

CULT 210: 001: Reading Screens

Course Instructor: Daniel Keyes

Course Overview, Content, and Objectives

This course explores how screen texts whether a feature film or an Instagram post are made objects that seek to move viewers in the world. The first five weeks of the course introduce the early history of film and the technical terms necessary to discuss critically the construction of synchronized sound and images. The second half of the course explores the critical discourse on screen texts in relation to genres and cultural theories that articulate with issues like race, gender, sexuality, class, Indigeneity, and nation looking at contemporary screen texts. This later part of the course will focus on a couple of contemporary feature films and will involve reading both popular and scholarly analysis of these features to help students develop their research writing skills by learning to paraphrase film theory and criticism to build their own argument about how a screen text moves or frustrates.

Course Format

This course is cross listed between English and Cultural Studies so although on Workday your specific section may appear small, the class size includes another section.

This is a lecture course that will invite and expect active contribution from class participants. Low stake group work will focus on honing analytical screen skills as we become acquainted with formalist film terms likes *mise-en-scène*, non-diegetic sound, continuity, parallelism, leitmotiv, etc. that we will apply to reading screens.

Booklist

Readings will be drawn from screen studies texts and critical and cultural scholarly readings that will be available via the library's online reserve.

Feature films include *Modern Times*, Chaplin (1936), *Psycho*, Hitchcock (1960), *Get Out*, Jordan Peele (2017), *Red Snow*, Marie Clements (2019). I am open to considering other features that help diversify the course (e.g., Japanese anima like this homely science fiction film *Mirai of the Future*, Mamoru Hosada (2018). All these films are available via the library's database [Criterion on Demand](#) along with thousands of other mainly American films. Browse the database and e-mail me daniel.keyes@ubc.ca with your pick!

Assessments

6 low stake group work exercises, 2 short papers; 1 midterm; 1 final exam