CARRERA: BACHILLERATO Y LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

CICLO LECTIVO: I-2016

DOCUMENTO: Programa de curso semestral

CURSO: IO6012 Cine y Literatura   **GRUPO:** 01

CREDITOS: 05

HORAS POR SEMANA: 03 (Jueves de 1:00 a 3:50 p.m.

REQUISITO: No tiene

CO-REQUISITO: No tiene

NIVEL: 5to año (X Ciclo) del plan de estudios

DOCENTE: M.S. Ed Tamatha Rabb Andrews

HORAS ATENCIÓN ESTUDIANTES: Jueves de 9:00 a 11:30 a.m.

DESCRIPCIÓN DEL CURSO

Éste es un curso de naturaleza teórico-práctico que forma parte de la oferta de electivos para el grado de licenciatura en la enseñanza del inglés, por lo que se requiere un dominio avanzado en escritura, escucha, habla y comprensión de lectura. En este curso se introduce al estudiantado en el estudio de la literatura anglófona mediante el uso y análisis de adaptaciones cinematográficas, especialmente de clásicos que hayan sido estudiados en los cursos previos de literatura de la carrera, sin que esto constituya una limitante para la inclusión de otros textos. Centrado en el debate "literatura-pantalla," el curso aborda la investigación y análisis crítico de temas generales y específicos de forma y fondo en diferentes obras literarias que han sido llevadas al cine.

OBJETIVOS

GENERALES	ESPECÍFICOS
1. Investigar mediante la comparación crítica, diversos elementos de formalista, estructura, estética, retórica, discurso de obras literarias anglófonas en relación con sus respectivas adaptaciones cinematográficas.	1.1 Identificar mediante la argumentación, aspectos comunes y disonantes entre obras literarias anglófonas y sus adaptaciones. 1.2 Aplicar diferentes enfoques teóricos en el análisis de obras literarias anglófonas y cinematográficas.
2. Analizar los principales dilemas relacionados con la transferencia de la ficción al cine.	2.1 Reconocer críticamente las limitaciones y disyuntivas derivadas del debate literatura-pantalla. 2.2 Interpretar los signos más significativos del lenguaje cinematográfico para contrastarlos con sus homólogos literarios.

Ciudad Universitaria Carlos Monge Alfaro. San Ramón, Alajuela
Teléfonos: (506) 2511-7128 (CUBICULO 11) o (506) 6040-6705 (celular)
Email: tamatha.rabb@ucr.ac.cr o tamcambronero@gmail.com

ACREDITADA SINAES

CONTENIDOS

Se estudiarán los siguientes ejes temáticos generales de los periodos literarios:

I.   EL CINE Y SUS PARTICULARIDADES

    a.   The History of Film

    b.   The Language of Film and Its Relation to the Language of Literature

    c.   Anglophone literary works and their film adaptations

        i.   Plays, Novels and Novellas into Film

            1.   Dilemmas between cinema and literature.

II.   UNIDAD: UN MARCO DE ANÁLISIS

    a.   How to Analyze a Movie

    b.   Film Theory and Approaches to Criticism

    c.   Comparative analysis of literary works and film adaptations

III.   Ethical Issues in Filmmaking

    a.   Copyright laws and ethics in film and filmmaking

METODOLOGÍA Y ACTIVIDADES

La metodología para desarrollar este curso es de índole investigativa y participativa. Dentro de las principales actividades a realizar están:

- Investigación sistematizada.
- Trabajo individual y grupal de análisis y discusión de temas de estudio.
- Resúmenes de la materia.
- Presentaciones orales.
- Cine-foros sobre películas representativas de obras clásicas.
- Elaboración de ensayo
- Uso de plataformas virtuales

Por las actividades propuestas, es indispensable que el estudiantado lea previamente los temas correspondientes a cada clase pues de lo contrario la participación podría verse limitada.

Se quiere que los y las estudiantes realicen preguntas y aporten ideas a lo largo del semestre, pues esta es la mejor manera de lograr un verdadero aprendizaje significativo. Las actividades y tareas del curso, se plantean dentro de las siguientes competencias comunicativas:

Ciudad Universitaria Carlos Monge Alfaro. San Ramón, Alajuela
Teléfonos: (506) 2511-7128 (CUBICULO 11) o (506) 6040-6705 (celular)
Email: tamatha.rabb@ucr.ac.cr o tamcambronero@gmail.com

E**VALUACIÓN**

Resumen de la evaluación:

(2) Screening Reports	20%
(2) Movie Reviews	(5% each)
Presentation and Activity	15%
Investigation / Research (5%) Critical Essay (30%)	35%
Adaptation of One Literary Work	30%

FURTHER DETAILS ON EACH EVALUATION ITEM GIVEN ABOVE:

< **Screening Report:** Your screening report should convey to the reader your interpretation and understanding of the movie your report addresses. Point out certain qualities or aspects of what you have viewed, so that you demonstrate to the reader the message the author intended to relay to his/her viewers.

