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# CREATING THE MYSTERY-THRILLER TO TEACH CINEMA STUDIES AND GENRE ANALYSIS

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## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

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The following is a syllabus for an upper division (400 level) undergraduate course in Electronic Media and Broadcasting (EMB), titled Advanced Media Studies, that explores historical, institutional, and social developments/significances of a media genre of the instructor's choosing. The course typically has twenty-four students enrolled, the majority of whom are EMB majors and minors but can include Cinema Studies and Communication students as well. Because the EMB program is focused on production-based skills, this course serves as one of the only upper division media analysis courses for the program. The course was therefore designed to encourage a deeper understanding of the ways design choices influence the meaning(s) of/in the film and to highlight the relationships between production, culture and reception.

While students are frequently excited to take this course and can readily assert their favorite films within the selected genre, when asked for rationale about what makes those films socially/culturally significant, they often struggle to define clear grounds for their argument. To foster a deeper socio-cultural understanding of film and media studies, this course scaffolds the development of critical thinking through three interlinking assignments. First, students are required to read a set of selected articles before class and submit a structured reading reflection (summarize, reflect, question) to the instructor. While the required reading and writing assignments are a rigorous part of the class, the material positions film production and analysis within a historical context. The conversation around film genre is therefore contextualized within the social modes of production that enabled and constrained both the film industry and its content. I have found that content is most useful for students when they are able to see the arguments in actions; therefore, rather than lecturing on the content, I have flipped the course, and we spend most of the semester watching/analyzing films in class. Through the in-class discussion of social contexts and subsequent examination of a film, students learn to visualize the arguments of the course readings and apply the film analysis techniques that the course is built around.

Second, to deepen the analytical skills of students they are required to take film notes which are treated as reference points during discussion. Specifically, film notes are used to focus student attention on the details of the film structure rather than on their reactions to the content. To facilitate this, I introduce Nam and Condon's (2010) Describe, Analyze and Evaluate (DAE) process during the second week of class. Simply put, the DAE asks individuals to first describe the structures of an image/scene, then analyze the objective connections/meanings of the descriptive terms, and, finally, to offer an evaluation of the connections/meanings that reveals alternative and/or implied messages. Through the DAE process students are not only encouraged to suspend judgment and make careful observation through critical

thinking, but to "link the objective and the affective, the content and the relationship[s] of meaning," to socio-cultural situations (Nam and Condone, 2010, p. 85). The DAE therefore functions as a descriptive tool that helps students reflect on structural (object, narrative, shots, cuts, color, etc.) and narrative elements within a text. The reading reflections and film notes thus work together to ground the class conversation in historical and textual structures related to the film being screened.

Third, the three assignments have students integrate the reading material, class content/conversation and external material into their essays. The larger essays are a formal opportunity for students to conduct their own independent analysis of both the smaller structures (scene analysis) and the larger themes (film analysis) present within a selected film. The final video essay brings the course content together by asking students to produce a video essay that is reflective of both the production processes and the current social context of their mystery focused sub-genre.

Because students must make an argument for a sub-genre at the end of the semester, the course mimics the final assignment structure and makes the argument for the Mystery-Thriller. To build the analytical base for the course, students are first introduced to the formal properties of genre analysis and encouraged to think about the ways structural features (scene, setting, object, characters, etc.) work to create a genre. I then localize the theme of the course through the historical structures of the mystery by moving from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, to Agatha Christie, and then to Dashiell Hammett/Raymond Chandler *Hard-Boiled Detective*. I use these authors to illustrate how the mystery genre structure has changed and how the socio-cultural context of their time influenced these shifts. To frame the course within early genre studies, and to give students more freedom for their final project, I utilized the broader definition of the mystery—a story whose central focus is on a puzzling crime, circumstance, situation or problem (and its related clues) that needs to be solved—rather than the more specific detective or crime genre.

While the first part of the class lays the foundation, the rest of the course asks students to think about how and why the Mystery genre has changed. Moving into an analysis of Film Noir, the class explores the influence of WWI, expressionist movements, social anxiety and distrust that worked to not only change the ways movies were made and regulated, but how the detective, jurisprudence, the law, and crime was depicted during this time. The class next moves into Neo-Noir to discuss how Noir structures and social concerns were reinvigorated, restructured and amplified during the Cold War. While Noir and Neo-Noir maintain similar semantic material, their syntactic differences become more apparent with the addition of color, CGI, film techniques and sound effects. Consequently, the movement from Mystery to Noir and Noir to Neo-Noir provides a systematic overview of the film structures and the socio-cultural contexts that influenced the genre, the purpose of which is to frame the analysis of a film as a mystery itself; a processes of uncovering hidden meanings buried with the film.

