called Content on eCampus and what’s in *CUT TO*: In that case, use *CUT TO*: as the definitive material for the class.

The course unfolds as quickly as you like, using mostly videos readily available on YouTube and elsewhere. You should treat these as you would any lecture: take notes, make connections, and work to retain the information that you find in them. The videos do a great deal of what I would strive to do anyway . . . they use clips and visuals that would take me years to assemble (not to mention paying for the rights!). And, as they are readily available, as I said, we save you the \$150 or so that a textbook would charge for much of the same information. I have spent the summer curating the videos. There will be some overlap between them; that is to be expected. Treat the repetition as “review” or another perspective.

THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM:

This course is consciously designed as a GEF 6 (The Arts and Creativity) in the University’s General Education program, the purpose of which is to provide students with broad liberal knowledge and experience. The study of humanities develops knowledge of and appreciation for the accumulated wisdom and experience contained in world literature, history, fine arts, religion, and philosophy; the objective of such an education lies in bringing the student to an active consciousness of the living,

operating, and continuing values of human culture. FILM 101 covers the beginnings of cinema to c. 1960; FILM 102 picks up there to the most recent movements.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The student will be able to (1) explain the syntax of film and describe the ways in which filmmakers manipulate cinematic material to create meaning; (2) articulate the levels of aesthetic cohesion in film, both from the creators' side, and from the audience/reception side; (3) analyze film at symbolic and thematic levels; (4) compare and contrast various technical terms discussed in class; (5) define, compare, and contrast cinematic genres and styles as they develop and change through time and cultural interactions; (6) describe the development of the recent cinema from its roots to its maturity; (7) apply concepts specific to the range of films shown in class to the American hegemony in art and popular culture; (8) relate historical and cultural events or trends to parallel movements in the "mirror" of the arts.

ASSIGNMENTS, ASSESSMENTS, AND GRADE BREAKDOWN:

All of the work is performed at your pace, meaning there are no synchronous meeting requirements for the course. Because this is the inaugural version of the self-guided online FILM 101, I have decided to do away with the brief check quizzes. Instead, my assessment of your understanding and mastery of the material will take place in these three equally weighted Assignment and Assessment groups:

- Tests (3*100) = 300 total pts. possible
- Analysis Papers (2*150) = 300 total pts. possible
- Unit Work (6*50pts.) = 300 total pts. possible

So, for final letter grades, the 10% cutoffs would be: A=900-810, B=809-720, C=719-630, D=629-540, F=below 539 for total points amassed in the semester.

Midterm grades, if issued, will be calculated from Test One, Paper One, and three Units' worth of Assignments.

Major tests that cover two units at a time will be administered on eCampus and will gauge your competency with concepts, names, historical movements, the films of each unit, and other material contained and related over the previous few weeks. This is a clear way to maintain your progress, as the tests will be open on a specific day for a limited amount of time.

Test Study Hack: If a name, a film, a term, or a concept shows up multiple times during the unit, consider it an increased probability that it will appear on the test!

Two analysis papers will ask you to choose one film from the first half of the semester and later a film from the second half, and to analyze deeply a scene or moment of that film for its technique and execution of some cinematic artistry of its time.

You will also write the papers (about 750-1,000 words each) on a film of your choosing from the syllabus that will allow me to assess your analytical skills with regard to film culture.

1. The first paper will be on a film shown in the first half of the semester, while
2. the second from the second half.

Although this is not a writing course, the ideas and presentation matter for anything you submit in any class. Here is a handy summary of how I will treat your paper in the grading process:

- **Excellent Work:** (135-150 points) This essay establishes a foundation for sound reasoning that expounds on a well chosen topic. The presentation follows standard guidelines for style, and does not exhibit failings in punctuation, grammar, or rhetoric.
- **Good Work:** (120-134 points) This essay handles a suitable topic well, with minor mistakes in analysis, or a few minor stylistic flaws.
- **Average Work:** (105-119 points) This essay covers the assignment, but with problems of fact and analysis, or shortcomings in the writing mechanics.
- **Below Average Work:** (90-104 points) This essay fails to satisfy the assignment and displays many errors in the presentation.
- **Unacceptable Work:** (0-89 points) This essay does not rise to the level of college work, and cannot be construed to satisfy the level of commitment to the class and engagement with the material that such assignments seek to measure.

Specifically, I want you to choose any film studied in this class and analyze some narrow aspect of it. You may select a particular sequence, a camera movement, a striking image . . . almost anything that can be studied as one of those choices that define art I mentioned earlier. I do NOT want a paper titled, “The Art of Citizen Kane,” which could obviously fill a book or two.

Choosing a limited topic forces/allows you to analyze more deeply in the 750 or so words you produce for this assignment. I would suggest you choose a film and a moment in that film that struck you in some way as memorable or important. You’ll write a better essay.

