Instructor Contact Info

Instructor: Hans Aagard
Email: hansaagard@gmail.com
Office Hours: T/Th 10-11 am MST. I can schedule something outside of those times if needed.
How to reach me: I prefer email – I'll respond within 24 hours. If you have an emergency, give me a call or shoot me a text at my Google Voice number listed above.

Course Overview

For fans of media, film genres can be a fun way to explore new movies and learn where modern conventions come from. They've existed in other media much longer than they have in movies – radio, books, newspaper serials and other media have developed and used genres. As an example, think of the Western. Before the two-plus hour Lone Ranger movie (2013) there was a long-running Lone Ranger TV show (1949) with over 200 episodes, and actually the story was born on the radio (1933), with over 2,000 episodes. So some genres make the jump from one media to another. Films have a way of taking a genre and making it their own, changing things to make it work within the new medium.

Digging deeper into genres means we'll learn what makes up a specific genre. We'll think about why genres are often used, why some still work and some don't. We'll also look at what influence the genres have on our culture. An important question with any media to ask is, how is this influencing how I think? How is it changing my perception of the world? Different genres, and different twists within genres, give different messages.

Course Objectives

- **Goal**: Student will be able to explain genre theory and give examples of different genres and their conventions.
- **Goal**: Student will be able to explain formalist theory and how it applies to the romantic comedy genre.
- **Goal**: Student will be able to apply formalist or audience-based theory to the western genre.
- **Goal**: Student will be able to apply formalist or audience-based theory to the crime, musical, horror, or sci-fi genre.
- **Goal**: Student will be able to apply formalist or audience-based theory to the film noir genre.
- **Goal**: Student will be able to identify a new genre, including a formalist approach.
- **Goal**: Student will be able to apply formalist or audience-based theory a new, student-generated genre.

Required Reading / Watching

We'll use one book and a lot of online materials in this course.

The book:

Film Genre Reader IV, edited by Barry Keith Grant.

The online materials:

We'll be using links to academic papers, blog posts, IMDB postings, and other online content. There'll be links to them within the individual sections.

The movies:

To watch the movies themselves, it's up to you. I won't have the rights to post the movies within our online class system, so you can rent, borrow, or buy them as you have access. Some may be available on Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, or other streaming services, or you may want to rent them from your local video store. If you have one!

Course Structure

The structure of this course is to first learn about a couple of theories we can apply to film genres, then apply them to each genre. By the time we get to the last genre you'll be able to find a genre yourself – which is what you'll be asked to do!

Here's what being is this class will look like.

- **Participate in online discussion.** Every week you will need to participate in the online discussion. By Wednesday of the week post your initial response to the instructors' question. By Saturday of the week post a reply to at least two of your peer's posts. Your posts and your replies to your peer's posts are graded with a rubric posted on the top of the thread.

- **Take quizzes.** Every week we'll have readings that apply to theory or genre. They are mastery quizzes – you can take them as many times as you need to but you need to achieve 100%. I'll keep the five highest of the eight quizzes.

- **Old Genres.** As a course we'll all go through the western genre to practice doing analysis. Then, for each week of 5 and 6 you can choose one of four genres: crime, musical, horror, or sci-fi. I'll give you the readings and the film to watch. You'll talk about these with your classmates who chose them that week. Then in week 7 we'll come back together as a class with film noir.

- **New Genres.** Once we've done the western you'll have a sense of how genres work. It's time for you to identify one on your own! It can't be a genre we talk about in this course. You'll write up a reader for the genre, explaining some basic structural components, and point us to an example to watch. This will be due at the beginning of week 7. That will give me some time to review them and pick three to assign for our last week. Then we'll do the same thing with the new genres that we did with the old – analysis!

- **Reflections**. Write a three-paragraph analysis of the film in reference to the genre. Include semantics, syntax, and your perception of audience appreciation.

Schedule

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
	Jan 12-18	Jan 19-25	Jan 26-Feb 1	Feb 2-8
Topic	Introduction Genre	Theory: Formalist	Theory: Audience-Based	Genre: The Western
Reading	Grant Ch. 1	TBA	TBA	TBA
Film		Sleepless in Seattle	The Avengers	High Noon
Quiz	Jan 14	Jan 21	Jan 28	
Discussion	Jan 14 – Post Jan 17 – Reply	Jan 21 – Post Jan 24 – Reply	Jan 28 – Post Jan 31 – Reply	Feb 4 – Post Feb 7 – Reply
Analysis				Feb 7

	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
	Feb 9-15	Feb 16-22	Feb 23-Mar 1	Mar 2-8
Topic	Genre: Elective	Genre: Elective	Genre: Film Noir	Genre: Interwebs
Reading	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
Film	Elective	Elective	D.O.A.	Student Chosen
Quiz				
Discussion	Feb 11 – Post Feb 14 – Reply	Feb 18 – Post Feb 21– Reply	Feb 25 Feb 28	Mar 4 – Post Mar 7 – Reply
Analysis	Feb 14	Feb 21	Feb 28	

New Genre				

For more detailed information like instructor information, points, etc. you can go to the syllabus module.