Once students, functioning as a detective-audience, become involved in trying to solve the mystery of contemporary film analysis, I make an argument for the mystery-thriller. Drawing from Barthes (1970) conception of the writerly text, the course encourages students to analyze they ways current narratives (including films, shows, podcast, games, etc.) require interpretation, draw from intertextual references and spur fan theories to create a participatory Mystery-Thriller structure. To help structure the argument, I define the Mystery-thriller as a story whose central focus is on a puzzling crime/circumstance/issue/problem that incorporates and heightens the audiences feelings of anticipation and anxiety by asking, encouraging or requiring the audience to put the clues together and solve the puzzle themselves.

My approach to writing the syllabus is to give students a complete framework of the course and what is expected of them as they enter the semester. I do not want students to be surprised by anything, and I am not trying to hold anything back from them, the syllabus therefore presents everything they need to succeed. However, I understand that presenting all the content at the start can be overwhelming to some students, and at the start of class I have student groups work through sections of the syllabus. Students are then able to ask me for clarification on what is immediately important to them while also getting a general framework for the course. I have found that student conversations have provided a stronger dialogue about the course and its goals.

## **SYLLABUS: CREATING THE MYSTERY-THRILLER TO TEACH CINEMA STUDIES AND GENRE ANALYSIS**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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You can't turn on a television, watch a movie, or enter a bookstore without flashing across a program with a mystery at its core. While mystery stories have been with us since Cain killed Abel in the Bible, their evolution from supernatural monster hunting to the rise of Sherlock Holmes, Agatha Christie, Ellery Queen, and Raymond Chandler illustrates the developing lineage of the great detective mystery. Even beyond these varying narratives, mysteries are one of the few genres that have spurred their own participatory entertainment through games like *Clue*, *Time Stories* and *Mystery Express*, and theatrical events like mystery dinner theaters, mystery tours and escape games. While these experiences draw from the historical context of classic mysteries (a story whose central focus is on a puzzling crime, circumstance, situation or problem (and its related clues) that needs to be solved), genres are not a static form and as social systems change so do these narratives. Part of the reason these stories are compelling is because they draw from and "paint a timely portrait of the issues in our times," they are "the social [narratives] of today. We look to these [narratives] as how we are doing at this point in time; the state of our cities, the state of our crime and how we deal with crime and punishment" (Cogdill, 2010). What then are the issues and concerns of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? How do current narratives like *Making a Murderer*, *Serial*, and *Jinx* present and reflect the ways crime and punishment is dealt with today? What is equally compelling are the impacts that these narratives have on both the entertainment industry, spawning fictionalizations (e.g. *Lime Town*, *The Night Of*, *Until Dawn*, etc.), citizen investigators (e.g. *Up and Vanished*, *Atlanta Monster*, *Websluths*, etc.) and parodies (e.g. *American Vandal*, *The Very Fatal Murder*, *Trial and Error*, etc.) and on the legal system; influencing court cases like the West Memphis Three, Brenden Dassey and Adnan Syed. It is from these perspectives that this class interrogates the relationships between the mystery, the social structures that produced them and the ways in which audiences participate in/with them.

In this class students will explore the fundamental structures of the mystery as we work to examine the construction, purpose and implication of the genre. Drawing upon relevant academic literature and selection of films, television shows and video games, students will investigate the mysterious bonds of suspense, morality and society through the central questions: What is the role and function of the mystery genre? In what ways does this genre engage, speculate and reflect on contemporary social structures and contexts? What critical explorations of morality, jurisprudence and society can we draw from this genre? How are audiences pulled into the narrative structure, and what is the role of audience participation?

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

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- Bould, M. Glitre, K. & Tuck, G. (2009). *Neo-noir*.
- Corrigan, T. (2011). *Short guide to writing about film* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.).
- Doyle, A. C. (1994). *The hound of the Baskervilles*.
- Grant, B. K. (2007). *Film genre: From iconography to ideology (short cuts)*.
- Leitch, T. (2001). *Crime Films (Genres in American Cinema)*.
- Silver, A. & Ursini, J. (2004). *Film noir reader*.