Rewatch the film or pertinent passages and show off your growing understanding of cinema. Impress me. For this reason, I strongly urge you to analyze on some technical film basis, and not on an English class topic like symbolism or theme. Of course, that having been said, feel free to tie a symbol to a camera angle or something technical. Got it? If you have questions, contact me.

Finally, a few tips for any paper you write:

- Title your essay with something a little more clever than “Essay 1.”
- Film titles are *Italicized*.
- Avoid contractions in formal writing (I use them on here because I want to emphasize that I’m a person speaking to you, and not another textbook!)
- Don’t tell me the plot of the film all over again. If you mention a plot point make sure it’s tied to your thesis as a piece of evidence or illustration of a point.
- Name names. Don’t say “the director” on first reference . . . use the name!
- And don’t say “the guy with the funny hat”... Look up the character’s name in the credits.
For help here: www.imdb.com
- Good luck and I look forward to your analysis!

The Unit Work will itself be broken into two types,

- Video Analysis
- Research into the Period

There are six units and six assignments (not an accident). Therefore, you will do each assignment for an individual UNIT of your choice, but don’t do more than one for any one Unit. You will apply each assignment thrice (3X2=6). Remember, every unit will be covered by either an Analysis or Research . . . no duplication!

VIDEO ANALYSIS: For three units, you’ll provide an analysis of all of the YouTube videos contained in the unit, going over the quality and accuracy of the video. This will be my way of generating a system to double check the videos I assign. This is not technically a review (“thumbs up”), but more a user response to how helpful and informative the videos in the unit turned out to be. This will be submitted as an approximately 1,000-word report to eCampus.

PERIOD RESEARCH: For each Unit you do this for, you’ll submit a series of five (5) questions that occur to you as potentially important, but not covered sufficiently. You’ll pose a question, and then provide as close to an answer as you can find, likely another YouTube video. I’ll take your input into consideration as I revise this guidebook and the course itself. For maximum credit, you’ll be wise to submit material that is (1) appropriate to a 100-level course (don’t present a video on Stanley Kubrick’s favorite lenses, for instance), and (2) not already covered elsewhere. This course covers until about 1960, so don’t research Peter Jackson’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, for example. Because it is research, the expectation is that you sufficiently cite and even provide links to your source(s) for your answer.

WORKLOAD SUMMARY:

For each unit, you’ll read the .pdf textbook, watch the accompanying explanatory videos, watch any films connected to the unit (mostly through the Library’s reserves, roughly one film per day), taking notes as you can and making connections that will be easy to build into a confident understanding of each period, style, or movement. You will also perform one of the Unit Work assignments

(Analysis/Research). [This should take around two per week.] This three-week course load is super intensive. If you don't think you can handle this much work, drop the course now! Remember, you have weekends to catch up on the schedule or work ahead if needed. Be aggressive; work ahead if possible, and limit the stress accordingly. I strongly urge notetaking throughout, as this will help you remember and relate important material for tests and other assignments. You'll take a test on all of the assigned material covered in both units after every two units [approx. every 4-5 days]. Two analysis papers means you'll also turn in an essay based around one of the films we watch in the first half, then at the end, you'll turn in a similar essay on a film from the latter half. The amount of independent work is a function of the absence of required in-class time; you'll spend what you would normally spend on homework and class meetings—this semester—on the unit work.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE:

	Unit One: Invention	Ch. 1-5
	1. Photography Basics	
	2. Edison Shorts/Lumière Actualities	
	3. <i>The Great Train Robbery</i>	
	4. <i>A Trip to the Moon</i>	
	Unit Two: Birth of Hollywood	Ch. 6-8 (skip 9)
	5. <i>Sherlock Jr.</i>	
	TEST ONE + Two Unit Assignments completed	
	Unit Three: Aesthetic Developments	Ch. 10, 11 (skip 12)
	6. <i>Battleship Potemkin</i>	
	7. <i>M</i>	
	Unit Four: Studios and Stars	Ch. 13-15 (skip 16)
	8. <i>Sullivan's Travels</i>	
	9. <i>Citizen Kane</i>	PAPER ONE
	10. <i>Double Indemnity</i>	
	TEST TWO + Two Unit Assignments completed	
	Unit Five: Foreign Styles	Ch. 17, 19 (skip 18, skip 20)
	11. <i>Bicycle Thieves</i>	
	12. <i>Rashomon</i>	
	Unit Six: The Studio Revisited	Ch. 21, 23 (skip 22, skip 24)
	13. <i>High Noon</i>	PAPER TWO
	14. <i>Rear Window</i>	
	TEST THREE + Two Unit Assignments completed	

Please note that chapters 9, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, and 24 are omitted (along with their films), which is a real pity, but necessary to make the workload bearable for you in this abbreviated Winter term.

