

MRTS 3610.002: Film and Television Analysis

Thursdays, 2:00 - 5:50pm in RTFP 184

3 Credit Hours

Instructor: Mr. Travis Sutton

Office Location: RTFP 237

Office Hours: Mondays, 3:00pm - 5:00pm

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Course Prerequisites and Other Restrictions

A student must have completed MRTS 1330, MRTS 2010, and be registered as an MRTS/CBCM major, with the major's GPA requirement, to enroll in this course.

Course Description

This class is designed to introduce students to various qualitative methodologies used to study media texts and their relationship(s) to the real world, i.e. the cultures that produce and consume them. This course will introduce students to the historical development of these approaches, as well as to the vocabulary, scholars, and concepts germane to these various schools of thought. Film and television texts will be screened in conjunction with lectures and discussions so that students may practice the application (and the critique) of the methods and concepts under consideration. Ultimately, understanding these methodologies will not only enrich a student's approach to film and television but also to other aspects of culture and cultural activity.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, every student should be able to

- Identify a variety of basic qualitative approaches to studying film and television
- Demonstrate how to apply said approaches to the analysis of individual film and television texts
- Describe the historical and cultural contexts surrounding the approaches studied

- Explain some of the issues “at stake” in a postmodern, media-saturated world

This is a 3000-level upper division course, designed as an intermediate class between MRTS 1320 and the rotating series of 4000-level critical-cultural studies classes. Students wishing to pursue 4000-level classes in critical studies are encouraged to take this class beforehand. MRTS 3610 is a prerequisite for many 4000-level classes.

NOTE: This course includes film and television texts from different time periods and places, and these texts consist of culturally dominant ideas and practices that reflect their time of production and release. These cultural ideas may include messaging, stereotyping, and representational distortion in regards to race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. All form and content in these texts will be open for discussion, analysis, and criticism. Students who do not wish to participate in such a critical project, which includes viewing these texts, should consider taking another class.

Course Materials

Film and Television Analysis by Harry M. Benshoff and Caryn Murphy. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2024.

The textbook is required for the course. All of the information necessary for this course can be found on Canvas and in the course textbook. A copy of the textbook will also be available on reserve at the university library.

The course syllabus and instructions for all assignments will be available on Canvas.

Communicating with Your Instructor

Email or messaging through Canvas are the primary ways to contact your instructor. The instructor will make every effort to respond to student emails and discussion questions in a timely manner (within 24 hours). Students should also keep in mind that instructors are not required to respond to emails during evenings, weekends, or holidays.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Writing Activities.....	10%
Examination 1.....	18%
Examination 2.....	18%
Examination 3.....	18%

Short Paper 1.....	18%
Short Paper 2.....	18%
Short Paper 3 (Optional).....	---

NOTE: Students have the option to write two short papers or three short papers during the semester. The score for Short Paper 3 can replace the score of an exam or one of the other short papers. Final score adjustments are calculated at the end of the semester by the instructor.

Attendance

Attending lectures and discussions are mandatory, and in-class contributions are an important part of the classroom experience. Students are expected to complete each reading assignment for discussion in class. The instructor will be prepared to clarify concepts and to provide film clips for analysis as a group.

The instructor will maintain an attendance record for each lecture and discussion. Prior to the beginning of class, a roster will be located at the front of the room for each student to sign. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that they have signed the roster for that day. **Rosters without signatures will be recorded as absences.** The instructor will accept a signature as evidence of a student's presence for the entirety of a class session. Any form of dishonesty with the attendance record, which includes signing and leaving or signing for another student, will be treated as academic dishonesty and will result in a zero for the course.

Rosters will remain available for students to sign for fifteen minutes after class has started; however, please be on time to avoid signing during class instruction. Signatures will not be permitted fifteen minutes after instruction has started, and they will not be accepted at the end of class.

Students who acquire more than two unexcused absences over the course of the semester will receive a penalty in their final grade: each unexcused absence after the first two will result in three percentage points deducted from the final grade. For example, a total of four unexcused absences in the semester would result in two penalties; consequently, a final score of 84% would drop to 78%.

Absences can be excused ahead of time for school-sponsored activities, religious holidays, illnesses, and other personal emergencies. Please provide documentation, such as a doctor's note or an authorized absence card, to one of the teaching assistants to excuse an absence.

Classroom Behavior

Rude or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in the classroom. Disruptive behavior can include anything that would interfere with an instructor's ability to conduct class or with a student's ability to benefit from the instruction. Please note that behaviors likely to distract the instructor and, thus, to interrupt the flow of the class include activities designed to signal student inattentiveness, such as texting, reading, sleeping, working on material for other classes, etc. Electronic devices, such as laptops and tablets, are permitted in the classroom, as long as they are used to assist with course-related learning.

