

Instructor: Professor Marc Diefenderfer
Email: marc.diefenderfer@brazosport.edu
Office Hours: T 4:00pm-5:30pm; Additional Hours TBA

Class Meeting Times

This class will meet on Tuesdays, from 6:00pm to 9:00pm, in CLC.104.

Course Description

Over roughly the last century, film has emerged as one of the most popular and influential forms of narrative art in the world. The power of moving images (frequently, but not always, in combination with sound) often surpasses even literature in terms of immediate impact on an audience. What viewer could discount the cinematic spectacle of the epic science-fiction journey in *A Trip to the Moon*, the menacing shadows of *Casablanca*, or the lurid intrigue of *Rear Window*? This class will introduce you to these unforgettable cinematic experiences and many more via close consideration of the techniques they employ and the ideas they instill in us, the audience.

In addition, this course will take us on a whirlwind history of some of the twentieth century's most important directors and film movements, including Italian Neorealism, the French New Wave, and the New Hollywood. Along the way, we'll explore the social contexts of film production with the aim of understanding film not simply as a form of entertainment to be passively consumed, but as a rich artistic medium that produces meanings and messages worthy of intellectual scrutiny and analysis.

Learning Objectives

- Understanding and appreciation of film as an art form with its own unique narrative and rhetorical conventions.
- Ability to apply principles of film analysis and interpretation to cinematic texts.
- Development of critical thinking skills through formal analysis, as well as development of communication skills through small and large group discussion.

Requirements

- Regular attendance and active participation. Students are expected to come to class prepared and ready to discuss that day's reading assignment(s). Grades will be lowered by one half-step for each absence, beginning with the third absence. (15%)
- A final exam, consisting of multiple choice and matching questions in addition to several essay prompts. (20%)
- A Film Journal consisting of responses (300-500 words each) to prompts about the films screened each week. These responses are to be turned in via D2L. (65%)

Course Texts

Required course materials are available at the Brazosport College bookstore, on campus, or online at <http://www.brazosport.edu/bookstore>. A student of this institution is not under any

obligation to purchase a textbook from the college bookstore. The same textbook is/may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

- Dave Monahan and Richard Barsam, *Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film* (7th edition). ISBN: 9780393885828.

Course Website and Email Policy

Our course website can be found at **D2L** (<https://online.brazosport.edu/d2l/home>). All of our course materials will be housed on this website. You will be expected to access and submit all assignments digitally, so it is essential that you have a strong working knowledge of the D2L virtual campus, word processing software, and basic online tasks like downloading files, emailing, and using Dropbox. You also will be required to watch some films outside of class; information on how to access them will be posted on D2L. Course announcements will appear on D2L and may also be sent to you via your Brazosport College email account. You are expected to check your email and D2L on a regular basis.

Class Format

Our Tuesday class meetings will be utilized for screenings as well as discussions of the films listed on the course calendar. Your attendance of film screenings is a required component of the course, even if you have seen the scheduled film previously. During screenings, please refrain from talking with your classmates and from using electronic devices, including cell phones and laptops, as these can be very distracting both to yourself and to your classmates. Do, however, take handwritten notes during film screenings so that you'll be prepared to reference specific scenes and ideas from the films during class discussion and in the Film Journal. Please note that food and beverages other than water are not permitted in the screening room. If you are found in violation of the class rules for film screenings, you will be asked to leave and marked absent for the week.

Grading Standards

A	90-100%	D	60-69
B	80-89	F	59 or less
C	70-79		

- A** You completed the assignment at a high level of quality, *and your work shows originality and creativity*. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed below for a B, but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a style.
- B** You completed the assignment at a high level of quality. Work in this range needs little revision, is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style.
- C** You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range tends to need some revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.

- D* You did what the assignment asked at a low level of quality, OR you did not do what the assignment asked. Work in this range tends to need significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Style is often chaotic.
- F* This grade is reserved for those who do not complete the assignment. If you follow the assignment's instructions and give it an honest try, you are unlikely to receive an F.

Grammar and Spelling

At this point in your academic career, you are expected to have a fairly strong grasp on the mechanics of writing. This being said, proper mechanics alone are not enough to guarantee high grades in this class. If you experience difficulties in these areas, I encourage you to schedule an appointment with a Writing Consultant in the Student Success Center. The consultants are highly skilled and can help you whether you are a novice or more advanced writer. For more information, please visit the following Web address: <https://brazosport.edu/students/for-students/student-success-center/writing-center/schedule-an-appointment/index>

Attendance

Students are expected to be present for every meeting of the classes in which they are enrolled; as such, daily attendance is required and recorded. Our success as a learning community depends on each student's attentive presence and participation. Submission of make-up work will be permitted on a case-by-case basis, but I will not be available to meet with you in case you "miss something." If you are not in class, you will have missed something; find a classmate who will take notes for you in case of illness. If you know that you will miss class, it is expected that you will notify me by email beforehand.