Points

	How Many	Points Each	For a Grand Total Of
Quizzes	5	3	15
Discussion Posts	8	3	24
Discussion Replies	16	1	16
Analysis	5	5	25
New Genre Project	1	20	20
			100

There are no late discussion posts or quizzes. But, there is an optional 4-point extra-credit assignment. Analyses lose 10% if late, and new genre assignments will not be accepted late.

Technology Requirements

You'll need a device that has access to the Internet. The course will be using Canvas, an online learning system that seems to be straightforward to use. It lists minimum requirements and which browsers work well with it. It does have a functional mobile site (the app can be a little spotty).

If you're using Netflix you need a browser plug-in called Silverlight, which works on a lot of different operating systems and browsers.

If you're using DVD versions of the movies, you'll need a DVD player and a viewing device like a TV or monitor. If you have a new, slimmed down laptop you might not have a DVD player installed but for most other computers you should have one.

If you want to write out responses or reflections somewhere before you post them (this is a good idea in case Something Happens with your technology, and it often does) you will need to use a basic notepad or text tool on your device.

You will also need something to read .PDF files. Adobe Reader is the default (it's free), but some devices have their own reader built it.

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Netiquette & Discussion Expectations

Etiquette for participating in conversation online ("netiquette") is important for the course community to be a safe, engaging, friendly place. Here are some guidelines that should guide your participation:

- Avoid sarcasm. It's difficult to detect online. Remember that you are relying on your words to show the tone you intend. If in doubt, leave it out.
- Avoid yelling. ALL CAPS LOOKS LIKE YELLING. As does a lot of punctuation!!!!!!?????? Just as you wouldn't shout during a classroom discussion, avoid shouting in an online discussion.
- Be professional. Great discussions often include disagreements. Use positive, polite language in your comments about the text and other people's comments. For example, if you disagree: "That's a good point, but I disagree. My thinking is…." is a good way to let someone know you've read and thought about their post, but you have a different, and just as valid point of view. Avoid unprofessional language. Avoid texting shorthand (eg., UR, np). Check your spelling and grammar, and be patient with others' spelling and grammar.
- Avoid responding immediately if you are upset. If a post or feedback upsets you, stand up and take a breath before responding. Re-read your responses carefully before finally posting them. If you aren't sure, wait a few minutes and then come back to get perspective. Once your thoughts are posted, they are there for everyone to read and even if they are removed the impact has still been made.
- Stay on point. Avoid taking the conversation away from course content. If you want to chat with classmates about non-course related content, you can do that in the "Hallway" discussion topic.
- Use the readings. When making a point, be sure to use the text, instructor video, or other course materials. For example, "on page 27 of the Grant book it talks about conventions, describing it as '….'. To me, this means …."
- Be clear. Be as clear as possible in your response. Remember that you are not in the room with your classmates –all the information you want to express needs to be self-evident in the post itself. Participating in an online course often means you're learning how to express yourself online, which is an important skill.
- Write posts that match the question or prompt – no more, no less. As the number of posts increases as the week goes on, it's easier for everyone to participate if posts are clear and to the point, so that everyone's posts can be read in a timely manner.
- Read before responding. Before you respond to the instructor post, read the other comments in the discussion board first. If someone else made the point you wanted to make, you can agree with them and elaborate further, expand on the idea, take it in a different direction, or come up with a different approach altogether.

Overall, be kind and be clear.

Plagiarism

Boise State University students should be aware that all students are required to adhere to Boise State University's Student Code of Conduct on academic dishonesty. Assignments you submit must be your original work and cannot be used in other courses. Nor can you use significant portions of assignments completed for another course in this course.

All work that you submit must show your own ideas and current understanding. Assignments you submit must be original and developed by you. You are welcome to get ideas from other sources; however, you must interpret such ideas significantly and cite your sources. Anything copied from another source must be indicated by appropriate quotation notations.

Please refer to *Student Code of Conduct* Articles 2, 4 and 6 on Academic Dishonesty, Cheating, Classroom Misconduct, and Plagiarism.

For more (including the source of the information above).

ADA and Students with Disabilities

The following statement is from the Boise State University Disability resource center:

Students with disabilities needing accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations must be approved through the DRC prior to being implemented. To learn more about the accommodation process, visit the DRC's website at http://drc.boisestate.edu/students/getting-started/.