

HNRS 2352.002—Spring 2026
World, Text, and Image IV: Film as Narrative

Dr. Randy LeBlanc

Room: HPR 135
TTh 12:30pm-1:50pm

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Office Hours: TBA and by appointment.

Course Description (from the Catalog): This seminar course takes an interdisciplinary approach to the fine and performing arts and may include integrated study of any such fields including music, theater, and/or art history. This course is writing intensive. Satisfies core requirement for Creative Arts.

Our course: Works of art and the ways we engage them are means to individual and collective self-understanding. They tell stories that can, when articulated and pieced together, reveal a larger narrative. In other words, this larger narrative is a whole of which the stories, the works and our understandings of them, are particular instances. Not only does reading artworks together as narratives offer us the opportunity to gain insight into how people understood, or didn't understand, themselves in their own time, but the way we piece them together, that is, the narrative we construct using these pieces of art, reveals things about ourselves and our own time. Film, as a modern art form, tells stories with great narrative dexterity. Image, movement, framing, sound, voice, gestures and expressions (or the absence or muting of any of these) add dimension to stories in ways that mere text cannot. Of course, unlike texts (novels, essays, short stories, memoirs, and the like), film also does much of the work for us. For example, color films leave less to the imagination than their black-and-white forebears.

The stories we encounter in this course are part of a larger narrative. They come from postwar Europe, that is, a Europe confronting the reality of more than 70 million people killed in war between 1914 and 1945. Eighteenth century Europe had promised Enlightenment and human reason as means to overcome superstition and bring about progress and the alleviation of human suffering. By the middle of the twentieth century, however, it seemed all that had been learned was how to maim and to kill more efficiently and, of course, how to dispose of the bodies. In this context, European films of the postwar period mark an effort whereby this Europe, this self-proclaimed height of human civilization, wrestled with having authored the massive destruction, dehumanization, and deracination of the middle third of the twentieth century—and not just in Europe. In this course, we will track the resulting relentless self-examination through some key films and filmmakers of the era. In the process, we will engage a handful of recurring themes: death and mortality, silence, disaffection, the costs of freedom, and the powers of both the gaze and art itself. Above all, we will explore how to confront what we will call “implication,” that is, our being responsible for things we would rather not, and how film as art can help us learn about ourselves—even when its subject matter seems remote from us at best.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- To develop and improve critical viewing, thinking, and writing skills by engaging different elements of film and film criticism (films, discussion, worksheets, and papers).
- To learn how to read critically, engage, analyze, and interpret an unfamiliar cultural time and place through film and film criticism (films, discussion, worksheets, and papers).
- To make connections between critically engaging the way others work through their experience and culture in film and students' self-knowledge through reflection, discussion, and creative activity (discussion, written assignments, student film project).

Required Texts:

There are no required texts to purchase. All readings are available as PDFs on Canvas.

N.B.: *The films will be viewed in and during class.* If you wish to gain access to them outside of class, the best way is to subscribe to the Criterion Collection (<https://www.criterionchannel.com/>). The cost is about \$10/month. Subscribing is NOT REQUIRED for the course. If you choose to do so, once you are in, simply search for the name of the film.

A Note on Films: The films we will watch this semester, owing to the cultural context in which they were made and the issues they confront, may feature anachronistic attitudes and terminology, vulgar language, and/or scenes of violence, nudity, or sexuality. These films were selected because of their artistic merit, their cultural significance, and how they fit with the nature and goals of this course. They were not selected for controversial reasons or with the intent of causing discomfort. It is understood that, by agreeing to attend this class, you, as adults, are aware of the films and their subject matter, and view them accordingly, with the understanding that the films were picked for the insights they offer into the time, place, and culture, that inform the subject matter of the course.