- View the movie completely through at one sitting. Write down your overall impression of what you have just watched. Include within your reaction what you think the main focus or meaning or intent of the movie is. Name its socially redeeming qualities or lesson taught.
- View the movie completely through in a single sitting again. This time, pay more particular attention to the essential elements of the story itself. Describe how the story is told. Identify its point of view. Mention the level of drama involved in the telling of the story. For example, does it have many surprising twists and turns to keep the viewer's attention, or is it relatively drama free and boring?
- Write about the story's conclusion. Describe how the central conflict was resolved. Relate how the characters were changed through or by their experiences within the plot. For instance, did the main characters grow or degenerate in any way through the sequence of events within the story?
- Discuss the more technical aspects of the production. Describe the dialogue, narration (if any). Did they work in unison to contribute to the overall message and film's effectiveness? Explain how the sound effects and the important use of silence played significant roles with message delivery.
- Critique the use of lighting, camera angles, locations and their use. Tell how these combined to present the overall setting and viewer impression of the film. Explain how the editing worked to help make the presentation more effective. Describe the rhythm, continuity and sequencing of the rise and fall action sequences, and tell how these combined to improve message delivery.
- Mention any other literary devices used to effectively tell the story, such as historical context or social/cultural standards and expectations. Write a brief summary of how all the above details worked to

Ciudad Universitaria Carlos Monge Alfaro. San Ramón, Alajuela
Teléfonos: (506) 2511-7128 (CUBICULO 11) o (506) 6040-6705 (celular)
Email: tamatha.rabb@ucr.ac.cr o tamcambronero@gmail.com

present/deliver the movie's central message. Was the message delivered via emotional appeal, established authority, point of view or other? http://www.ehow.com/how_6472468_write-screening-report.html

- Use MLA formatting throughout the report. Report consists of 3 to 4 paragraphs. The value of this work is 5% for each report. The report may be done in pairs or trios.

-

< **Movie Review:** A good movie review should entertain, persuade and inform, providing an original opinion without giving away too much of the plot. A great movie review can be a work of art in its own right. Write a rough draft immediately after the movie. This helps you remember some of the main points of the movie you want to focus on in the review. If you're watching the movie at home, take notes during the movie. After writing the rough draft, organize the review by starting out with how the movie begins, then work your way up to the more climatic scenes in the movie.
  - Start with a compelling fact or opinion on the movie. You want to get the reader hooked immediately. This sentence needs to give them a feel for your review and the movie -- is it good, great, terrible, or just okay? -- and keep them reading. Some ideas include:
    - Comparison to Relevant Event or Movie: "Every day, our leaders, politicians, and pundits call for "revenge"-- against ISIS, against rival sports teams, against other political parties. But few of them understand cold, destructive, and ultimately hallow thrill of revenge as well as the characters of Blue Ruin."
    - Review in a nutshell "Despite a compelling lead performance by Tom Hanks and a great soundtrack, Forrest Gump never gets out of the shadow of its weak plot and questionable premise."
    - Context or Background Information: "Boyhood might be the first movie made where knowing how it was produced -- slowly, over 12 years, with the same actors -- is just as crucial as the movie itself."
    - Mention the technical aspects of the movie. Talk about the visual effects, sound effects, the director's use of certain scenes, background music and the costumes of characters. Discuss whether these specific elements worked for the movie or not. If you felt that the director's use of medieval costumes worked well for the movie or that you disagreed with the choice of techno music for the movie, state this in the review.
  - Give a clear, well-established opinion early on. Don't leave the reader guessing whether you like the movie or not. Let them know early on, so that you can spend the rest of the time "proving" your rating.
    - Using stars, a score out of 10 or 100, or the simple thumbs-up and thumbs-down is a quick way to give your thoughts. You then write about why you chose that rating.
    - Great Movie: "American Hustle is the rare movie that succeeds on almost every level, where each character, scene, costume, and joke firing on all cylinders to make a film worth repeated viewings."
    - Bad Movie: "It doesn't matter how much you enjoy fung-fu and karate films: with 47 Ronin, you're better off saving your money, your popcorn, and time."
    - Okay Movie: "I loved the wildly uneven Interstellar far more than I should have, but that doesn't mean it is perfect. Ultimately, the utter awe and spectacle of space swept me through the admittedly heavy-handed plotting and dialogue."
  - Back up your opinion with specific evidence. This is where taking notes during the movie really pays off. No one cares about your opinion if you can't give facts that support your argument.