Only the instructor can excuse a student from a course requirement or responsibility. When conflicts or absences can be anticipated, such as for school-sponsored activities and religious observations, you should inform me of the situation as far in advance as possible. Students are allowed no more than two weeks' worth of absences, documented or undocumented. The first undocumented absence beyond the maximum number of allowed absences will result in a one-step reduction of your course grade (e.g., high B to high C). **Further absence will result in a failing grade in the course.**

Absences due to illness or extracurricular commitments are not "excused" simply as a matter of course. An absence can only be excused, and accommodations in the form of make-up work or deadline extensions can only be made (on an individual, case-by-case basis, and at the instructor's discretion) when documentation is provided either: (1) in advance, for extracurricular activities; or (2) either in advance or immediately upon return to class, in the case of illness. Documentation must take the form of either (1) an official letter from the school, or (2) a school-approved doctor's note. Letters of excuse written by parents or other individuals will not be accepted. Except in rare cases, accommodation for documented absences is only in order when the number of documented absences meets or exceeds the number of absences allowed in the course.

There are no direct grade penalties associated with incurring less than the maximum number of allowed absences. However, since this course is based largely around discussion and collaboration, it is important to remember that any number of absences can negatively impact your

final grade in less tangible ways. Students who attend class infrequently tend not to perform as well on major assignments, often because they have missed discussions in class that would have clarified key concepts or led them to think more critically about their own work. In any case, it is ultimately the responsibility of students to weigh the potential costs and benefits of missing class for themselves.

For unanticipated or emergency absences when advance notification is not possible, contact me as soon as possible by email. When a student is unable to make direct contact with the instructor and is unable to leave word with the instructor's department because of circumstances beyond the student's control, and in cases of bereavement, the student or the student's representative should contact the Office of the Dean of Students.

Students will be considered tardy after the class's official start time. Two tardies will be counted as an absence, and work turned in after the beginning of class may not receive full credit.

Class Participation

Dialogue and argument are essential to facilitate critical thinking, reading, and writing; thus, all thoughtful comments will be entertained. The rule here is simple: show respect. I expect you to play an active part in large and small group activities, to do all assigned readings on time, and to come to class ready to engage in detailed discussion, armed with physical or digital copies of the assigned readings.

Your performance in these areas will affect your overall course grade (15%), with each week of class participation contributing up to 1 point toward your participation grade. During class discussions, I will expect to be able to call on any member of the class for their thoughtful, informed participation. You may "pass" on participating when called upon, without penalty, once per semester. After your "pass" has been used, failure to contribute meaningfully when called upon will result in a participation grade of zero for that day. In egregious cases, you may also be marked as absent. Additionally, if you use your "pass," expect to be among the first students called upon in the following class meeting.

In short, be advised that generous, effective, prepared participation in class discussions and group work will push your grade up. Minimal, unprepared, or grudging effort will push it down. Why? The reason is that vigorous, inclusive, and wide-ranging discussion is essential for student learning and for the success of the course as a whole.

Late Work

All writings are due when specified by the instructor or by the assignment description on D2L. Anything turned in later is considered late. Late Film Journal assignments will have their grades lowered by half; assignments more than two weeks late will not be accepted. No late work will be accepted after the Sunday at the beginning of finals week. The final exam must be completed per the instructor-specified time and/or venue in order to pass the class.

Thus, if you have an emergency, please contact me in advance to arrange for another due date. If you contact me after the due date has passed, such arrangements will not be possible. If you need

to miss class for an extended period, contact the Office of the Dean of Students; they will send letters to all your instructors so that you may make up work.

Computer problems will not be accepted as excuses for late work; please be responsible and complete your work far enough in advance to turn it in on time. Discussion post assignments that have been closed on D2L cannot be made up.

Content Note

This is a college-level class, and we will be dealing with texts that may make you uncomfortable, upset, or offended because of the language, content, or views expressed. This will include films that carry an MPAA rating of “R.” Some films will contain images and subject matter—including violence, language, and/or situations of a sexual nature—that many would deem inappropriate for children. Nevertheless, you are expected to engage with the texts in a professional manner and to be respectful in all discussions with your classmates and instructor. I look forward to open-minded discussions with you about the possibilities for artistic expression afforded by the inclusion of such themes and topics.