Also note that while it looks as if I'm asking you to turn in multiple pieces of work on the same day (especially at the end), these are DUE DATES. Nothing precludes you from turning in a paper or a unit assignment earlier than listed. The tests are open on a specific day, so set that time aside!

Late work will lose 10 points for each day late. Each test will be open and available for a 24-hour period. Makeups will be allowed at my discretion.

I will make every effort to update and correct both this document syllabus and the material on eCampus as things arise. I expect a few hiccups but let's enjoy this journey together!

INCOMPLETE POLICY:

The WVU Catalog contains the full [Incomplete Policy](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT:

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the Student Conduct Code at <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecreditstermsclassification/>. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

COVID-19 SYLLABUS STATEMENT:

WVU is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment for all students, faculty, and staff. If a student becomes sick or is required to quarantine during the semester, they should notify the instructor. The student should work with the instructor to develop a plan to receive the necessary course content, activities, and assessments to complete the course learning outcomes.

SALE OF COURSE MATERIAL STATEMENT:

All course materials, including lectures, class notes, quizzes, exams, handouts, presentations, and other course materials provided to students for their courses are protected intellectual property. As such, the unauthorized purchase or sale of these materials may result in disciplinary sanctions under the [Student Conduct Code](https://studentconduct.wvu.edu/campus-student-code). (<https://studentconduct.wvu.edu/campus-student-code>) [adopted 5-11-2015]

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT STATEMENT:

West Virginia University does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence [[BOG Rule 1.6](#)]. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may

speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff; keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the [Title IX Coordinator](#).

If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the [Carruth Center](#), 304-293-9355 or 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the [Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center](#) (RDVIC), 304- 292-5100 or 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline).

For students at WVU-Beckley, contact the [Women's Resource Center](#) at 304-255-1585 (toll free at 1-888-825-7836) or [REACH](#) at 304-340-3676. For students at WVU-Keyser, contact the WVU-Keyser [Psychological Counseling Services Office](#) at 304-788-6976, and locally in Keyser, the [Family Crisis Center](#), 304-788-6061 or 1-800-698-1240 (24-hour hotline).

For more information, please consult [WVU's Title IX Office](https://titleix.wvu.edu/resources-offices) (<https://titleix.wvu.edu/resources-offices>).

STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION STATEMENT:

Effective teaching is a primary mission of West Virginia University. Student evaluation of instruction provides the university and the instructor with feedback about your experiences in the course for review and course improvement. Your participation in the evaluation of course instruction is both strongly encouraged and highly valued. Results are strictly confidential, anonymous, and not available to the instructor until after final grades are released by Admissions and Records. Information about how you can complete this evaluation will be provided by your instructor. [adopted 4-14-2008]

INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT:

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in your classes, please advise your instructors and make appropriate arrangements with [the Office of Accessibility Services](https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/). (<https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>)

More information is available at the [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](https://diversity.wvu.edu/) (<https://diversity.wvu.edu/>) as well. [adopted 2-11-2013]

The aim of higher education is the broadening of knowledge in the pursuit of truth and understanding of the complex realities of our world. The interaction with course materials/topics must be respectful of diversity, including but not limited to race/ethnicity, age, dis/ability, sex, sexuality, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion.

In this environment, we welcome discussions about inclusivity the art of film and how we as scholars and film artists can be more responsible and active in the pursuit of social justice. All participants are expected to engage in a respectful and productive manner. If you have questions about how to partake in these exchanges safely and effectively, please contact Dr. Malarcher. If

concerns extend beyond the classroom, please contact the University's Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, who will direct you to the appropriate person.

While we're on the subject of inclusion, I have to confess that the first fifty years of film history that this course covers is sorely lacking in diversity, alternative voices, or racial and alternative gender presentations. That is the sad history. I am always on the lookout for more to say on the subject and trust me when I say that FILM 102 is much more replete with diverse points of view and contributors. Because this course is a survey and not encyclopedic, and necessarily deals with the movers and shakers of the major influential film artists, it would be in all of our best interests to see beyond any limitations and understand that *Citizen Kane*, for instance, influenced filmmakers of all stripes and periods to come.

INSTRUCTOR RESPONSE TIME:

Because this class is delivered online, I wanted to affirm that I will make myself as available as possible to you via email. Using jay.malarcher@mail.wvu.edu will assure you have the best avenue for communication. I will endeavor to respond to your questions and concerns within six hours of your email, from the beginning of the next business day—This means that if you email me at 2:30am EST, the business day clock doesn't begin until 8:00am. Note all times are Eastern Standard Time, and I will in all likelihood reply sooner, but I will be doing some travelling at times, so please be understanding. Also note that I will offer a reply in a timely fashion; I'm not promising an instant correction or resolution. Some things are out of my control, but at least you'll know I'm working on the issue because of my reply. Do not hesitate to contact me about anything related to the course. I'm here for you and the smooth rollout of the course and your learning/experience are my prime concerns.