Ciudad Universitaria Carlos Monge Alfaro. San Ramón, Alajuela
Teléfonos: (506) 2511-7128 (CUBICULO 11) o (506) 6040-6705 (celular)
Email: tamatha.rabb@ucr.ac.cr o tamcambronero@gmail.com

- Great: "Michael B. Jordan and Octavia Spencer's chemistry would carry Fruitvale Station even if the script wasn't so good. The mid-movie prison scene in particular, where the camera never leaves their faces, show how much they can convey with nothing but their eyelids, the flashing tension of neck muscles, and a barely cracking voice."
- Bad: "Jurassic World's biggest flaw, a complete lack of relatable female characters, is only further underscored by a laughably unrealistic shot of our heroine running away from a dinosaur -- in heels."
- Okay: "At the end of the day, Snowpiercer can't decide what kind of movie it wants to be. The attention to detail in fight scenes, where every weapon, lightbulb, and slick patch of ground is accounted for, doesn't translate to an ending that seems powerful but ultimately says little of substance."

- Move beyond the obvious plot analysis. Plot is just one piece of a movie, and shouldn't dictate your entire review. Some movies don't have great or compelling plots, but that doesn't mean the movie itself is bad. Other things to focus on include:
  - Cinematography: "Her is a world drenched in color, using bright, soft reds and oranges alongside calming whites and grays that both build, and slowly strip away, the feelings of love between the protagonists. Every frame feels like a painting worth sitting in."
  - Tone: "Despite the insane loneliness and high stakes of being stuck alone on Mars, The Martian's witty script keeps humor and excitement alive in every scene. Space may be dangerous and scary, but the joy of scientific discovery is intoxicating."
  - Music and Sound: "No Country for Old Men's bold decision to skip music entirely pays off in spades. The eerie silence of the desert, punctuated by the brief spells of violent, up-close-and-personal sound effects of hunter and hunted, keeps you constantly on the edge of your seat."
  - Acting: "While he's fantastic whenever he's on the move, using his cool stoicism to counteract the rampaging bus, Keanu Reeves can't quite match his costar in the quiet moments of Speed, which falter under his expressionless gaze."

- Bring your review full-circle in the ending. Give the review some closure, usually by tying back to your opening fact. Remember, people read reviews to decide whether or not they should watch a movie. End on a sentence that tells them.
  - Great: "In the end, even the characters of Blue Ruin know how pointless their feud is. But revenge, much like every taut minute of this thriller, is far too addictive to give up until the bitter end.""
  - Bad: "Much like the oft-mentioned "box of chocolates," Forest Gump has a couple of good little morsels. But most of the scenes, too sweet by half, should have been in the trash long before this movie was put out."
  - Okay: "Without the novel, even revolutionary concept, Boyhood may not be a great movie. It might not even be "good", but the power the film finds in the beauty of passing time and little, inconsequential moments -- moments that could only be captured over 12 years of shooting -- make Linklater's latest an essential film for anyone interested in the art of film."
    http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Movie-Review
- Use MLA formatting throughout the review. Review consists of 3 to 4 paragraphs. The value of this work is 5% for each review. The review may be done in pairs or trios.

Ciudad Universitaria Carlos Monge Alfaro. San Ramón, Alajuela
Teléfonos: (506) 2511-7128 (CUBICULO 11) o (506) 6040-6705 (celular)
Email: tamatha.rabb@ucr.ac.cr o tamcambronero@gmail.com

- **Presentation:** Students will develop an oral presentation on one chapter / topic within the course anthology. Students need not only read the content material but also (1) investigate further concerning the topic using other bibliographical sources in which to broaden one's understanding of the topic which will then enhance the presentation itself, (2) present the topic creatively, and (3) guide the rest of the class in a teaching activity for students to obtain a deeper understanding of the material presented. The presentation itself should go beyond a traditional Power Point or poster board presentation of the content material and look to utilize other types such as a documentary, photography, news report, newspaper report, etc. The chosen presentation technique needs to be approved by the professor no later than 15 days prior to the presentation so as to be sure the group is complying with innovative presentation techniques. The aspects to be developed are: (1) Content of the Material, (2) Presentation of the topic, (3) Teaching Activity, (4) Presentation Techniques, and (5) Language Performance. The value of this work is 15%

- **Critical Essay:** The MLA formatted essay consists of 5 to 6 typed paragraphs, and it is to be turned in as a hard-copy on the date and time stated in the program schedule. The essay will not be accepted after the time and date indicated. The essay breakdown and general instructions will be placed on the course Facebook page and / or course Wiki platform. The essay may be done in pairs or trios. Grades are based on individual effort in the construction of the essay from start to finish. The effort is verified on the course wiki platform. Students who showed little or no effort will receive a failing grade. Plagiarism either by Internet or any other source is not accepted based on the regulations of the UCR. Pleading ignorance on this is not a valid defense. The use of phrases, ideas, or words without giving credit to the author of the material is considered plagiarism. It is recommended that you take the time to get two revisions. The value of this work is 30%. The **Investigative** aspect is 5%

- **Adaptation of one Literary Work: The** project consists of creating an audiovisual original adaptation video based on one literary work from either American, British or Comparative Literature Anthology. Projects submitted after the date and time specified will not be accepted or reviewed. View Course Schedule for more specifications and delivery dates. Be creative and use technology whenever possible. NOTE: Any plagiarism will result in the loss of the 30% project grade.