Inclusive Language

All work in this course should employ inclusive language, which shows that the writer honors the diversity of the human race by not using language that would universalize one element of humanity to the exclusion of others. Examples of areas in which non-inclusivity commonly occurs include racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or otherwise discriminatory language.

Disrespectful or threatening speech or behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disregard this policy will receive zero credit for that activity and be asked to leave the class.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Brazosport College takes academic dishonesty very seriously. It is assumed that students eligible to perform on the college level are familiar with the ordinary rules governing proper conduct, including academic honesty. The principle of academic honesty is that all work presented by you is yours alone. Using someone else’s work as your own without careful citation is always unethical and, at times, illegal. Conversely, letting someone else use your work is also unethical. Academic dishonesty (including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and collusion) is a serious offense and shall be treated accordingly. Please refer to the Brazosport College Student Guide for more information. This is available online at <https://brazosport.edu/Guide/>.

Academic dishonesty violates both the policies of this course and the Student Code of Conduct. In this class, any occurrence of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Dean of Student Services for prompt adjudication and may, at a minimum, result in a grade of zero for the assignment and/or your failing the course. Sanctions may be imposed beyond your grade in this course by the Dean of Student Services. Please note that I am required to report any instance of academic dishonesty that affects a student’s grade.

As a writer and student at Brazosport, you are cautioned against:

- submitting someone else’s (or AI-generated) work as your own, even if you have paid for it or obtained the author’s permission

- using, without proper citation and/or acknowledgment, word-for-word phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from the printed or electronic manuscript material of others
- using materials not written by you (including AI-generated writing) after making only slight changes (a form of plagiarism known as “patch-writing”)
- using a rewritten form of someone else’s materials
- submitting work that you have composed for another class

These guidelines apply to the work of fellow students as well as the published work of professional writers, information found on the Internet, and electronic compositions such as websites and slideshows. If you have questions about this policy, or if you are not sure whether an assignment that you plan to submit is in violation of it, contact me immediately. Work that has not yet been turned in can always be revised without penalty; submitted work cannot.

AI Statement

AI (Artificial Intelligence) is a tool, and like any tool, it can be used beneficially or it can be misused. In this class, which tasks you with thinking critically, evaluating sources, and developing your own rhetorical awareness, the use of AI actively works against fulfillment of the learning objectives. This is because the course values the *process* of thinking and writing over the *product* of thinking and writing.

For the purposes of this class, it is not appropriate to use AI to generate thesis statements, sources, supporting evidence, or specific language to be submitted for assignments. To copy text from an AI program into your paper would be cheating and a violation of the Academic Honesty policy outlined above. As such, it will be treated in line with any other violation of the policy and of the Student Code of Conduct.

If you believe that a specific application of AI would somehow uniquely benefit your work, you must discuss that potential application in detail with me and secure my written approval before moving forward with its use. Further, if AI plays any role in the composition of your assignment(s), it must be cited; you can find examples of how to cite AI programs online. However, keep in mind that many assignments in this course discourage the use of outside sources.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that requires academic accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible. Brazosport College is committed to providing equal education opportunities to every student. BC offers services for individuals with special needs and capabilities including counseling, tutoring, equipment, and software to assist students with special needs. For a student to receive any accommodation, documentation must be completed in the Office of Disability Services. Please contact Phil Robertson, Special Populations Counselor, at 979-230-3236 for further information.

Title IX Statement

Brazosport College faculty and staff are committed to supporting students and upholding the College District’s non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX and Brazosport College’s policy FFDA (Local), discrimination based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and

gender expression is prohibited. If students experience an incident of discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct, they are encouraged to report it.

If a faculty or staff member “is informed of a student's pregnancy or related condition” by the student or “a person who has a legal right to act on behalf of the student,” the employee must “promptly” tell the student or representative how to notify the Title IX Coordinator of the student's pregnancy or related conditions and must provide the Title IX Coordinator’s contact information to the student or representative, unless the employee “reasonably believes” the Title IX Coordinator already knows.

While students may talk to a faculty or staff member at BC, please understand that they are “Responsible Employees” and must report what is told to them to college officials. Students can also contact the Title IX Coordinators directly by using the contact information below. Additional information is found on the Sexual Misconduct webpage at www.brazosport.edu/sexualmisconduct.

