

## **FST 496-001 / PSY 495-002: Cognition of Cinema**

Professors Dale Cohen and Todd Berliner  
Tuesday 2-4:45 pm in Morton 101

Spring 2004

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course addresses the processes that occur in spectators' minds as they watch a movie, from elementary processes (such as the perception of apparent motion) to higher level processes (such as hypothesis formation, narrative comprehension, and the experience of pleasure). The class will discuss and test the proposition that cinema conventions recruit fundamental psychological processes of perception and cognition that the human mind has evolved to perform.

The course is designed as the culminating experience of your academic study in the Film Studies and Psychology majors. Since this is a seminar, everyone must participate fully. If you are willing to devote a hell of a lot to this class, then it will flourish. If not, the material of this class will die, and those of us who are excited about the course would rather you were not in it.

The course will also endeavor to improve your skills as writers. We will devote class time to writing and research instruction, and students in the course will be working on written assignments throughout the semester. In addition to short papers and other writing assignments, students will write a substantial research paper due at the end of the term. We will evaluate your written work based on the quality of your research and your writing.

The course satisfies the "oral competency requirement" in the film studies major, and all students must give an oral presentation.

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES**

See the assignments handout for detailed descriptions of the following assignments:

- 10% Storyboard
- 15% Refined Investigation Report and Literature Review
- 20% Detailed Outline
- 20% Final Paper
- 35 % Class Participation (scholarly presentation, design of stimulus presentation, reading summaries, attendance, preparedness for class, thoughtful participation in class discussion)

### **WRITING RESOURCES**

The *FIAP International Film Archive Database* is a comprehensive electronic reference database for recent scholarly articles on film. *Psych Info* is a comprehensive electronic reference database for scholarly articles on psychology and related fields. Randall Library subscribes to both of them, and you can reach them from university computers (or from your home computers, once you establish a password) in the alphabetic list of databases at <http://library.uncwil.edu/elist3.html>.

To view a film's credits and production information (for example, to obtain the names of the actors, characters, writers, cinematographers, etc.), you can look up the movie on the *Internet Movie Database* at <http://uk.imdb.com/>.

You can receive free individual tutoring from The Writing Place on the second floor of Randall Library. We recommend that everyone obtain writing help with his or her writing assignments. Their number is 962-7155.

We are also available in office hours and by appointment to help students individually with their writing.

## **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is causing or allowing your reader to believe that another person's words or ideas are yours, and it is a serious offense. If you plagiarize something, we will give you an F in the course and report you to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. If you are unsure about how to cite sources or about what constitutes plagiarism, consult one of us or a composition handbook (most of which have detailed descriptions of plagiarism, as well as guidelines for avoiding it). Always cite your sources, whether the ideas or information are from a book, a website, an article, another student, one of your professors, or any place other than your own brain.

## **OFFICE HOURS, EMAIL, AND CONTACTING US**

Todd Berliner will hold office hours in 116 Lakeside Hall on Wednesdays, 2:30-4 PM, or by appointment. His campus mailbox is located in the Film Studies Department office (Lakeside 116). His office phone number is 962-3336. Email is the best way to contact him: [berlinert@uncw.edu](mailto:berlinert@uncw.edu).

Dale Cohen will hold office hours in S&B 105E on Thursdays, 3:30-5 PM, or preferably by appointment. His campus mailbox is located in the Psychology Department main office. His office phone number is 962-3917. Email is the best way to contact him: [cohend@uncw.edu](mailto:cohend@uncw.edu)

Everyone in the course must be reachable by email. We will collect email address during the first two weeks of class.

You can find these course policies, the course syllabus, the assignments, and any updated information for the course by following the links for this course at the bottom of Professor Berliner's website: <http://www.uncwil.edu/people/berlinert/berliner.htm>

## **TEXTS**

### *Required Texts*

- 1) Electronic Reserve Readings

### *Recommended Texts*

- 1) Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*, Seventh Edition (New York: McGraw Hill, 2004)
- 2) David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985)

Bring the week's reading with you to class.