CANVAS: All written and graded assignments will appear on Canvas. Assignments can be found under the “Syllabus,” “Assignments,” and “Modules” tabs on the Course page. All written and graded work will be submitted via Canvas. Students will also find supplementary handouts and readings on Canvas. All modules, essays, and attendance/participation grades are weighted as part of your final grade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Grading is done on a 10-point scale: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79, etc. The formal requirements of the course and their relative impact on your final grade are as follows:

1) Class Attendance and Participation 10%

Our work in this course necessarily involves discussion, and, in that vein, discussion involves taking cues from gestures, tone of voice, etc. To serve this end, you are expected to attend our class meetings regularly and to participate in our class discussions. In addition, you will need to be in class to watch the assigned films. Films are made to be viewed in groups and this experience will be a vital part of our class's work. Bring your understanding of the readings, your observations about the films and criticism, your questions, your answers, and your insights to class meetings and be ready to articulate and discuss them.

2) Modules: Readings and Assignment Worksheets (4 x 15% each) 60%

The course is divided into 4 units or modules. You can find the modules under the “Modules” tab on the course’s Canvas page. Each module consists of several reading and film assignments (listed below in the syllabus). Each module is also divided into (1) **Assignment Worksheets** and (2) **In-class group reflection exercises**. Each component refers to specific class material and must be completed by its due date. ***These assignments cannot be made up.***

(1) The Assignment Worksheets consist of three (3) *Analytical Prompts or Questions* about the films and readings. You will be asked to read the assigned texts and answer the accompanying questions. USING ONLY THE FILMS AND THE TEXTS YOU READ and ***in your own words***, respond to the first two prompts in coherent, comprehensive paragraphs (no lists!) of neither more nor less 100 words each. The third prompt, dealing with some larger comparative aspect of the work, including the film criticism you will read, will consist in a short essay of at least two paragraphs and no more or less than 300 words total. In all responses, makes sure to be clear, comprehensive, and don’t waste words.

Missed worksheets cannot be made up.

(2) In-class Group Reflection Exercises. After we watch each film, students will participate in small group discussions (reflections) on what they have seen and learned. They will discuss their impressions and/or respond to more directed questions. One member of each group will submit—for the group—the results of these reflections (i.e., a series of ideas and observations on the film or answers to directed questions). These will be submitted directly to Dr. LeBlanc via email at jleblanc@uttyler.edu after class. These reflections will form the basis of our discussions of the films we watch. The results of your reflections will constitute part of each appropriate module grade.

3) Final Essay 15%

Students will be asked to write an analytical essay on some aspect of the class material using specific works we have read, seen, and discussed. These WILL NOT be research papers. Students are expected to limit themselves to the material we have read and discussed and to demonstrate their own substantial analytical abilities. The midterm essay will be 2-3 pages, uploaded to Canvas as a

Word doc (double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman, etc.). This final essay will be comprehensive. See the assignment on Canvas for further instructions.

4) Final Student Film Project

15%

As a final project, at the end of the semester, students (in groups) will write, act in, produce, and present 12-15-minute films on some substantial aspect of the course. Films should be creative engagements with the material of the course, reflecting the students' experience in class, not only with the films we watched but also the texts we read and discussed. The idea is that you enjoy the creative process, and the result should be films that tell stories fitting into the larger narrative of the course.

Your essay assignment will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

Essay Rubric

Criterion	Good (90-100%)	Fair (80-90%)	Poor (<80%)
Content and Development ____/50 points	Content is comprehensive, addresses itself to the issues raised by the assignment and the major points are clearly stated and well supported.	Content is not comprehensive or persuasive. Major points are identified but not well addressed. Content is inconsistent with regard to purpose and clarity of thought.	Content is incomplete. Paper demonstrates little or no understanding of the issues raised by the assignment. The content is confused or confusing and without apparent purpose.
Organization and Structure ____/25 points	The structure of the paper is clear. The Introduction/Thesis paragraph demonstrates sufficient understanding of the issues and previews major points. Paragraph transitions are present, logical, and maintain the flow of thought throughout the paper. The conclusion is logical and flows from the body of the paper.	Structure of the paper is not easy to follow. The Introduction/Thesis is missing or, if provided, does not demonstrate an understanding of the issues or preview major points. Paragraph transitions need improvement. The conclusion is missing or, if provided, does not flow from the body of the paper. You should not use crutch phrases like "In conclusion..."	Poor or missing organization and structure detract from the writer's discussion. The Introduction/Thesis is missing. Paragraphs are disjointed and lack transition of thought—or they are merely missing.
Format ____/5 points	Paper follows these guidelines and is of the appropriate length.	Paper follows most guidelines or is too long or too short.	Paper lacks many elements of proper formatting. Writer does not follow directions.
Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation ____/20 points	Rules of grammar, usage, and punctuation are followed. Spelling is correct. Language is clear and precise. Sentences display consistently strong, varied structure.	Paper contains few grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. Language lacks clarity or includes the use of some jargon or conversational tone.	Paper contains numerous grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. Language uses jargon or is too conversational in tone.

