

English 197

Writing Link with Comparative Literature 272

Fall 2008

Course Information

Instructor: Kimberlee Gillis-Bridges

Meetings: M, 12:30-1:50 p.m., Mary Gates 082A (seminar room); W, 12:30-1:50 p.m., Mary Gates 082 (lab)

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Description

How do film scholars critically think and write about film? In English 197, we will explore this question, drawing in part on the lectures, readings and films for Comparative Literature 272. The goal of English 197 is to help students critically analyze films, engage the work of film scholars, develop claims, evaluate their own writing as well as that of their colleagues, and use feedback to revise their drafts. Students will also learn to examine cinema studies lectures, discussion sessions, and assignments to identify significant questions in the field, scholarly beliefs about what counts as evidence, and characteristic ways of building arguments in the discipline. Class activities in the writing link reflect the importance of writing as a means of learning. Students will write to think through issues or problems as well as to articulate their knowledge. Students will do much of this writing as homework assignments that include online responses to films, summaries of readings and essay proposals.

English 197 is computer-integrated. The lab setting allows students to view and offer feedback on their peers' work, collaborate on group activities, and view film clips, and incorporate visual aids into their papers. However, technical savvy is not a course prerequisite; students will receive instruction in all technical tools used in the classroom.

Our Roles and the Link Between the Courses

Although English 197 shares some assignments with Comparative Literature 272, our composition class has separate discussion, presentation, and writing tasks. I attend lectures and meet with cinema studies course staff, but *you* serve as the primary link between the courses. To do well in English 197, you will need to keep up with cinema studies course lectures, discussions, and films. Occasionally, we will complete readings before they are due in Comparative Literature 272. You should also expect to re-screen selected films as you compose your essays.

My role in the writing course is to provide the tools and resources you will need to advance your own thinking about film through your writing. I will pose questions, design activities to help you think through those questions, and respond to the substance of what you write. Your role is to do the hard work—the critical film analysis, discussion, reading, and writing. You will generate ideas, evaluate evidence, and construct arguments relevant to issues raised in the cinema studies course. You will revise your papers until they are as good as you can make them.

Requirements

Class Participation

Class discussion constitutes one key method of developing your analytical skills. Thus, I expect prompt, regular attendance and active participation in discussions of films, readings, and student writing. You should come prepared for each class session, with assigned readings completed and assigned films screened. You should also plan to ask questions, make comments, analyze clips, paraphrase your electronic postings, share writing

done as homework, and critique essay drafts. Students can expect me to call on them, as I want everyone to earn full points for class participation. Like all skills, speaking in class becomes easier with practice. I do not expect fully polished analyses during discussion; rather, your contributions represent ideas for further development.

The computer-integrated environment presents the temptation of email and the web; therefore, students must follow basic ground rules in the lab:

- Students will not type when somebody is addressing the class.
- Students will not check email or access the web during class unless instructed to do so.

Lack of engagement in class activities, inadequate preparation, and failure to adhere to lab classroom rules will substantially lower your participation grade for the course.

Essays

You will complete three major essays—a 1000-word scene analysis, a 1000- to 1250-word comparison paper and a 1000- to 1250-word analysis of gender and sexuality in the horror film or postmodern horror. The first essay builds upon the Comparative Literature 272 scene analysis paper, the third anticipates essay questions on the Comparative Literature 272 final, and the second is joint with the lecture course. I require at least two drafts of all essays; only the final draft receives a grade. Before revising your draft and submitting it for a grade, you will receive feedback from your peers and me. You can also seek additional feedback from the cinema studies course TAs and from consultants at the English Writing Center, located in Padelford B-12, or the Odegaard Writing and Research Center, located in Room 326 of Odegaard Undergraduate Library. **Please note that you must turn in all three essays in order to pass the class.**

Please title, paginate, type and double-space your essays, using one-inch margins. In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, include your name, the course number, the assignment number, and the due date. Use a commonly installed font (Arial, Garamond, Georgia, Times New Roman, Verdana) for your papers. All essays will be submitted to the class network in electronic format. To avoid problems with lost files, bring your work to class in two of the following electronic formats: email attachment, file uploaded to Dante, or memory stick.

Electronic Film Responses

Students will use the class discussion board to post responses to films viewed in Comparative Literature 272. Before selected screenings, I will post questions that ask you to analyze films in light of the formal and theoretical principles outlined in lectures and readings. Your postings should provide 200- to 250-word responses to selected questions; you may also address your classmates' ideas as you respond to the question. The electronic posting site allows you to formulate ideas for papers and to raise issues for in-class discussions. Your postings will be graded on a credit/no credit basis, with credit granted to on-time postings that meet the length requirement and demonstrate serious engagement with the questions.

Homework

Throughout the quarter, you will complete homework assignments as part of the process of developing your formal essays. Homework should be typed and formatted as described above unless otherwise specified.