Additional reading will be posted on Canvas

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES/OBJECTIVES**

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By the end of this course students should be able to:

- ✓ **Identify** the semantic/syntactic properties of a genre.
- ✓ **Analyze** the structure/content and form/function of a media text (Film, TV show, game).
- ✓ **Explain** the ways in which social/cultural meanings are imbedded in genres.
- ✓ **Describe** the cultural, historical, political and social assumptions of a genre.
- ✓ **Offer** an argument about the role of genres in contemporary society.
- ✓ **Write** a critical and informed film/TV review.
- ✓ **Construct** grounded arguments for the discussion and production of cultural criticism.

### **CLASS EXPECTATIONS**

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#### **ASSUMPTIONS:**

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This course has been designed with a series of expectations that are laid out within this syllabus. If students are willing to take the time and commit to these expectations, the course should be challenging but enjoyable. If not, then students will need to make careful considerations about how to balance what is expected against their other demands. Additionally, the instructor is dedicated to actively creating an open and inclusive environment that pushes us to explore the related content and its relation to our experiences.

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**IN-CLASS INVOLVEMENT:**

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Student contributions to class discussions are vital to the learning objectives of this course and individual comments, questions and insights are highly encouraged. However, we cannot move forward, or start a conversation, if we are not prepared to do so. Skipping the assigned readings will do little to prepare for the assignments and discussions in this class; I will therefore assume that we have at least familiarized ourselves with the required readings. I am excited to hear your perspective and insights and to have discussions about them, but they will always be more productive if we have some shared knowledge to expand upon. The instructor will work to push our understanding of the content and at times will challenge you as a student, but this will always be about the content. As a teacher I am dedicated to the processes of learning and I look forward to learning alongside all of you.

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**ASK QUESTIONS:**

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One part of involvement will be to ask questions! Be it to clarify a term, to slow down, to offer a reflection, or to clarify a counter point; questions are the crux of understanding. I am here to answer your questions and know that I will surely ask some throughout the semester.

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**GRADING PHILOSOPHY:**

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I consider work that meets the basic requirements of the assignment to warrant a C. Work that receives higher grades will be carefully researched, planned, written and edited. Grades will be posted to Canvas no later than two weeks after completing the assignment.

**A** = Achievement significantly above requirements

**B** = Achievement over and above requirements

**C** = Meets basic course requirements

**D** = Requirements are partially met

**F** = Work does not meet requirements

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**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

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**PARTICIPATION (10 POINTS)**

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This class will consist of film screening, short lectures and class discussion with peers. At times, students might be called upon, asked to lead a discussion through respectful and engaged dialogue or to offer a question about the reading/film. To help facilitate and ground the discussion students will learn to create film notes which will be used as a discussion resources and will be periodically turned in for points.

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### READING REFLECTIONS (8 X 5 = 40 POINTS)

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Reading reflections should contain the following 4 components:

1. **PART 1:** Summary (6-8 sentences at least) of the main argument(s) from the reading.
  - a. The summary should address the full arguments of the chapter, the instructor will be looking for a complete summary not just a reflection of the first couple of pages.
2. **PART 2:** The three most important/compelling aspects of the reading to you and a brief description as to why.
  - a. While the class is designed to encourage critical thinking, and I will hope that some of the insights push you to think about film, genre and society in a more critical/complex way, this does not mean that the content is strictly philosophical. The reading may get you to think about consuming film, but it may also encourage you to think about making film in more complex ways. Be clear as to how and why these insights are important/significant to you.
3. **PART 3:** Two aspects of the reading you do not understand and a brief description as to why this interfered with your ability to comprehend the reading.
  - a. Some of the reading will be more academic or filled with jargon and I encourage you to embrace the arguments rather than dismissing them. But we may need help in clarifying terms, argument, examples, etc., and this is what this section is for.
4. **PART 4:** One question that seeks to go beyond the reading content.
  - a. The question should therefore ask a deeper film, society or theory-based question.
5. **READINGS** from the same source (i.e. two readings from neo-noir) require one summary per chapter but may combine parts 2 - 4.

The reflections are due by the start of class and must be turned in on Canvas for credit. There will be 13 weeks where students can turn in these reflections but only eight count and the first four are mandatory.

