

**Instructor:** Kimberlee Gillis-Bridges

**Class:** M-TH, 2:30-4:20 p.m.

**Location:** Smith 120

**Office:** Padelford A-305

**Phone:** 543-4892

**Email:** kgb@u.washington.edu

**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00-2:00, and by appointment

**Class Web Page:** <http://faculty.washington.edu/kgb/cinotech>

## Description

In English 345, we will concentrate on films that portray the relationship between humans and technology. Our investigation of the visual language filmmakers use to represent technology will involve formal analysis of narrative, mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound. However, we will go beyond formal analysis to address the historical, social, and ideological contexts at play in films about technology. Throughout the quarter, we will question how films about technology both draw on and shape contemporary cultural notions of technology. The first part of the course focuses on films depicting the promise of technology. The second explores critiques of technology and technological societies, and the third analyzes the cyborg and other meldings of human and machine.

## Course Goals and Methodology

Students in the course work toward several goals: learning how to read film both formally and contextually and developing as critical thinkers and writers. Course activities promote active learning, with most class sessions including a mix of mini-lectures, discussion, and group work. My role is to provide the tools and resources you will need to advance your own thinking and writing. I will pose questions, design activities to help you think through these questions, and respond to your ideas. Your role is to do the hard work—the critical reading, discussion, and writing. You will analyze films, generate ideas in electronic and face-to-face discussions, verbally analyze a film clip, and construct written arguments.

## 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 and supplemental readings. You should come prepared for each class session with assigned reading completed. You should also plan to ask questions, make comments, summarize critical arguments, analyze clips, paraphrase your electronic postings, or contribute to small-group discussions. Like all skills, speaking in class becomes easier with practice. I do not expect fully polished analyses in class discussion; rather, your contributions represent ideas for further development.

### Electronic Discussion

Students will use the class discussion board to post responses to films and readings. To facilitate discussion, I will post questions to which I want you to respond. Your posting should provide a 200- to 250-word response to a selected question; you may also address your classmates' ideas as you respond to the question. The electronic discussion site allows us to extend class discussion and to raise issues for in-class discussions. Your postings receive points on a credit/no credit basis, with full points granted to on-time postings that meet the length requirement and demonstrate serious engagement with the discussion questions. Over the course of the quarter, you may do three optional postings in which you respond to your classmates or develop an idea only partially explicated in class. You may reply any other student, not only those in your group. These postings will also receive full points for length and genuine engagement. On the course schedule, I have indicated the dates when I will accept optional postings.

To access the electronic discussion board, go to the course Web site, click on "Discuss," and follow the instructions. I have divided the class into three groups to keep the discussion manageable:

- o Group One: Students with last names A through J
- o Group Two: Students with last names K through N
- o Group Three: Students with last names O through Z

### Clip Presentation

Students will work together in groups of two or three to create a 15- to 20-minute analysis of a selected clip from a course film. The presentation should focus on the formal, thematic, or ideological significance of the clip. Presenters will use visual aids (PowerPoint, film clip, images, transparencies, handouts) to structure their remarks and underscore key points. Groups should conclude their presentations with two or three questions for class discussion.

### Midterm Exam

During the fifth week of the term, you will take an in-class midterm exam. The exam will consist of three short essays that require you to analyze the narrative form and cinematic techniques at play in selected clips from class films.

### Article Critique

Students will complete a 4- to 5-page critique of a packet article on *Dr. Strangelove*, *Brazil*, *Blade Runner*, or *The Terminator*. You will complete the assignment in two stages: a proposal and a final draft. Before submitting your completed essay for a grade, you will receive feedback from two classmates. You can seek additional feedback from me or consultants at the English Department Writing Center, located in Padelford B-12; the CLUE Writing Center in the Mary Gates Commons; or the Odegaard Writing and Research Center in Odegaard Undergraduate Library.

Please title, paginate, and double-space your essay, and set margins at one inch. In the upper left hand corner of the first page, include your name, the course number, the assignment, and the due date; this information should be single-spaced. Please use a 10- or 12-point Arial, Bookman, Century Schoolbook, or Times New Roman font for your papers. When citing sources, use MLA format. You will submit the article critique via the course E-Submit tool. I will include a link to the E-submit space on the course Web site.

