

## MRTS 3610: Film and Television Analysis

**ONLINE INSTRUCTION**

**3 Credit Hours**

**Instructor:** Mr. Travis Sutton

**Office Location:** RTFP 237

**Office Hours:** By appointment only

**Email:** [Travis.Sutton@unt.edu](mailto:Travis.Sutton@unt.edu) (<mailto:Travis.Sutton@unt.edu>)

### 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.

Supplemental reading assignments and course documents, such as the syllabus and grading rubric, will be available on Canvas.

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.

***This course contains some copyrighted material, (short segments of film clips from films available in the UNT library and identified as such) the use of which has not been specifically authorized by the copyright owner(s). I have determined this to be "fair use" of the copyrighted material as referenced and provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. If you wish to use any copyrighted material from this course for purposes of your own that go beyond fair use, you must obtain express permission from the copyright owner(s).***

## 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**

Screening Discussions.....	10%
Writing Activities.....	10%
Examination 1.....	20%
Examination 2.....	20%
Examination 3.....	20%
Final Paper.....	20%

### **Online Instruction**

Students are required to complete the course content online. There will be twelve lessons to complete the course. Four lessons and one exam will be released each week. Lessons will appear on Canvas every Monday morning (12:00am): the first two lesson modules are to be completed by Wednesday (11:59pm), and the second two modules and exam are to be completed by Friday (11:59pm). Each lesson will include video instruction, reading assignments, movie clips, and activities. Students must stay up-to-date on the course content in order to understand the feature-length screenings.

**NOTE:** Online classes are not the best choice for everyone. They require time management, self-motivation, and the acceptance of personal responsibility. This course involves not only textbook readings, video lectures, writing assignments, and online assessments but also feature-length films. All of these require time, so do not delay with committing your time and attention to the course during the semester.

### **Screening Discussions**

Eight of the lessons this semester include short films or a feature-length movie screening. A link to a film will be available at the end of eight of the lessons. After students have watched the film, students can, then, post an online discussion response by answering questions about the film that have been provided by the instructor. After posting a response, students can ask their own questions and respond to one another's posts.

### **Writing Activities**

Twelve writing activities will be assigned during the semester. Each writing activity is designed for a student to respond to an idea associated with the week's lesson. These activities are akin to in-class writing activities, so they are not meant to be formal college essays. 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.

## **Final Paper**

One final paper must be drafted and submitted by the end of the course, with a length of at least 2000 words, and unlike the writing activities, this paper is meant to be a formal college essay, necessitating time, preparation, a writing process, a cohesive argument supported by reasons and evidence, and a bibliography. This essay is worth 20% of your overall grade.

This paper will be an essay in which you apply one of the critical methodologies under consideration to a media text of your choosing. Students will be required to upload these papers to Turnitin.com through a link available on Canvas. 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 writing activity or final paper that has been drafted or modified using ChatGPT, 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 to be completed online through links posted on Canvas. Each examination will be worth 20% 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 lesson materials, assigned readings, and film screenings.

While examinations are to be completed online, they are closed-book and should be treated with the expectations of an in-class examination. Students are not to look to outside sources during an exam: these include the textbook, notes, and other people. To mitigate the use of outside sources, the examinations will be timed.

To complete an exam, students will need to download and install Respondus Lockdown Browser (or use a campus computer available to students with Respondus Lockdown Browser installed). Respondus Lockdown Browser will also require a webcam to monitor the testing process.

If you are an assistive technology user please contact the instructor to make alternate arrangements for proctored exams.

## **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 and screening discussions are generally not accepted. A late submission of a short paper will not be possible, since it is submitted at the end of the semester.

### **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.
- 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>).

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

The instructor will be available for virtual office visits through Zoom. If you wish to visit with your instructor over Zoom, then send him a message through Canvas or campus email, and he can set up a link for a virtual visit.

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) (<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) (<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.