NOTAS: Para todas las evaluaciones orales se utilizará una hoja rubrica con escala numérica que explicará más a profundidad los aspectos evaluativos anteriormente citados en cada uno de los elementos a evaluar en el curso. Los análisis deben tener el formato MLA en la presentación de contenido y en el digitado. Estas rubricas serán facilitadas por la docente en las dos primeras semanas de clase. Ninguna actividad evaluativa se repetirá, a menos que se presente la debida justificación según lo regulado en el Reglamento de Régimen Académico Estudiantil. También se les recuerda que no se permite el uso de teléfonos celulares dentro de la clase.

EXAMEN DE AMPLIACIÓN
En caso de que el estudiante obtenga una nota de 6.0 o 6.5, tendrá derecho de hacer un examen de ampliación, en el cual se evaluarán los temas estudiados en el semestre. Si aprueba este examen, su nota será de 7.0.

Ciudad Universitaria Carlos Monge Alfaro. San Ramón, Alajuela
Teléfonos: (506) 2511-7128 (CUBICULO 11) o (506) 6040-6705 (celular)
Email: tamatha.rabb@ucr.ac.cr o tamcambronero@gmail.com

BIBLIOGRAFÍA OBLIGATORIO

Corrigan, Timothy. *Film and Literature an Introduction and Reader* 2nd Edition. London: Routledge, 2012. Print.

Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* 9th Edition. Boston: Pearson, 2015. Print.

Costanzo C., Linda. *Literature into Film*. London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2006. Print.

Otros materiales compilados por la docente y estudiantes sobre los contenidos del curso, tales como artículos, videos, canciones, documentales, audios, revistas, etc.

BIBLIOGRAFIA COMPLEMENTARIA

Alcántara, Isabel, and Sandra Egnolff. *Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera*. Munich: Prestel, 1999. Print.

Gaiman, Neil, and Dave McKean. *Coraline*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002. Print.

Chbosky, Stephen. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. New York: Pocket, 1999. Digital Version.

Ciudad Universitaria Carlos Monge Alfaro. San Ramón, Alajuela
Teléfonos: (506) 2511-7128 (CUBICULO 11) o (506) 6040-6705 (celular)
Email: tamatha.rabb@ucr.ac.cr o tamcambronero@gmail.com

CRONOGRAMA   **GRUPO 01** (Jueves de 1:00 p.m. a 3:50 p.m.)

Month	Date	Contents	Due Dates	Readings
March	10	Organization of the Course & Discussion of the Syllabus Copyright Law and Ethics		-"How to Analyze a Movie" -The Prehistory of Film and Literature
	17	History of Film		- The Nature of Film Translation: Literal, Traditional, & Radical - Beginning to Think, Preparing to Watch, & Starting to Write
	24	**EASTER WEEK**		
	31	Silent Films:		--The Language of Film & Its Relation to the Language of Literature -Film Terms & Topics for Film Analysis & Writing
April	7	Cinematographic Language and an overview of film theory	Presentation #1	--"Film Theory and Approaches to Criticism" --Six Approaches to Writing About Film.
	14		**Screening Report #1 (5%)** Presentation #2	--Short Stories into Film -Style & Structure in Writing
	21	Adaptations I: Short Stories (i.e. Children's Literature)	Presentation #3	--Researching the Movies
	28 **SEMANA U**			--Manuscript Form
May	5	Adaptations I: Short Stories (i.e. Children's Literature)	**Screening Report #2 (5%)**	
	12	Adaptations I: Short Stories (i.e. Children's Literature)		Plays into Film
	19	Adaptations II: Plays into Film	Presentation #4	
	26	Adaptations II:	**Movie Review #1 (5%)**	

		Plays into Film		
June	2	Adaptations II: Plays into Film		Novels and Novellas into Film & an Aesthetic Rubric for Film Translations of Literature
	9	Adaptations III: Novels and Novellas into Film	Presentation #5	
	16	Adaptations III: Novels and Novellas into Film	**Movie Review #2 (5%)**	
	23	Adaptations III: Novels and Novellas into Film		
	30		**Final Essay (30%) by 9am as a hardcopy** **Video Projects to be presented.**	
July	7	**Grades will be posted.**		

Copyright Law and Ethics

Copyright law provides that any content used as part of a production must be wholly created by the maker of the film - it should be new and original work. Otherwise written permission must be sought from the copyright-holder agreeing for their work to be included in the production.

All communication with copyright holders must make the outcomes of the work clear, and where it will be seen. This affects what rights are required and what fees may be charged.