Peer Critiques

English 197 uses a workshop format, with students sharing their writing with each other. For each essay assignment, students will critique drafts in small groups. Each student will complete peer critiques for two group members and receive critiques from two fellow writers. In class, we will develop criteria to guide the peer review process

Conferences

In addition to regular class meetings, students will attend conferences with the instructor on each major essay. Such conferences allow us to talk one-on-one about your first draft and ideas for revision. You should come to conferences prepared to discuss the responses you have received from peers, your own assessment of your

draft, and your plans for revision.

Although my suggestions are designed to help you write more critically, and if you follow those suggestions your paper will probably improve, you will not automatically receive a 4.0. In our conferences, we will focus on selected aspects of your draft—there is not enough time to address everything. Moreover, while revising will help you progress as a writer, revision on an individual draft may not improve all aspects of that draft, and new issues may arise as you rewrite. However, the more willing you are to revise substantially (which often means rewriting from scratch), and the more often you repeat the process of critiquing and revising, the better your grade on each paper is likely to be.

Portfolio and Reflective Statement

At the end of the term, you will turn in an electronic portfolio of selected essays, peer critiques, and homework/responses completed over the course of the quarter. The portfolio will include reflective commentaries that explain your selections and evaluate your progress as a writer in cinema studies. In order to have the widest possible range of materials from which to select your portfolio pieces, you will upload copies of all homework, in-class writing, peer critiques, and essay drafts to your electronic portfolio space. **Please note that you must turn in the electronic portfolio in order to pass the course.**

Email and Access to Course Web Site

You must have a working UW email account and a way to access the course web site. I will frequently upload schedule changes and handouts generated during class discussion to the web. You will exchange peer reviews done as homework using web-based tools. I also expect to communicate regularly with you—and for you to communicate with each other—via email.

As a student in a computer-integrated course, you have late-afternoon and early evening access to Mary Gates 076, a CIC-restricted lab connected to our class network. The lab is open afternoons Sunday through Friday; hours are posted on the CIC lab home page: <http://depts.washington.edu/engl/cic/lab.php>.

Lateness Policy

Since homework and electronic postings form the basis of in-class activities, I will not accept these assignments late except in cases of documented medical or family emergency.

Whether first or final draft, essays are due at the beginning of class; work submitted after the first five minutes of class will be considered late. Failure to submit essay drafts will result in a 20-point deduction from the final grade, as revising from feedback constitutes an essential part of the essay assignments. Late essay revisions will receive a 10-point deduction per day late, including weekends and holidays. I will make exceptions to the lateness policy only in cases of documented illness or family emergency.

Technology glitches do not constitute valid excuses for lateness. To avoid computer problems, you should save frequently while working, and you should back up work saved to a hard drive on a memory stick, your Dante account, or your E-Portfolio space. If you use a word processing program other than Microsoft Word, make sure to save in Rich Text format to avoid file conversion problems.

Plagiarism Policy

In your electronic postings, homework, and essays, you may draw upon the ideas and words of other writers. However, you must make clear to your audience that you are incorporating another's work by placing quotation marks around exact words and citing the author's name whenever you quote, summarize or paraphrase. Failure to credit sources may result in a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, or expulsion from the university. The course links page contains information on when and how to cite sources.

Films and Textbooks

- All films, readings and lecture notes from Comparative Literature 272
- Recent style manual (Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*; Lunsford and Connors, *The Everyday Writer*; Harris, *Prentice Hall Reference Guide to Grammar and Usage*; etc.)

- *CIC Student Guide* (available online at <http://depts.washington.edu/engl/cic/sgonline>)

Other Materials

You will need several reliable ways to transfer your work between home and lab computers. You may electronically transfer files via FTP or email attachment, or you may use a memory stick.

Because we will frequently view film clips on lab computers, you will also need to bring a small pair of headphones to our Wednesday classes.

Grading

Grades in English 197 will be computed by points, with 400 points equaling a 4.0, 300 points a 3.0, and so on. If your total falls between grades, I will round up if you score one to five points below the higher grade and round down if you score one to four points above the lower grade. For example, 274 points equals a 2.7 and 275 points a 2.8. Students who score less than 65 points total will receive a 0 for the course, as the UW grading system does not scale grades lower than .7.

Apart from postings, which are graded on a credit/no credit basis, points all other assignments will be awarded based on quality of work submitted. You will receive grading criteria for the essays when I distribute those assignments. I will grade homework and peer reviews on a five-point scale as follows:

Points	Homework	Peer Review
5	Exceptionally thorough, focused, organized, and well-argued response to the assignment	Complete critiques with perceptive, substantial and useful comments
3-4	Thoughtful, adequately organized and argued response	Complete critiques with thoughtful comments
1-2	Simplistic, inadequately organized and argued response	Incomplete or hastily done critiques

Each component of the course is worth the following number of points:

- *Class Participation*: 40 points
- *Homework, Electronic Postings, and Peer Critiques*: 80 points
- *Essays*: 240 points
- *Electronic Portfolio*: 40 points

Schedule

This schedule may be altered at any point in the term at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete readings by the dates listed.