Writing Activities

Nine writing activities will be assigned during the semester. Each writing activity is designed for a student to respond to the weekly reading assignments from the textbook. These activities are akin to in-class writing activities, so they are not meant to be as formal as the short papers (discussed below). Students do not need to complete a rough and revised draft, conduct research, and compose a bibliography. With the writing activities, I'm mainly interested in seeing your recall and application of information. Writing activities are to be completed online through links posted on Canvas. Hard copies and/or late submissions, without instructor approval, will not be accepted.

Short Papers

There will be two short papers required for the course (1500 - 2000 word count), each worth 18% of your overall grade, with an option to write a third paper. These papers will be essays in which you apply one of the critical methodologies under consideration to a media text of your own choosing. Students will be required to upload these papers to Canvas, which will also scan papers through Turnitin.com. Detailed instructions for each short paper will be available on Canvas. A grading rubric will also be available online that details what the instructor and teaching assistants consider when assessing completed assignments.

NOTE: Turnitin currently scans for AI-generated text. Do not submit a document for a writing activity or short paper that has been drafted or modified using ChatGPT, Gemini, Grammarly, Jasper AI, Quillbot, EditPad, or similar programs. Text that has been drafted or revised with an AI, automated process will not be accepted for credit in this course.

Examinations

There will be three examinations, each worth 18% of your overall grade. The final examination will not be cumulative. Each examination will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions, and the questions will be based on class lectures, assigned readings, and films screened in class. Each student is required to be prepared with a **Number 2 Pencil** for each examination.

Examinations will not be given to students who arrive fifteen minutes (or later) after the course is scheduled to begin on an examination day. The third test will be administered during the scheduled final exam period—or as close to it as possible given some of the unique course scheduling in Media Arts. Contact the instructor if the third test conflicts with another final exam in your schedule.

If you are involved in a school-sponsored activity that requires your absence during an examination day, you must make arrangements with the instructor to take the examination prior to the scheduled examination date.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Students can expect a grade for writing activities and exams to be posted on Canvas within one week of that activity or exam's due date. Short papers may take up to two weeks for a grade to post on Canvas.

Late Work

Students are required to submit assignments on due dates listed in this syllabus. Late submissions of the weekly writing activities are generally not accepted. A late submission of a short paper will result in a deduction of 10 percentage points of the grade per day. Students are responsible for presenting appropriate documentation to excuse late work.

Grading Criteria

- Because assignments for this course are submitted online, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that submissions are fully uploaded into Canvas and Turnitin. Additionally, it is a good idea to keep backup copies of all completed work in case these online systems encounter problems during the semester.
- Because of security concerns and your right to privacy, the instructor will not discuss grades over

email. If you have a question about your grade, send your instructor a message indicating that you want to discuss your grade, and your instructor will make arrangements to visit with you.

- Your instructor's goal is to help you improve your writing and critical thinking skills, so it is important for you to ask questions.
- Other than the third short paper, extra credit assignments or a final grade curve will not be offered in this class.
- Grades are not negotiable. Your final course grade will be based on your work in the course. If you are concerned about a grade, see your instructor during office hours.
- **Any form of academic dishonesty will result in an "F" for the course and possibly further sanctions at the university level.**

Numerical Grade Equivalents.

Course grades are calculated on the standard scale:

A = 100-90

B = 89-80

C = 79-70

D = 69-60

F = 59-0

Every border creates situations where you may be “just below” the grade you want or require. This is frustrating for all concerned, but it is not a reason to change the grade.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS/ASSISTANCE

Every student enrolled in this course needs access to a computer with a webcam that is capable of connecting to the Internet and a technical capacity to run Canvas and Respondus Lockdown Browser.

For additional information, please visit CLEAR's web page about [Canvas App and Browser Compatibility](https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements)  [\(https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements\)](https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements).

Students also need a word processing program (e.g. MS Word or Google Docs) to draft and submit writing projects.

The University of North Texas provides student technical support in the use of Canvas and supported resources. The student help desk may be reached at:

Help Desk Contact Information

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu (<mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu>)

Phone: 940-565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Help Desk Hours

Monday-Thursday, 8am-midnight

Friday, 8am-8pm

Saturday, 9am-5pm

Sunday, 8am-midnight

Minimum Technical Skills Needed

- Sending and receiving email
- Creating, sending, and receiving Microsoft Word documents
- Posting to discussion boards
- Printing Word documents OR opening and printing PDF files, using Adobe Acrobat Reader
- Navigating Canvas

Netiquette

Netiquette, or online etiquette, refers to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors online. Please read through "Netiquette Guide for Online Courses," available on Canvas, and treat your instructor and fellow classmates with kindness and respect.

Outages

The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty that prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and contact the UNT Student Help Desk: helpdesk@unt.edu (<mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu>) or 940.565.2324. The instructor and the UNT Student Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

UNT POLICIES

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Emergency Notification and Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Blackboard online system, including grading information and comments, is

also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct 
<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>).

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu 
<https://my.unt.edu>_. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail: [eagleconnect.unt.edu/](http://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect)  <http://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at <http://spot.unt.edu/>  <http://spot.unt.edu/> or email spot@unt.edu (<mailto:spot@unt.edu>)_.

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.