### Take-Home Final

During the final week of the quarter, I will distribute a take-home final to be submitted on 3/13. The final will consist of two essays on films screened after the midterm. Please follow the formatting guidelines for the article critique when composing the final exam. You will submit the final via the course E-Submit tool.

## Policies

### Lateness Policy

I will not accept late electronic postings, presentations or article critique proposals. Late article critiques and take-home finals will receive a 10-point deduction per day late, including weekends and holidays. Because receiving and responding to feedback constitutes an essential component of the article critique, failure to submit a proposal will result in a 20-point deduction from the final grade. 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 disk or your Dante account. Remember also to avoid storing floppy disks next to cellular phones. To avoid problems submitting documents via E-Submit, make sure to use only

alphanumeric characters to name files; otherwise, the program will not accept your file. If the posting board or E-Submit breaks down, email your work directly to me.

### Plagiarism Policy

In your electronic postings, article critique, presentation, and take-home final, 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.

### Email and Access to Course Web Site

You must have a UW Net ID, a working email account and a way to access the course Web site. I frequently upload schedule changes, film clips, assignment guidelines, and grading criteria to the Web site. The site also contains links and sample student work not distributed in class.

### Texts

#### Films

All course films are on reserve at the Odegaard Media Library, either for English 345 or another class. While you may not check out reserve films, you may view them at the Media Library.

- o *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982, 117 min.)
- o *Brazil* (Terry Gilliam, 1985, 142 min.)
- o *Dr. Strangelove* (Stanley Kubrick, 1964, 93 min.)
- o *eXistenZ* (David Cronenberg, 1999, 97 min.)
- o *The General* (Buster Keaton, 1926, 75 min.)
- o *Ghost in the Shell* (Mamoru Oshii, 1995, 82 min.)
- o *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929, 80 min.)
- o *The Matrix* (Wachowski Brothers, 1999, 136 min.)
- o *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927, 124 min.)
- o *Modern Times* (Charlie Chaplin, 1936, 87 min.)
- o *The Terminator* (James Cameron, 1984, 108 min.)
- o *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (James Cameron, 1991, 137 min.)
- o *Sherlock Jr.* (Buster Keaton, 1924, 45 min.)

#### Textbooks

- o Gillis-Bridges, Kimberlee. *Reading Packet for English 345*. Available at Professional Copy N' Print on the northeast corner of 42nd and University.

### Grading

Grades in English 345 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 for each assignment will be awarded based on quality of work submitted. I will distribute grading criteria with all assignments. Each component of the course is worth the following number of points:

- o Article Critique: 80 points
- o Class Participation: 40 points
- o Clip Presentation: 40 points

- o Electronic Postings: 80 points
- o Midterm Exam: 60 points
- o Take-home Final: 100 points

## Schedule

This schedule may be altered at any point in the term at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete readings by the time class meets on the dates indicated. The designation (P) indicates a reading from the course packet.

Date	Activity/Topic	Reading/Film	Due
1/3	Course introduction		
1/4	Lecture and screening: <i>Sherlock Jr.</i> (Keaton, 1924, 45 min.) and short silent films	Solnitt, "The Annihilation of Space and Time" (P)	Student Information Sheet
1/8	Discuss <i>Sherlock Jr.</i> and silent films  Clip presentation assignment introduced	Bordwell and Thompson, "Narrative as a Formal System" (P)	
1/9	Screening: <i>The General</i> (Keaton, 1927, 75 min.)		
1/10	Rescreen <i>The General</i> (Keaton, 1927, 75 min.) on own		Posting on <i>The General</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
1/11	Discuss <i>The General</i>	Corrigan, "Film Terms and Topics" (P)	
1/15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday		
1/16	Screening: <i>Man With a Movie Camera</i> (Vertov, 1929, 80 min.)		Posting on <i>Man with a Movie Camera</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
1/17	Discuss <i>Man with a Movie Camera</i>  Student clip presentations	Phillips, "Editing," and Bordwell and Thompson, "Documentary Form and Style: <i>Man with a Movie Camera</i> " (P)	
1/18	Screening: <i>Metropolis</i> (Lang, 1927, 124 min.)		
1/19			Optional response posting due by 10:00 p.m.
1/22	Finish screening <i>Metropolis</i>  Discuss <i>Metropolis</i>  Student clip presentations		