Alex Crouse, Director of Student Life and Deputy Title IX Coordinator
979-230-3355; alex.crouse@brazosport.edu

Mareille Rolon, HR Coordinator and Deputy Title IX Coordinator
979-230-3303; mareille.rolon@brazosport.edu

Campus Emergencies

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor’s control. To get information about changes in this course, check our D2L website or contact me at marc.diefenderfer@brazosport.edu.

Campus Closure Statement

Brazosport College is committed to the health and safety of all students, staff, and faculty and adheres to all federal and state guidelines. The College intends to stay open for the duration of the semester, and to provide access to classes and support services on campus in the safest way possible. The College will also comply with lawful orders given by applicable authorities, including the Governor of Texas, up to and including campus closure. It is possible that on-campus activities may be moved online and/or postponed if such orders are given.

Student Support

To help you on your educational pathway, Brazosport College provides all students with access to TimelyCare. If you’re stressed, challenged, or need help, download the TimelyCare app today! It’s your free virtual health and well-being service platform, available 24/7, 365 days of the year. Search “TimelyCare” in your app store. Then, register with your student email to access your health care services.

Course Calendar

Next to each date you will find the film (or films) being screened that week. Please complete all assigned reading prior to our class meeting each week. In addition, listed next to some dates is an “At Home” viewing requirement. For these films, you should check our course website for information on how to view them and do so prior to that week’s class meeting.

Aug.	29	Screening:	<i>Lady Bird</i> (Greta Gerwig, 2017)
Sept.	5	Reading:	<i>Looking</i> , Chapter 1 (“Looking at Movies”) <i>Looking</i> , Chapter 2 (“Principles of Film Form”)
	12	Reading: Screening:	<i>Looking</i> , Chapter 4 (“Elements of Narrative”) <i>Children of Men</i> (Alfonso Cuarón, 2006)
	19	Reading: At Home: Screening:	<i>Looking</i> , Chapter 3 (“Types of Movies”), pp. 56-84 <i>Out of the Past</i> (Jacques Tourneur, 1947); 97 min. <i>American Movie</i> (Chris Smith, 1999)
	26	Reading: At Home: Screening:	<i>Looking</i> , Chapter 3 (“Types of Movies”), pp. 85-106 <i>Shane</i> (George Stevens, 1953); 118 min. <i>Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind</i> (Hayao Miyazaki, 1984)
Oct.	3	Reading: Screening:	<i>Looking</i> , Chapter 5 (“Mise-en-Scène”) <i>Looking</i> , Chapter 8 (“Editing”) <i>Rear Window</i> (Alfred Hitchcock, 1959)
	10	Reading: Screening:	<i>Looking</i> , Chapter 6 (“Cinematography”) <i>Do the Right Thing</i> (Spike Lee, 1999)
	17	Reading: Screening:	<i>Looking</i> , Chapter 9 (“Sound”) <i>Drive</i> (Nicolas Winding Refn, 2011)
	24	Reading: Screening:	<i>Looking</i> , Chapter 10 (“Film History”), pp. 340-351 <i>The Lumière Brothers’ First Films (1895-1901)</i> <i>A Trip to the Moon</i> (George Méliès, 1902) <i>The Great Train Robbery</i> (Edwin S. Porter, 1903) <i>The Musketeers of Pig Alley</i> (D. W. Griffith, 1912)
	31	Reading: Screening:	<i>Looking</i> , Chapter 10 (“Film History”), pp. 352-361 <i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i> (Robert Wiene, 1920) <i>Freaks</i> (Tod Browning, 1932)
Nov.	7	Reading: At Home: Screening:	<i>Looking</i> , Chapter 7 (“Acting”) <i>Looking</i> , Chapter 10 (“Film History”), pp. 384-386 <i>Casablanca</i> (Michael Curtiz, 1942); 102 min. <i>Citizen Kane</i> (Orson Welles, 1941)

- 14 Reading: *Looking*, Chapter 10 (“Film History”), pp. 362-367
 At Home: *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948); 89 min.
 Screening: ***Elevator to the Gallows* (Louis Malle, 1959)**
- 21 THANKSGIVING BREAK — NO CLASS MEETING
- 28 Reading: *Looking*, Chapter 10 (“Film History”), pp. 367-384
 Screening: ***Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975)**
- Dec. 5 Reading: *Looking*, Chapter 11 (“How the Movies Are Made”)
 At Home: *Dazed and Confused* (Richard Linklater, 1993); 102 min.
- 12 Final Exam