

English 319: 001: Film & Video Forms
Fall 2012
TR 10:30-11:45am; Thompson Hall 1018

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Your Real Self at That Moment

You go home and watch some more TV and maybe it's a fun night and you go out and watch a movie. I mean, it's got so bad that half the people on TV, inside the TV, they're watching TV. What are these people watching, people like me?
--Kevin (Ezra Miller), *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (2011)

Did you think this is not yourself, but your real self at that moment?
--Werner Herzog, *Into the Abyss* (2011)

Description: This course focuses on how films and videos tell stories, construct subjects, and create convincing realities. Looking at how different fiction films and documentaries take on similar topics, we'll consider narrative and formal conventions -- and challenges to these conventions -- as these conjure "realisms," shaping subject perspectives and viewer positions.

Assignments: These will be posted on blackboard: check regularly for blogs and quizzes not listed on the syllabus below. Coursework includes papers, and in-class quizzes and blackboard posts on readings and films. You can make up one quiz/post with good reasons; others you miss will affect your grade. More than two unexplained absences will result in an automatic grade deduction.

Most of your homework for this course is watching movies. Please complete these assignments on time, take notes and bring your notes to class to use for quizzes and discussions.

Please do not use laptops or other devices in class. Treat all class members as you might want to be treated. You can contribute to discussions by speaking, posting to blackboard, or otherwise demonstrating your respectful engagement.

Texts and movies:

Online readings, available on blackboard (b)
DVDs are available at the JC Media Reserve Desk, and many titles can be found online, at Netflix, Amazon, iTunes, etc. They are also available in the 319f12 Dropbox. In all cases, plan ahead: be prepared for quizzes and complete all assignments on time.

Requirements:

class participation, quizzes, blackboard assignments	40%
three essays (2-6 pages)	40%
one presentation (2 people)	10%
one final exam	10%

Writing Center: please take advantage of the GMU Writing Center in person or online, if you have questions concerning the construction of arguments, correct grammar and punctuation, or formal styling. Rob A114 Tel: 703-993-1200 | wcenter@gmu.edu | <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

Disability Resources: If you are a student with a disability and need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. | ods@gmu.edu | <http://ods.gmu.edu/>

Honor Code: George Mason University's Honor Code requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. See <http://honorcode.gmu.edu/> for more detailed information.

Studio A (extra credit for attendance and thoughtful one-page report): To attend one of these live to tape shows, please contact Cindy Lont at clont@gmu.edu. Each show runs 3-4pm, followed by 5pm reception. See <http://favs.gmu.edu/studioa.html>

Schedule

Aug	28	introduction: discuss structure and expectation, perspective and reality
	30	<i>Catfish</i> (Ariel Schulman, Henry Joost 2011) HM743.F33 C38 2011 post to blog by 6am
Sep	4	<i>Billy the Kid</i> (Jennifer Venditti 2008) CT275.P75 B55 2008 and Corrigan, "Elements of Mise-en-scène" (51-57) (bb)
	6	<i>Wendy and Lucy</i> (Kelly Reichardt 2009) PN1997.2 .W436 2009 and Corrigan, "Composition and the Image" (57-70) (bb)
Sept	11	<i>The Blair Witch Project</i> (Daniel Myrick, Eduardo Sanchez 1999) PN1997 .B5541 1999 and Hopgood, "Before <i>Big Brother</i> " (bb)
	13	2 page scene breakdown and presentation groups named and <i>Blair Witch</i>
	14	Studio A: Eduardo Sanchez, director, <i>The Blair Witch Project</i>
Sept	18	<i>The Dark Knight</i> (Christopher Nolan 2008) and McGowan, "The Exceptional Darkness of <i>The Dark Knight</i> " (bb) and presentation
	20	<i>Confessions of a Superhero</i> (Matt Ogens 2007) PN2277.L59 C66 2007 and Saunders, "The D-Word" (bb) and presentation
Sept	25	<i>JCVD</i> (Mabrouk El Mechri 2009) PN1997.2 .J383 2009 and Bazin, "On the Ontology of the Photographic Image" (bb) and presentation
	27	<i>Haywire</i> (Steven Soderbergh 2011) and presentation
	28	Studio A: Otessa Shadar, director-producer, <i>Orange Juice in Bishop's Garden</i>
Oct	2	<i>George Washington</i> (David Gordon Green 2000) PN1997 .G369 2002 and presentation
	4	<i>Bombay Beach</i> (Alma Har'el 2011) HN80.B6 B66 2012 and Sheila Curran Bernard, "Story Basics" (bb) and presentation

- Oct 9 no class (Columbus day shuffle)
11 3-4 page paper due (sequence analysis)
and *Senna* (Asif Kapadia 2011) GV1032.S46 S46 2012
- Oct 12 Studio A: Jeffrey Cooper, president of Cut Entertainment Group
- Oct 16 *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (Män som hatar kvinnor)* (Niels Arden Oplev
2009) PN1997.2 .M3625 2010 and presentation
18 *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (David Fincher 2011) PN1997.2 .G583 2012
and presentation
- Oct 23 *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (Lynne Ramsey 2011) and presentation
25 *Into the Abyss* (Werner Herzog 2011) HV6515 .I58 2012
and Nichols, "What Are Documentaries About?" (bb) and presentation
26 Studio A: Thomas Kaufman, cinematographer
- Oct 30 *The Arbor* (Clio Barnard 2011) PR6054.U52 Z7 2011 and Lanthier, "Do You
Swear to Re-Enact the Truth?" (bb) and presentation
- Nov 1 *Tabloid* (Errol Morris 2011) HV6557 .T33 2011 and Morris, "Play It Again, Sam
(Re-enactments, Parts One and Two)" (bb) and presentation
- Nov 6 *Contagion* (Steven Soderbergh 2011) and presentation
7 ***The Waiting Room/Peter Nicks: 6pm Johnson Center Cinema (extra credit)***
8 *The Waiting Room* (Peter Nicks 2012)
- Nov 13 *Miss Bala* (Gerardo Naranjo 2011) and presentation
15 *El Velador (The Night Watchman)* (Natalia Almada 2011) and presentation
- Nov 20 *The Woodmans* (C. Wills Scott 2011) TR140.W675 W66 2011 and presentation
22 Thanksgiving recess
- Nov 27 *The Oath* (Laura Poitras 2010) DS371.414 .O28 2010 and presentation
29 *Caché* (Michael Haneke 2005) PN1997 .H54 2006 and presentation
- Dec 4 Final paper proposals discussion - due on blackboard by 12/3 6pm
6 Final paper proposals discussion - due on blackboard by 12/3 6pm
- Dec 13 5-6 page paper due (film analysis) - email by 6pm
- Dec 18 final exam 10:30am-1:15pm