Some key legal issues:

   Sound and music - You may have bought a CD or paid for some music online. You still need to obtain written clearance from the owner of the copyright to use it in a film production. This may require authorization from both the record label (the publisher) and the songwriter and performer, as in some cases the rights are held jointly. Start by contacting the publisher. Even if your school has an APRA|AMCOS license, you still need to obtain written clearance from the copyright owner of the music you intend to use.

   Appropriation -Be aware when using others' work and vigilant that your use does not infringe the rights of the original artist.

   Photographs - Images can be sent around the world so quickly today. This increases the risk of photos that were meant to be private entering the public arena. Consider the ethics of image production and the origin of their source materials - particularly important if the subject has little or no concept of the final use of an image.

   Commercial photography - Any photograph taken for a commercial purpose features a persons' image should be covered by a legally binding model release form. Free sample model and property release forms are available at: http://www.dpcorner.com/all_about/releases.shtml. The Arts Law Centre of Australia charges a fee for downloading its release form.

   Photography online - Many sites provide exhibition, distribution and commercial outlets for photographic media. They often service both general public and commercial users. One of the largest photo-sharing websites is Flickr. Care must be taken when uploading images to these sites. Assigning the wrong license type can make an image available to the commercial market at no cost.

Creative Commons--

Creative Commons is a rights regime comprising of a range of licenses creators can choose to apply when publishing their work. You choose a set of conditions that you wish to apply to your work in both commercial and non-commercial contexts. The four Creative Commons licenses are: Attribution, Share Alike, Non-Commercial and No Derivative Works.

Moral rights--

'Moral rights' are the rights individual creators have in relation to copyright works or films they have created. Moral rights are separate from the 'economic rights' of the copyright owner. The creator of a work, who holds moral rights, is not necessarily the owner of copyright in the work.

What is meant by ethics?

Ethics is a term we use to explain moral concepts as opposed to laws, such as good and bad, right and wrong, justice, and virtue.

All filmmakers need to think about ethics, especially if involved in factual/documentary production.

In documentary film, the filmmaker is constantly making decisions about their film:

  -the way the story is told
  -how the characters are represented
  -what facts are included or excluded

Factual stories represent the views of their subjects. They also represent the views of the filmmaker through editing, camera angles, and lighting decisions. Deadlines, budgets, point of view and perspective can affect the filmmaker's relationship with the subject negatively, potentially leading to serious ramifications.

The best way to avoid the problem is to construct an ethical framework at the beginning of the project.
Some key ethical issues

  Power imbalance - what steps can be taken to ensure that the rights of all parties are respected and upheld?
  Audience and the range and scale of distribution - be clear with a film's subjects about the outcomes of the project.
  Financial and intellectual reward - what would the film's subjects want to receive in return for participation?
  Cultural and personal respect - be respectful of the people and culture a film represents.

Adapted from http://generator.acmi.net.au/resources/legal-and-ethical-issues

How to Analyze a Movie

By Michael Pollick

A film, whether it is a blockbuster Hollywood production or a small independent effort, has a number of elements that come together in order to guide the audience through the arc of the story. The actors may be the most visible elements on the screen, but a number of other craftsmen had to perform a lot of other functions in order to get that finished film in front of an audience. If you are interested in analyzing why one movie succeeds and another fails, it is important to understand how collaborative filmmaking really is. To really have a handle on why movies work, it's helpful if you watch a number of films in different genres to understand the conventions of each.

Here are some elements to consider when analyzing a film for a review or personal critique.

1. **Consider the effectiveness of the dialogue and storyline**. Although many professional screenwriters do not get the same attention as actors or directors, they are the true architects of a movie. Screenwriters may adapt a book into script form, or they may create their own original stories for the screen. Either way, you should be able to sense an attention to detail in the dialogue and plotlines. A successful movie script uses authentic dialogue and scenarios that the actors can handle with ease. A less successful script places characters in situations that feel artificial or contrived. The language of the characters may be peppered with obscenities, or thoughts that seem to come more from a screenwriter's mind than the character's. When analyzing the writing in a film, ask yourself if the dialogue felt honest and the scenes flowed in a logical progression. Did you see all of the scenes you needed to see in order to stay with the storyline? Did you have any moments where the dialogue took you out of the movie?

2. **Look at the background and set pieces**. The job of a cinematographer (or director of photography) is to create the proper atmosphere for the film. When you watch a film for analysis, try to ignore the actors and dialogue for a few minutes. Pay attention to the shapes and colors of the scenery, sets and costumes. They should all be working together to create a specific mood or ambience. The use of light and darkness can be very important, as can other atmospheric effects such as shadow and fog. In a good film, the background information should enhance the scene but not overwhelm it. When cinematography is not handled well, the audience might inadvertently focus on a distracting wall decoration or an anachronistic car in the background. When analyzing a film, ask yourself if the setting and background added more to the story or distracted you from it.