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### ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENTS (25 POINTS)

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During the semester students will write two critical analyses about a selected text (film, TV, game)<sup>1</sup>. The analysis will utilize course readings, external sources and draw upon additional texts to help supplement the analysis. Students will orient their essay and argument toward a critical film journal/blog rather than a purely academic framework (film sites might include: <https://filmschoolrejects.com/>, <http://filmref.com/>, <https://academic.blogspot.com/>, or <http://screenprism.com/>, in addition to the film

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<sup>1</sup> for the remainder of the assignment the term "text" will be in reference to the film/show/game that is/are used as a part of the analysis.

section of sites like Vanity Affair, Slant and Rolling Stone). The goal of this assignment is to help students create informed/critical reviews of a text that could be published.

Each essay will first consist of a developed genre analysis/outline that will be no longer than two pages. Within this section you will briefly describe the plot and the structural qualities/elements of the selected text (film, TV, game) as they are described by our course readings. Second, each essay will provide an informed critical interpretation and cultural analysis of the text, roughly three pages.

Third, to help the analysis process along, students will need to attach a copy of their film notes, for all texts, to illustrate the development of their analytical work.

#### **SCENE ANALYSIS ESSAY – 1500 WORDS (12.5 POINTS):**

Following the Corrigan (2011) reading, this assignment "is designed to help students identify narrative, visual, and sound elements and to establish the link between minute details and broader patterns in a film" (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2005, p. 39). Students will therefore select a significant scene from a film/TV show/game (be that an important turning point, a character transformation, or a central narrative shift) of their choice and carefully dissect the qualities of each individual shot. In addition to describing the action in the scene, you should analyze as many visual elements as you can: camera angles, lighting, setting, dialogue (required), clothing, facial expressions, music and other sounds, representations of cultures, gender, race, ethnicity, or class, etc. To ensure that this is a critical analysis, and not a personal evaluation, utilize the language from the course readings to ground your analysis in film studies.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE SCENE ANALYSIS:**

1. **Read Chapter 1-3 of Corrigan**, see: <https://filmanalysis.coursepress.yale.edu/basic-terms/> for additional insights on terms.
2. **Select** a scene from a text outside of class, but related to the content, that will demonstrate a clear knowledge about analyzing films as rhetorical texts (beyond simple opinions and entertainment).
  - a. The writing should discuss both the scene and its relevance to the entire film.
  - b. Anything written about the scene must support the central argument of the paper (**which is the thesis**).
3. **Include** short examples of dialogue from characters in the film.
4. **Include** images from the film to help illustrate the argument.
5. **Utilize** at least **five key** terms from the course readings.
6. The analysis will need to situate the scene within the larger context of film/TV history.
  - a. The analysis will situate the scene by **drawing from two other films** that we have watched in class to help frame your arguments.
  - b. And have at least five source citations (three of which can come from the course readings).

7. **Include** a copy of film notes.
8. **Consider** the audience, the essay should be writing to a film audience not to the instructor: [Oh! That Film Blog](#), [Cinema Autopsy](#), [Slant](#), [Cleo](#), [Indi Wire](#), [Bitch Flicks](#), etc.

**Example:** [Director Analysis](#), [Hurt Locker](#), [American Beauty](#), [Alien](#), [Rio Bravo](#)

**FILM RESEARCH PAPER ANALYSIS – 1500 WORDS (12.5 POINTS):**

During the semester students will write a critical analysis about a selected text. The analysis will utilize course readings, focus on one external text and draw upon **four additional** texts to ground the analysis. Students should orient their essay and argument towards the critical research paper framework found in Corrigan.

**GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE FILM ANALYSIS:**

1. **Analyze** a single primary text from outside of class.
  - a. Offer a clear and detailed analysis of the genre structure which this text participates in.
  - b. Provide an informed and critical analysis, utilize the language and key terms from the semester.
  - c. Take detailed notes on the text to look for deeper meanings, connections and/or patterns.
2. The assignment will draw upon four other texts to help inform the analysis. These texts should work to clarify intertextual references, motifs, parallel structures, cycle/cluster elements, and illustrate the social and cultural connections of your analysis.
  - a. Students are required to use two texts from class and any two other texts, this means a review of **five** total texts (your text, two in class and two out of class).
3. **Include** images from the film/show/game to help illustrate the argument.
4. Student papers will utilize at least five source citations (three of which can come from the course readings)
5. **Include** a copy of film notes.
6. **Consider** the audience, write to a film audience not to the instructor: [Oh! That Film Blog](#), [Cinema Autopsy](#), [Slant](#), [Cleo](#), [Indi Wire](#), [Bitch Flicks](#), etc.