Required Statement on Artificial Intelligence and this Course

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

The use of AI (including Grammarly and similar programs) is NOT PERMITTED in this course. We expect all the work students submit for this course to be their own. We have carefully designed all assignments and class activities to support your learning. Doing your own work, without human or artificial intelligence assistance, is best for your efforts in mastering course learning objectives. For this course, we expressly forbid using ChatGPT, Grammarly or any other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any stages of the work process, including brainstorming. **Any instance of the following constitutes a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values:** a student has another person/entity do any portion of a graded assignment, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment and/or using AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, etc.).

Schedule/Assignment List

Jan 13 T Introduction

Jan 15 Th Film Exercise

Module 1: Bergman: Philosophical (Dis-) Orientation Themes: death and mortality

Jan 20 T *Seventh Seal* (1957) 96 mins

Jan 22 Th *Seventh Seal* conclusion/discussion

Jan 27 T *Wild Strawberries* (1957) 92 mins

Jan 29 Th *Wild Strawberries* conclusion/discussion

Feb 3 T Read: Blackwell, "The Seventh Seal (1956), Ingmar Bergman" (PDF on Canvas)
Worksheet #1 Due on Sunday, February 8 @ 11:59pm

Module 2: Melville—Silence and Style
Themes: silence, the visual, the aural

Feb 5 Th Jean-Pierre Melville
 read: Neupert, “Jean-Pierre Melville, the Renegade Role Model” (PDF)

Feb 10 T *Silence of the Sea* (1949) 87 mins

Feb 12 Th *Silence of the Sea* conclusion/discussion

Feb 17 T *Le Samourai* (1967) 101 mins

Feb 19 Th *Le Samourai* conclusion/discussion
Worksheet #2 Due on Sunday, Feb 22 @ 11:59pm

Module 3: Truffaut and Godard--French New Wave
Themes: disaffection and the costs of “freedom”

Feb 24 T Francois Truffaut, *The 400 Blows* (1959) 99 mins

Feb 26 Th *The 400 Blows* conclusion/discussion
 Read: Phillips, “The 400 Blows (1959)” (PDF on Canvas)

Mar 3 T Jean-Luc Godard, *Breathless* (1960) 90 mins

Mar 5 Th *Breathless* conclusion/discussion
 Read: Neupert, “Breathless (1960)” (PDF on Canvas)

Mar 9-13 Spring Break

Mar 17 T Jean-Luc Godard, *Band of Outsiders* (1964) 95 mins

Mar 19 Th *Band of Outsiders* conclusion/discussion
Worksheet #3 Due on Sunday, March 22 @ 11:59pm

Module 4: Varda—Art, the Gaze, and Human Being
Themes: the power of the gaze and why it matters

Mar 24 T Agnes Varda, *Cleo from 5 to 7* (1962) 90 mins

Mar 26 Th *Cleo from 5 to 7* conclusion/discussion

Mar 31 T *Daguerreotypes* (1975) 78 mins

Apr 2 Th *Daguerreotypes* conclusion/discussion
 Read: Neupert, “Agnes Varda’s Elegant Realism” and reviews of Varda’s *Cleo from 5 to 7* readings by Sadoul and Bory (PDF on Canvas)

Worksheet #4 Due on Sunday, April 5 @ 11:59pm

Apr 7 T Film Project Check-in

Apr 9 Th Film Project Check-in

Apr 14 T Film Project Check-in

Apr 16 Th Film Project Check-in

FINAL ESSAY DUE (Sunday, April 19 @ 11:59pm)

Apr 20 M **FILM DUE as YouTube link sent to jleblanc@uttyler.edu at 6pm.**

Apr 21 T Spring Film Festival

Apr 23 Th Film Festival