Date	Activity	Reading	Due
9/24	Course introduction and student survey Introduction to film genre and formal analysis	English 197 Syllabus	
9/29	Discuss mise-en-scene, cinema studies argumentation, and notetaking Essay 1 assigned	Bordwell and Thompson, "Mise-en-Scene" (C Lit 272 Packet)	
10/1	Discuss viewing notes and mise-en-scene and cinematography in <i>Phantom of the Opera</i> Introduction to storyboarding	Bordwell and Thompson, "Cinematography" (C Lit 272 Packet)	<i>Phantom of the Opera</i> viewing notes; bring in two electronic formats
10/2			<i>Dracula</i> response due by 10:00 p.m. via GoPost
10/6	Constructing scene analysis essays from notes, responses, and segmentations or storyboards Discuss sample essays and approaches to Essay 1	Bordwell and Thompson, "Editing" (C Lit 272 Packet)	Storyboard of a scene from <i>Phantom of the Opera</i> or <i>Dracula</i> ; bring in hard copy
10/8	Peer critique of Essay #1 Sign up for conferences		First draft of Essay 1; bring in two electronic formats
10/9			Exchange completed reviews of two peers' essays by 10:00 p.m. via GoPost
10/13	Essay 1 workshop		
10/15	Reflect on the process of writing Essay 1 Compare <i>Cat People</i> and <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i>		Final draft of Essay 1; bring in two electronic formats
10/16			<i>Psycho</i> response due by 10:00 p.m. via GoPost
10/20	Discuss <i>Psycho</i> responses and approaches to comparing films' formal elements Essay 2 assigned		

Date	Activity	Reading	Due
10/22	Develop and post formal film comparisons		
10/23			<i>Night of the Living Dead</i> response due by 10:00 p.m. via GoPost
10/27	Discuss <i>Night of the Living Dead</i> responses and approaches to comparing films' contextual dialogues	Worland, "Horror in the Age of Anxiety" and Becker, "A Point of Little Hope: Hippie Horror Films and the Culture of Ambivalence" (C Lit 272 Packet)	
10/29	Discuss <i>Rosemary's Baby</i> and sample comparison essays Integrating sources into comparative film analysis	Sobchack, "Bringing it all Back Home: Family Economy and Exchange"	Commented sample essays and two to four questions about Sobchack's article; bring in two electronic formats
10/30			<i>The Exorcist</i> response due by 10:00 p.m. via GoPost
11/3	Discuss Essay 2 proposal and <i>The Exorcist</i> responses		Essay 2 proposal; bring in hard copy
11/5	Peer critique of Essay 2 Sign up for conferences		First draft of Essay 2; bring in two electronic formats
11/6			Exchange completed reviews of two peers' essays by 10:00 p.m. via GoPost
11/10	Essay 2 workshop		
11/12	Reflect on the process of writing Essay 2 Examining gender and sexuality in the horror film		Final Draft of Essay 2; bring in two electronic formats
11/13			<i>Carrie/Halloween/The Shining</i> response due by 10:00 p.m. via GoPost
11/17	Discuss <i>Carrie</i> , <i>Halloween</i> , and <i>The Shining</i> responses and approaches to analyzing gender and sexuality in film Essay 3 assigned	Carroll, "Nightmare and the Horror Film: The Symbolic Biology of Fantastic Beings" and Clover, "Her Body, Himself: Gender and the Slasher Film" (C Lit 272 Packet)	

Date	Activity	Reading	Due
11/19	Discuss <i>Videodrome</i> and approaches to theoretical film analysis	Modelski, "The Terror of Pleasure: The Contemporary Horror Film and Postmodern Theory" (C Lit 272 Packet)	Modelski article response; bring in two electronic formats
11/20			<i>Silence of the Lambs</i> response due by 10:00 p.m. via GoPost
11/24	Discuss <i>Silence of the Lambs</i> responses Develop thesis and writing plan for Essay 3	Halberstam, "Skinflick: Posthuman Gender in Jonathan Demme's <i>Silence of the Lambs</i> " (C Lit 272 Packet)	
11/26-11/30	Class cancelled for online peer review and conference sign-up		Exchange first draft of Essay 3 and completed reviews of two peers' essays via GoPost
12/1	Essay 3 workshop Portfolio and reflective essay assigned		
12/3	Reflect on the process of writing Essay 3 Discuss approaches to portfolio assignment Course evaluation		Final Draft of Essay 3; bring in two electronic formats
12/10			Publish E-Portfolio to web by 10:00 p.m.