**Examples:** [Alien](#), [LGBT Problem](#), [Melancholia](#), [Argo](#), or [Falling Skies](#).

7. **See** Appendix A for Rubric.

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**FINAL VIDEO EXAM (25 POINTS) – YOU MAY WORK WITH ONE PARTNER**

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The video essay assignment is a challenge “to apply theoretical concepts directly to a work of image and sound, thereby encouraging cognitive flexibility; to deepen understanding and memory through active, experiential learning; and to enable students to perform their own knowledge construction based on what they’ve learned” (Proctor, 2013). In sum, the goal of this assignment is to cultivate the experiential process of learning by having students produce a grounded argument, using grounded research and social analysis, to illustrate an active knowledge about film genre and mysteries in society. Students will therefore conduct an analysis of several screened films and produce a visual text that addresses the overarching course questions about mysteries and society, work to make an informed argument and practice conveying their arguments to others (Hinck, 2013). Like any essay, it should follow the format of a thesis statement in some form, followed by supporting information, utilize verbal and visual evidence in support of the claims, and offer a compelling conclusion that ties the essay together.

**ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION:**

The video essay exam will rely on a thoughtfully crafted essay format that requires students to make a grounded argument about genre, mysteries and contemporary society.

1. Students should first reflect on the historical construction of mysteries and the connection/development of the genre to American culture.
  - a. The reading reflections should help you with this section.
  - b. Utilize at least **four** of the class films/shows/games to help construct this argument.
2. Second, students will construct a sub-genre analysis of the of several films external to the class.
  - a. Utilize at least **four** selected texts to establish the existence and structural elements of their sub-genre
  - a. Offer their interpretation, critical analysis and evaluation of the genre as it connects to contemporary society.
    - i. Use the Describe, Analyze, and Evaluate model to guide the analysis.
    - ii. This section will draw upon specific examples from the text, which your film notes should help with, in order to ground this argument.
  - b. The project should draw from the: stock characters, setting, premise, structure, semantics/syntax, plot and trappings that are covered across course readings.
    - i. **Potential topics:** True Crime, Neo-Femme Fatale, Corporate Mystery, Supernatural Mystery, Mystery Game, Transmedia Mystery, Participatory Mystery, Fandom and Mystery, your own.
3. Finally, Students will need to pull together the use of their mystery and genre insights to construct a contemporary argument about their mystery film sub-genre.

- a. It is within this last section that the student will need to illustrate an analysis and critical argument.
- b. A well-rounded argument will require you to craft a video and speaking outline.

In sum, the answers to the exam will address the class question of: What is the role and function of mysteries as a genre? In what ways does this genre engage, speculate, and reflect on contemporary social structures and contexts? What critical explorations of justice, morality, humanity and society can we draw from this genre?

#### **VIDEO DETAILS:**

The production of the video is up to you, but I will expect that you have visual references to the films that you are drawing upon, textual and/or semiotic elements that direct the viewers' attention and verbal elements that tie your voice and argument to the project. In sum, the visual elements are there to support and illustrate your argument.

1. The length of **the essay should be roughly 15 minutes.**
2. You will need to draw **from at least four out of the class films and four external films to construct your analysis and argument.**
  - a. You are welcome, and encouraged, to draw upon other films.
  - b. Think of this as an assembly project, so you may use a packaged Prezi or Keynote presentation if you so choose.
3. You may opt to answer all the presented questions in one single video, or you may split the questions up into three videos if you like.
4. Students should consider formal issues to content (images, pacing, written content, music, montages, voice overs, rhythm, etc.). Edits and transitions should be clean, functioning as guideposts thereby leading the viewer from point to point, and subheadings can be used to help increase flow.

#### **For examples please see:**

1. [The Western genre](#)
2. [Science Fiction Genre](#)
3. [Horror](#) (Longer but a quality example)

**EXAM QUESTIONS:**

1. **History Question:** What is the historical construction of the mystery? How does this genre fit into the U.S. context and early film? What industry concerns (graphics, CGI, 3D, etc.) are there? How has the genre structure changed throughout history?
  - a. Draw upon the course readings to ground these arguments.
  