3. **The performance of individual actors should be considered**. It can be easy to look at a particular lead character's performance and fail to notice the supporting actors' efforts. When analyzing a film, pay

attention to what other characters are doing when they are not part of the main action. A good actor understands that his or her role is to drive the plot forward or establish a character in the audience's mind. The actor portraying a villain, for example, must be a formidable opponent for the actor portraying the hero. Supporting characters may not have much dialogue, but their presence can still be felt by the audience. When analyzing the performance of actors, ask yourself if they successfully inhabited the character and provided something for other actors to work against.

4. **Editing is a very important element of the finished film**. Many film critics say the real movie begins in the editing room. Sometimes a potentially good film is less successful because of poor editing. Essential parts of the film's storyline may be cut out entirely, or scenes which do nothing to move the plot forward are left in the final cut. When editing is done right, it should be nearly invisible. When analyzing the editing of a film, look for anything that jars or confuses you. Scenes with dialogue should cut seamlessly between actors speaking the lines and others reacting to them. Action scenes should maintain a steady, exciting pace that builds to a climax. A good film should flow from scene to scene without denying the audience enough information to follow the arc of the story.

5. **Directors put distinctive fingerprints on their films.** While much of a director's job begins and ends with film production, his or her vision should still be apparent in the look and feel of the finished movie. A good director understands the intentions of the scriptwriters, the capacities of the actors and the skills of the crew. When analyzing a film, it often helps to research the director's body of work and details of his or her distinctive style. How do they get the best performances from their actors? What is their reputation among other filmmakers? Two different directors could film the same scene and an informed audience member should be able to tell the difference. When analyzing the director's contribution to a film, look for signature elements such as familiar actors, edgy dialogue, unique devotion to particular camera angles or perspectives, or creative background music. Every director has at least one distinctive feature, so look for it when analyzing a new film.

Breaking a film down into its essential elements may not sound like fun on a date night, but it's a good way to learn the essentials of filmmaking. If you are an aspiring filmmaker yourself, it can be very useful to understand how some films become classics and others become distant memories.

http://www.howtodothings.com/p3580-michael--pollick.html

Departamento de Filosofía, Artes y Letras
Sección de Lenguas Modernas

SEDE DE
OCCIDENTE

SO

UNIVERSIDAD DE
COSTA RICA

Film Theory and Approaches to Criticism,

or, What did that movie *mean*?

By Christopher P. Jacobs

Movies are entertainment. Movies are documents of their time and place. Movies are artistic forms of self-expression. Movies we see at theatres, on television, or home video are typically *narrative* films. They tell stories about characters going through experiences. But what are they really about? What is the *content* of a film?

DIGGING DEEPER: FOUR LEVELS OF MEANING

Recounting the plot of a movie, telling what happens, is the simplest way to explain it to someone else. But this is neither a film *review* nor a film *analysis*. It's merely a synopsis that anyone else who sees or has seen the movie will likely agree with. This level of content may be called the **referential** content, since it refers directly to things that happen in the plot and possibly to some aspects of the story that are merely implied by the plot. In John Boorman's *Deliverance* (1972), four men from the city go on a weekend canoe trip that unexpectedly becomes a life or death struggle for survival of man against man and man against nature. Some characters survive, others don't. Most films can be analyzed more thoroughly to reveal deeper levels of meaning.

A *review* (perhaps 400-1200 words) typically includes personal impressions and evaluations of a movie's content and techniques. A good review may touch superficially on topics that might be explored in more detail in a longer formal analysis. An *analysis* (perhaps 1200-12,000 words) attempts to determine how the film actually uses various cinematic techniques and elements of film or narrative form to make a viewer react in a certain way and why it makes viewers come away with certain opinions about it. Serious film criticism, whether essays written for magazines, journals, books, or class assignments, attempts to analyze films, rather than merely review them or provide simple descriptions of what happens. An analysis requires some reflective thought about the film, and usually benefits from multiple viewings and outside research.

Most films include lines of dialogue and depict obvious developments of character that explicitly communicate meaning to the viewers. **Explicit** content is perhaps some sort of "moral of the story" or socio-political attitude that the filmmaker is expressing directly through the mouths and actions of the characters. Some reasons the men in *Deliverance* give for taking the canoe trip include friendship and camaraderie, proving their manhood, and experiencing nature before it is destroyed by industrial development. As the plot develops, they also express personal attitudes about life and law and survival, which the writer and director obviously want the audience to think about. We also see explicitly how construction of a new dam is affecting the wilderness as well as human settlements.