Date	Activity/Topic	Reading/Film	Due
1/23	Continue discussion of <i>Metropolis</i>  Student clip presentations	Jordanova, "Science, Machines, and Gender" (P)	
1/24	Screening: <i>Modern Times</i> (Chaplin, 1936, 87 min.)		Posting on <i>Modern Times</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
1/25	Discuss <i>Modern Times</i>  Student clip presentations		
1/26			Optional response posting due by 10:00 p.m.
1/29	Midterm exam		
1/30	Class cancelled: complete midterm evaluation online		
1/31	Screening: <i>Dr. Strangelove</i> (Kubrick, 1964, 93 min.)		Posting on <i>Dr. Strangelove</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
2/1	Discuss <i>Dr. Strangelove</i>	Maland, " <i>Dr. Strangelove</i> (1964): Nightmare Comedy" (P)	
2/2			Optional response posting due by 10:00 p.m.
2/5	Screening: <i>Brazil</i> (Gilliam, 1985, 142 min.)		
2/6	Finish screening <i>Brazil</i>  Discuss <i>Brazil</i>	Postman, "The Ideology of Machines: Computer Technology" (P)	
2/7	Rescreen <i>Brazil</i> (Gilliam, 1985, 142 min.) on own		Posting on <i>Brazil</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
2/8	Continue discussion of <i>Brazil</i>  Article critique assigned		
2/9			Optional response posting due by 10:00 p.m.
2/12	Screening: <i>Blade Runner</i> (Scott, 1982, 117 min.)		
2/13	Finish screening <i>Blade Runner</i>  Discuss <i>Blade Runner</i>	Kerman, "Technology and Politics in the <i>Blade Runner</i> Dystopia"; Stiller, "The Music in <i>Blade Runner</i> " (P)	
2/14	Screening: <i>The Terminator</i> (Cameron, 1984, 108 min.)		Posting on <i>The Terminator</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
Date	Activity/Topic	Reading/Film	Due

2/15	Discuss <i>The Terminator</i> , clips from <i>Terminator 2</i> , and approaches to article critique	Telotte, " <i>The Terminator, Terminator 2, and The Exposed Body</i> " (P)	
2/16			Optional response posting due by 10:00 p.m.
2/19	Presidents Day Holiday		
2/20	Submit article critique proposal and review two peers' proposals online		Article critique proposal due online at 2:30 p.m.
2/21	Article critique workshop		
2/22	Class cancelled for individual article critique proposal conferences		
2/26	Presidents Day Holiday		
2/27	Screening: <i>eXistenZ</i> (Cronenberg, 1999, 97 min.)		Posting on <i>eXistenZ</i> due by 10:00 p.m
2/28	Discuss <i>eXistenZ</i>	Keane, "From Hardware to Fleshware: Plugging into David Cronenberg's <i>eXistenZ</i> " (P)	
3/1	Screening: <i>The Matrix</i> (Wachowski Brothers, 1999, 136 min.)		
3/2			Article critique due via E-Submit by 5:00 p.m.
3/5	Finish screening and discuss <i>The Matrix</i>	Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations" (P)	
3/6	Continue discussion of <i>The Matrix</i>  Take-home final assigned  Course evaluation		
3/7	Screening: <i>Ghost in the Shell</i> (Oshii, 1995, 82 min.)		Posting on <i>Ghost in the Shell</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
3/8	Discuss <i>Ghost in the Shell</i>	Napier, "Doll Parts: Technology and the Body in <i>Ghost in the Shell</i> " (P)	
3/13			Take-home final due via E-Submit by 5:00 p.m.