2. **Structure Question:** What overlapping, or genre elements connect these films together? What are the connecting characteristics or the Outer/Inner form of this genre? Are there any significant syntax/semantic structures within the structure of these films?
  - a. While these questions are not comprehensive, they are a framework to answer the structure question. Because this section is primarily descriptive, students are encouraged to utilize the genre reading reflections here.
  
3. **Overarching Class Question:** If the mystery genre provides commentary on existing states of society including justice, morality, conflict, and the law, while simultaneously producing images and descriptions of social progress (or decline), sociopolitical configurations and the system of crime and punishment, then what does your contemporary sub-genre tell us? How does this genre reflect social change? How do these narratives use social issues as a background character for the plot, and what are the implications of this?
  - a. **Questions to consider:** Why are these films (the sub-genre) so popular today? What is happening in contemporary society that is reflected in these narratives? What cultural/social role does justice and morality serve? What interconnected social concerns are there with regards to justice and society? What forms of power and oppression are imbedded here? How have the roles of victim, villain, and civil rights changed?

**EXAM FAQ'S:**

1. When is the project due and how should I turn it in?
  - a. See the course schedule for deadline.
  - b. You can send me a link to your video, or you may bring the project to my office.
  
2. How should I answer the questions if I can't find research on my sub-genre?
  - a. A central goal of the class is to teach you how to make critical arguments on your own. The answers to the questions should therefore be unique to your perspective and grounded in your knowledge about the sub-genre.
  
3. Can I just use a power point?
  - a. The essay needs to make a claim that is supported with visual and oral content (grounds and warrant). Source material should therefore include moving images, still images and sound (music, sound effects, etc.).

- b. There are many ways to produce the video essay. For example, you may do a mock interview that is interspersed with clips (think film premiers), you may do a news segment that has clips embedded in frame (think *The Daily Show* or *Crash Course*), you may create your own with clips and images (think YouTube), and you may use PowerPoint or Prezi as long as it is converted into a video.
4. Is research required, and if so, how should I cite my research?
- a. Documentation of research is required, and citation is acceptable through an end credit or scroll.
- i. You should verbally cite sources in the video but should be limited to name and date
- ii. You may use any publicly available material you want, including books, the Internet, etc., but you must cite your sources and give credit to your source.

### GRADING CRITERIA

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Students will demonstrate their understanding and mastery of the topics through the following:

Participation	10
Reading Reflections 8 x 5 pts	40
2 Analysis x 12.5 pts	25
Final Video Exam	25

**Total Points Possible      100**

Assignment deadlines are of utmost importance, if work is submitted after the due date the grade will be reduced by **10% per day late**.

### TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

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**Content in red indicates a PDF file hosted on Canvas**

Week	Film/ Topic	Readings/ Location	Assignments
1	Introductions/ Course Syllabus		
2	<b>What is Genre?</b> Approaching Film Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short Cuts 1</li> <li><b>Altman, R. (1984). A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre.</b></li> </ul>	Mandatory reflection due before class