A slightly deeper level of interpretation is **implicit** content, which may be less obvious but can still be inferred by seeing how the characters change, grow, and develop throughout the course of the film. Issues and ideas dealing with general human relations (rather than those specific to individual characters) may be fairly easy to recognize but are not explicitly stated by the characters. Sometimes implicit meanings are less obvious, and different viewers might interpret the same thing in different ways, depending upon their own experiences and expectations. In *Deliverance* we see implicitly the change in one character from being a passive follower after he is accidentally thrust into a leadership position. We see another character's casual attitude about casual sex change drastically after a traumatic experience in the woods. We see all four men force to contend with unexpected dangers in ways that imply how differently individuals can deal with the same events and suggest that certain compromises in one's ideals may need to be made in order to survive. It could even be possible to infer that the four central characters are separate personifications of conflicting values that might exist within a single individual. Such a literary technique allows an author (and viewer/reader) in effect to argue with himself over what the best or most practical course of action would be under comparable circumstances, and what different decisions might lead to. One could also identify instances of dramatic irony and argue whether certain events are meant to be considered "poetic justice" for the characters involved.

Implicit, explicit, and referential interpretations are based entirely on the film as a self-contained work, on "internal evidence." It is also possible to find richer meaning in a film, meaning deduced by knowing something about its creators and the time and place it was created, meaning from "external evidence" that is not possible to identify exclusively from the film itself. Sometimes this type of meaning is intentional on the part of the filmmakers, and other times it may be unconsciously incorporated into the story. Analyzing a film on this level is treating the film as a symptom of a much greater influence than simple dramatic concerns for the characters and their actions. A **symptomatic** interpretation looks at the film as part of the broad context of society, reflecting and illustrating themes prevalent in the culture, in the time and place it was made, and possibly in the creator's personal life experience. This level of interpretation tries to recognize symbolic content, identifying characters and situations as metaphors for something else, or possibly seeing the entire story as an allegory about something else. *Deliverance* is an outdoor adventure and journey story set in the American south, but many critics looked at it as an allegory for the disastrous American experience in Vietnam, which was still going on when the film was made. Men conditioned by modern urban civilization believe they're more or less invincible as they travel into a rural environment inhabited by a less technologically advanced culture of backwoods people they look down upon. However, they soon discover the more primitive people can be more dangerous than they expected, they must do things they were not prepared to do to survive, not everyone gets out alive, and those that do are forever haunted by the experience. The movie *District 9* (2009) is a science fiction action-thriller, but this Oscar-nominated and internationally popular South African production by Neill Blomkamp is also symptomatic of late 20th and early 21st century attitudes towards immigration, minorities, government and corporate policies, the news media, and documentary filmmaking.

FIGURING IT OUT: APPROACHES TO INTERPRETATION

Identifying the content, whether explicit, implicit, or symptomatic, with a certain attitude you perceive the film takes (whether by its writer and/or its director), is an interpretation of its **ideological** meaning. Many films are overt attempts by their filmmakers to persuade audiences to their points of view. Others are more interested in raising various issues for audiences to think about. These may be less heavy-handed in supporting one view or another, and sometimes even come across as ambivalent, depicting opposing viewpoints as each having valid concerns and each having their good and bad points. Still other films express obvious socio-political views

through their characters, but may appear to contradict them through the actions and ultimate resolutions of the plot, possibly to keep them marketable to a wider public while still raising awareness of the issues. It's up to viewers and critics to determine whether a film is effective at achieving some or all of its intentions, and sometimes even what those intentions might be. Analysis from a variety of approaches can help a viewer realize just what a film is trying to do, and to appreciate it more, whether or not one agrees with it.

Once people realized that films could do much more than provide simple entertainment, a variety of theories and approaches were developed to help analyze films in order to understand how they created responses in viewers and just what they might mean. Different approaches examine different aspects of a film for different reasons.

A **formalist** approach looks at the film itself, its structure and form. Thus, while other approaches often use some degree of external evidence to analyze a film, a formalist approach will focus primarily on internal evidence. This approach might analyze how the way the plot presents the story material forces the viewer to see things at certain times and have reactions that might be different if presented some other way. A narrative analysis will examine how a film employs various narrative formal elements (such as character, setting, repetition/variation, etc.) to convey meaning to the viewer. Analysis of specific formal techniques might concentrate on a film's use of *mise en scene* or photographic composition, camera movements, editing choices, sound in relation to the image, etc., noting the effect of those techniques on how the viewer perceives the scenes and interprets what they mean.

