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English 2090: The Screenplay as Literature

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Office Hours: 5-5:30pm Tuesday and Thursday, Wednesday 2-4pm, Friday 9-12pm

Texts: The screenplays we will read will be posted on Moodle, as will any supplemental material. Students will need to have regular access to a computer in order to keep up with assignments and they will need a PDF reader such as Adobe Acrobat Reader. Adobe Acrobat Reader is fee and safe software, and I have provided a download link on our Moodle page.

Course Description: This class intends to treat screenplays as literature, and to read them with an eye towards identifying how their content and formal arrangement communicate theme, how that theme affects the audience, adding resonance to what happens and deepening the work's emotional and intellectual impact.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of the semester, students will be able to do the following:
1. Understand and navigate the conventions of screenplays and how those conventions affect the audience.
2. Make connections between a screenplay and the world in which it was constructed, the social, historical, and ethical questions of its time and ours.
3. Develop and organize their thoughts into a coherent, supported argument for a screenplay’s theme and effect.

Grading: There will be two examinations, the mid-term and final, and two essays. The first essay will be in-class, while the second will be done out of class. The second will be a longer, more fully developed argument that incorporates research and cites that research using MLA style. There will also be weekly quizzes intended partly to ensure that students are keeping up with their readings, and these quizzes make up a significant percentage of a student’s grade. The breakdown:

- The Mid-term Examination: 20%
- The Final Examination: 20%
- Essay 1: 10%
- Essay 2 (Minimum 1,500 words): 25%
- Quizzes: 25%

Policies on Late or Missed Work: All of our work will be either completed or turned in using Moodle. I will penalize a late essay as much as a letter grade per day. Quizzes cannot be made up; however, I drop one quiz grade.

Turning in your Essays: We will use Moodle’s anti-plagiarism tool Turnitin to submit the second essay. When you submit an essay, you are given a receipt. That receipt lets you know your submission went through, so look for it and keep it. Before you submit an essay, double check that it is the right essay and the right draft of that essay, because what you submit is what I will grade. Make sure that you include your Works Cited page as a part of the document you submit. Copy and paste it onto the end of your essay if you created it as a separate document.
**Essay assignment:** Both of your essays will offer an argument for *your* interpretation of one or more of the screenplays we’ve read. I’m looking for original thought, not just what others have said about the work you are analyzing. It is not necessary for students to use sources on the first essay. Mostly, I am looking for a student’s own ability to think and write critically. *The second essay requires that you cite two sources in addition to your primary source or source, the screenplay or screenplays we have read in class.* Even then, those sources should support your thesis, not provide it. The controlling idea of your essay should be your own. Cite your sources using MLA format, and pay attention to the deadlines, which are posted on our Moodle page and often included in emails. *You must turn in both essays in order to pass the class.*

**Extra Credit Assignment:** If you write your original screenplay for a short film, five to ten pages, you can turn it in to get an extra 10 points on your final exam or to get one absence excused. The screenplay needs to demonstrate proficiency with the conventions of script writing, and it must be accompanied by a one-page, 400-word, reflection on the effort, how certain decisions were made, what was the intended effects of those decisions.

**Academic Integrity:** Using papers from other classes, passing someone’s writing off as your own, or failing to credit sources, these come with serious consequences. If I find solid evidence of plagiarism, I will fail refuse to credit that assignment or any revision of that assignment, making it almost certain that you will fail the course. I will also file an Academic Dishonesty Report with the University.

**Attendance Policy:** You are required to come to every class, and after three absences, you will incur a penalty: your grade will drop half a letter grade for every subsequent absence. There are no excused absences. Finally, you will still be responsible for the assignments and the deadlines given the other students during your absence. If you miss a class, I suggest you contact a classmate, easily done through Moodle, and ask what you might have missed.

**Tardiness:** Being late is disruptive. If you arrive to class and find the door is closed, please leave and return the next class meeting. If you are late, you will be marked absent.

**Cell Phones:** Have your cell phone turned off and put away during the class period. Do not keep your cellphone on your desk or lap, and if you have an important reason to have your cell phone on during class time, tell me about it at the semester’s beginning, and provided I allow it, put your phone on vibrate and in a place that you can hear or feel it, but not see it.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students who qualify for services will receive the academic modifications for which they are entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to register with the Office of Disability Services (UC 260) each semester and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance.

**Miscellaneous:** In order to be eligible for this class, students must have successfully completed English 1158 or have credit for a similar course from another college.