3	<b>What is a Mystery?</b> Conducting Genre Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grindon, L. (2012). <i>Cycles and clusters: The shape of film genre history</i></li> <li>• Wright, J. H. (2012). <i>Genre films and the status quo.</i></li> <li>• Short Cuts 2</li> </ul>	Mandatory reflections due before class
4	<b>Setting the Crime Genre:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hound of the Baskervilles</li> </ul>	Read Hound of the Baskervilles
5	<b>Developing the Crime Genre:</b> Mystery on the Orient Express, Vertigo, Rear Window, Clue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime Films 1 &amp; 3</li> <li>• Corrigan 2 &amp; 3</li> </ul>	Mandatory reflections due before class
6	<b>Framing the Investigation:</b> The Thin Man, Maltese Falcon, The Big Sleep, Dick Tracey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime Films 8 &amp; 9</li> <li>• Short Cuts 4</li> </ul>	Mandatory reflections due before class
7	<b>What is Noir?</b> The Big Heat, The Woman in the Window, Double indemnity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noir Reader intro, 1 &amp; 3</li> <li>• Crime Films 6</li> </ul>	
8	<b>Motifs of Noir:</b> M, Laura, Touch of Evil, The Third Man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noir Reader 5, 6, 12, 14 &amp; 15</li> </ul>	<i>Scene Analysis Due (read Corrigan 5 for writing help)</i>
9	<b>What is Neo-Noir?</b> Parallax View, Chinatown, Body Heat, The Usual Suspects, Devil in a Blue Dress, Blood Simple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neo-Noir Intro-3</li> </ul>	
10	<b>Femme Fatale:</b> Basic Instinct, Fatal Attraction, The Crush, Brick, Hollywood land, L.A. Confidential, Gone Girl, Lost Highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime Films 7</li> <li>• Neo-Noir – 11 &amp; 12</li> </ul>	
11	<b>Subjectivity:</b> Mulholland Drive, Blue Velvet, Taxi Driver, Drive, Secret Window, Identity, Nightcrawler, Old Boy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neo-Noir 6 &amp; 10</li> <li>• Wood, R. (1977). <i>Ideology, genre, auteur.</i></li> </ul>	<i>Film Analysis Due (read Corrigan 6 for research help)</i>
12	<b>Affect in Film:</b> The Machinist, Memento, Fight Club, Inherent Vice, Sin City, Se7en	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neo-Noir 13, 14 &amp; 15</li> </ul>	
13	<b>What is a Mystery Thriller?</b> Serial, Up and Vanished, The Fall, Lime Town, Give Up Tomorrow, Making a Murderer, Jinx, Homecoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hanich, J. (2010). <i>Cinematic emotions in horror films and thrillers – Chp 6</i></li> </ul>	
14	<b>Thoughts on Mystery Thriller</b> Fire Watch Game, Until Dawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Derry, C.(2001). <i>The suspense thriller – Chp. 3</i></li> <li>• Ekman, I. &amp; Lankoski, P. (2009). <i>Hair-Raising Entertainment</i></li> </ul>	<i>Video Essay Due</i>
15	<b>Finals Week</b>		<b>Presentations of video essays</b>

**RESOURCES:**

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- Nam, K. & Condon, J. (2010). The DIE is cast: The continuing evolution of intercultural communication's favorite classroom exercise. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 34, pp. 81-87.
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**APPENDIX A: RESEARCH ANALYSIS RUBRIC****STYLE and ORGANISATION**

<b>Expectation</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Point total</b>
Creative, thoughtful, and critical analytical writing 1. Writing style offers a clear flow of thought and sentence structure 2. The writing style is compelling and adds to the essay argument	1. Concise and balanced structure 2. Fully elaborates on the presented ideas, terms, and evidence	/1
Clear organizational format that means format directions 1. Introduction 2. Body 3. Conclusion 4. The essay argument should follow a logical and clear development	1. Effectively edited to create structure. 2. Tightly organized and evidence of outlining	/2
Spelling and grammar 1. As an upper division class spelling and grammar rules are expected		/1
<b>Overall Style (Subtotal)</b>		<b>/4</b>

**CONTENT**

<b>Expectation</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Point total</b>
History 1. The historical context of the film is clearly presented 2. There is a connection to U.S. American culture and the history of the genre 3. These elements lead to an argument about the film as an important text for analysis	1. Synthesizes, compares, and critiques ideas across a variety of films 2. Draws on and contributes to in-class work 3. Awareness of broader scholarly/film contexts 4. Insightful, judicious references to the history of the text(s)	/2
Film structure 1. Various elements of the films are connected through genre elements 2. Various elements of the narrative are clearly analyzed	1. Character dialogue is utilized to help ground the arguments 2. Engages in a deeper analysis of the narrative 3. Fully discusses the overt and subtle meanings within the film. 4. Convincing evidence for all claims	/3

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. The references to other films are fully contextualized</li> <li>4. Establishes an argument about foreshadowing, narrative development or plot structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. While there may be more, the essay touches on elements such as mise-en-scene, cinematography, sound, color, etc.</li> <li>6. The analysis weaves together multiple film elements to make a grounded argument</li> </ul>	
<p>Critical analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a clear discussion of the cultural significance of various scenes</li> <li>2. Shows the contemporary importance of the film to the broader U.S. context</li> <li>3. Asserts a compelling argument about the content and structure of the film that reveals something new</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overarching argument is clearly explained and supported.</li> <li>2. Offers connections across research/ literature and genre analysis.</li> <li>3. Show the importance of the genre and the social connection to society.</li> <li>4. Explains importance of the analysis</li> <li>5. Establishes an argument about contemporary society and addresses the ways media is a product and producer of culture</li> </ul>	/3.5
<b>Overall Content (Subtotal)</b>		<b>/8.5</b>
<b>FINAL GRADE</b>		<b>/12.5</b>