

Film Studies

About Your Teacher

Mr. Plansinis (Plan-SIN-iss), better known as "Mr. P" to most students, has been teaching high school English for 15 years. Originally from a small town north of Pittsburgh, Mr. P went to college at both Penn State Erie and West Virginia University before moving back to the Pittsburgh area.

Mr. P likes to walk around as he teaches, so don't be too freaked out by the giant lumbering through the room. He loves his morning coffee and writing weird example sentences. His pet peeves include students who line up at the door and unwanted style tips (his wife has already tried to improve his wardrobe for years).

Canvas

The Canvas page for this course is... not to sound too full of myself... awesome! I have playlists, calendars, and links for almost everything. If you're absent or just want to look ahead, you can see everything that we're doing.

Even though I use Canvas often, I'm not a 24-hour service center. I can't grade work or respond to messages immediately at all hours of the day. Be aware of the technology's benefits and its limitations.

Contact Me

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What We Do

Film Studies is exactly what it sounds like... we study films! We look at the history of how films have developed but also the different techniques that filmmakers use to tell a story visually.

Watching Films – A big part of this class involves watching movies (shocking, I know). We'll talk about them and break them down to interpret their meaning. However, you can't do any of that if you're not paying attention. If you're absent, many of these films can be found on the class Canvas page or can be streamed on many different platforms.

Discussion and Activities – Depending on the film and the kinds of techniques we're looking for, our analysis may take different forms. Sometimes we just talk about the movie. Other times, we may break down clips with activities or write about our interpretation of different ideas. Participation in these discussions and activities is a big part of your grade for the class.

Filmmaking – This isn't a filmmaking class... that's not really my area of expertise. But we will have several opportunities to learn about different filmmaking techniques by trying them out ourselves. You may be asked to film things from different angles, or tell a story without dialogue, or play with lighting and shadow.

Quizzes – At the end of each unit, there will be a quiz on the techniques and films that we've worked on.

Film Content

This course is designed with high school students in mind; however, cinema was not shaped in a completely innocent way. There will be some assignments where students can choose any movie to work with, and I have no major restrictions on what students choose to watch on their own time. I will not show anything in class that is graphic or wildly inappropriate for teenagers (nudity, graphic violence, etc.); however, there may be some content that addresses adult themes or uses adult language (denoted with an asterisk * below). Students or parents who do not feel comfortable with the film selections below should contact me immediately or schedule a different elective course.

We will not watch all these films. I pick and choose and based upon the interests and abilities of the students in the class.

City Lights (1931)
Citizen Kane (1941)
Casablanca (1943)
Double Indemnity (1944)
Sunset Boulevard (1950)
Singin' in the Rain (1952)
Vertigo (1958)

* Psycho (1960)
* The Apartment (1960)
* One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975)
* The Shawshank Redemption (1994)
* Good Will Hunting (1998)
* Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004)
Inception (2010)

Grading

Late Work - All assignments must be completed on time for full credit. Assignments can be accepted late for half credit. Large assignments (essays, projects, etc.) will be docked one letter grade for each day late until you reach 50%, after which it can be turned in for half credit.

Makeup Work – Making up missed work is your responsibility. If you're absent, you need to check Canvas or speak with me about making up the missed assignment. As a rule, you have the number of days you missed to make up the work. For instance, if you missed two days of school, you have two days to make up the work.

Zeros in the Gradebook – Anytime an assignment is not turned in on time, a zero will be put in the gradebook regardless of the reason. This is so that you are aware that the assignment is missing. If you were absent that day and the absence is excused, you will be given full credit for the assignment once you turn it in. If the assignment is simply late (not due to an excused absence), you will receive half credit for the assignment once you turn it in. If you never turn it in, the zero stays.

Passing the Course – You must earn at least a 60% average to pass.

Classroom Behavior

Phone and Earbud/Headphone Use – At the beginning of the period, your phone MUST be put in the phone holder and kept there until the end of the period. You may not use your phone or earbuds/headphones during ANY classroom activities.

Being On Time – Arrive for class on time. If you are late, get a pass from a teacher. If you don't have a pass, it counts as a tardy. After five tardies, you will receive a detention or office referral.

Personal Space – Do not touch another student's body, belongings, phone, desk, or invade his or her personal space.

Bathroom Procedures – If you must use the bathroom, use the Pass feature on your iPad to create a pass and have it approved by me. You may not use the bathroom as an excuse to be late to class. If you're going to be late, come to class and get a pass first.

Appropriate Language – Even if you swear, yell, and insult other people on your own time, don't do it here.

Food and Drink Policy – Food/drinks are permitted ONLY if they aren't distracting (too noisy, smelly, disruptive, messy, etc.). If it becomes a problem, it's banned for the whole class.

Cheating – Copying another student's work or taking it from the Internet counts as plagiarism, no matter how small the assignment is. You are not permitted to 'work together' on assignments unless I have given you specific permission to do so.

Consequences

This class utilizes the district's discipline guidelines as described in the student handbook.

1st Offense: Verbal Warning

2nd Offense: Teacher Detention and Phone Call Home

3rd Offense: Office Referral

Plagiarism Policy:

This class will utilize a program called Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism. All students are required to submit written work through that program (integrated with Canvas), which compares submitted work with all text on the internet as well as previous papers submitted to teachers who use Turnitin.com.

If you are caught plagiarizing on an assignment...

• **1st Offense:** Zero on the assignment; no option to make it up. Your parents will be notified.

• **2nd Offense:** Zero on the assignment; no option to make it up. Your parents will be notified. One day of in-school suspension.

• **3rd Offense:** Zero on the assignment; no option to make it up. Your parents will be notified. One day of out-of-school suspension.