A **realist** approach examines how a film represents "reality." Some films attempt to make techniques "invisible" to viewers so the characters and situations are always the primary focus. Others attempt to use cinematic techniques to replicate a certain type of reality the filmmaker wants the audience to experience -- love, aging, memory, insanity, drug use, etc. Some films are more concerned with creating moods and emotional impressions than with depicting a traditionally plotted story with an obvious beginning, middle, and end. These films may be attempting to convey a type of reality important to their creators, hoping that viewers will pick up on it, but non-mainstream use of techniques and non-standard structure may require a concerted effort on the part of a viewer to understand, multiple viewings, or even an explanation by the filmmaker. Look, for example, at the unusual films written or directed by Charlie Kaufmann, such as *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Synechdoche New York, Adaptation,* and *Being John Malkovich.*

A **contextualist** approach to analysis always considers a film as part of some broader context. This can be society at large (as in the symptomatic interpretations mentioned above), the particular culture, time, and place that created it (a **culturalist** approach), the director's personal life and previous body of work (an **auteurist** approach that assumes the director is the "author" of a film), or various psychological and/or ideological contexts. A **psychological** approach often identifies plot elements with theories of psychologists like Freud or Jung, looking for sexual symbolism, treatment of the subconscious, representations of the id, ego, and superego, etc. The **dualist** approach looks for pairs of opposites (male-female, good-evil, light-dark, urban-rural, etc.), possibly identifying them as symbolic of contrasting tendencies in society or human nature itself. A **feminist** analysis concentrates on the portrayals of women in a film -- are they strong, weak, stereotypes, protagonists, antagonists, etc. A **Marxist** critic will attempt to associate characters and events in a film as representative of class struggle, labor vs. management, poor vs. rich, oppressive governments, and other Marxist sociopolitical concerns. A **generic** approach looks at a film as a representative of a genre, comparing it with other films from the same genre and finding meaning by identifying shared symbolic motifs or variations from the expected

formula. This is especially useful when a film intentionally subverts or inverts various elements of traditional generic formulas. A generic analysis often benefits from a wider-reaching contextual approach, as a substantial number of genre films (especially science-fiction, fantasy, and westerns, but also others such as journey films, war films, and historical dramas) incorporate intentional metaphors and symptomatic content relating to contemporary society at the time they were made. Another way to examine a film in a certain context is to chronicle its reception by audiences and critics over the years. Some films were huge popular and critical successes when originally released, but were all but forgotten within a few years or perhaps a decade or two. Other films were virtually ignored when they first came out, but gradually gained viewer and critical acclaim to the point that they're now considered major masterpieces or beloved favorites. It's possible that a film originally rejected by critics but popular with the mass viewing public gradually reversed that position over the decades so that it is now critically respected but largely disliked by the general public. Still other films provoke a certain amount of controversy, falling in and out of favor from one decade to another as public and/or critical tastes change. A variation on this survey of response to a film over the years is the **genetic** approach, which follows a film through all stages of its creation and release. It will examine and evaluate various drafts of the story and script, memos about changes during production, continuing through various cuts of the film made for preview audiences, theatrical release, re-edited rereleases, television and video editions, and later "definitive" director's cuts.

A viewer can use any one or combination of these critical approaches to try to figure out just what a filmmaker is trying to say in a work. Different approaches may embrace or totally ignore other approaches to come up with similar or completely opposite ideas about what a film really means. There may be as many different interpretations of a film as there are critics, but examining a film from a variety of approaches may reveal things one never even considered while watching it for the first time. Of course, trying to use every approach to analyze a film would result in a book-length study. Any particular film may lend itself most easily to one or two specific approaches in detail, with some consideration of perhaps one or more other approaches. Writing a brief critical analysis, whether five pages or 25 pages, requires narrowing down the scope of your coverage to only what strikes you as most important about the film and what you consider most rewarding to discuss.

http://www.und.edu/instruct/cjacobs/FilmTheory&Analysis

Dystopias: Definition and Characteristics

Utopia: A place, state, or condition that is ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs, and conditions.

Dystopia: A futuristic, imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral, or totalitarian control. Dystopias, through an exaggerated worst-case scenario, make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system.

Characteristics of a Dystopian Society
- Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.
- Information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted.
- A figurehead or concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society.
- Citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance.
- Citizens have a fear of the outside world.
- Citizens live in a dehumanized state.
- The natural world is banished and distrusted.
- Citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad.
- The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.

Types of Dystopian Controls
Most dystopian works present a world in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through one or more of the following types of controls:

- Corporate control: One or more large corporations control society through products, advertising, and/or the media. Examples include *Minority Report* and *Running Man*.

- Bureaucratic control: Society is controlled by a mindless bureaucracy through a tangle of red tape, relentless regulations, and incompetent government officials. Examples in film include *Brazil*.

- Technological control: Society is controlled by technology—through computers, robots, and/or scientific means. Examples include *The Matrix*, *The Terminator*, and *I, Robot*.

- Philosophical/religious control: Society is controlled by philosophical or religious ideology often enforced through a dictatorship or theocratic government.

The Dystopian Protagonist
- often feels trapped and is struggling to escape.
- questions the existing social and political systems.
- believes or feels that something is terribly wrong with the society in which he or she lives.
- helps the audience recognizes the negative aspects of the dystopian world through his or her perspective.

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson926/DefinitionCharacteristics.pdf

IO6012 **Film and Literature**
(Cine y Literatura)

Course Anthology

Professor: M.S. Ed. Tamatha Rabb Andrews