

COM117.4A: Reflexivity in Film and Literature *Final Requirements*

The final requirements for this course should be placed in a brown envelope on which you will write your ID number and the course code for the class (COM117.4). You will place no other “identifiers” on the envelope or its contents, which are:

- (1) your film journal
- (2) your final paper

Your film journal is something you should have been doing throughout the semester, so it should not be a major concern at this point in time. In other words, your attention should now center on the final paper.

You must **focus** on the films screened in class ever since the submission of the midterm requirement, but the ensuing **discussion** can include the films we have seen ever since the start of the semester, or even related films we did not watch (examples include Todd Haynes’s *I’m Not There* or Michael Winterbottom’s *9 Songs*).

In other words, choose a **starting point** from the following films for your discussions:

- (1) *Titus* (1999, Julie Taymor)
- (2) *My Own Private Idaho* (1991, Gus Van Sant)
- (3) *Band of Outsiders* (1964, Jean-Luc Godard)
- (4) *Masculin Féminin* (1966, Jean-Luc Godard)
- (5) *F for Fake* (1974, Orson Welles)
- (6) *After Life* (1998, Hirokazu Koreeda)
- (7) *Velvet Goldmine* (1998, Todd Haynes)
- (8) *24 Hour Party People* (2002, Michael Winterbottom)
- (9) *Run Lola Run* (1998, Tom Tykwer)

No matter what your topic is, your approach must proceed along the following line of inquiry: “How does my having seen the films listed above affect my understanding of the extra-cinematic issues raised by the films I have seen in class this semester?”

For this paper, strive to go beyond the film text as it is and try to understand the ideas it expresses about “life outside the movies,” especially with the films listed above. My suggestion is to select among the many possible broad themes: authorship, art, politics, history, violence, truth, the carnivalesque, Brechtian alienation, race, gender, youth, etc.

Given how this requirement concludes your experience in this film course, the flow of your arguments must go beyond our film class by demonstrating how the breakdown of illusionism in the cinema—the tendency of reflexive cinema towards willfully dismantling cinematic representation, in other words—allows “real life” to seep through the gaps now visible upon the surface of conventional narrative.

What do our films tell you about real-life issues in other words, and how does the formal qualities of reflexivity facilitate the communication and expression of these issues?

There is neither a minimum nor a maximum page requirement; consequently, I demand strict adherence to paper format and mechanics:

- 1-inch margins on all sides
- double-spaced lines
- Times New Roman in either size 10 or 12—no more, no less, no in-between
- proper use of paragraphs and all aspects of formal/academic written English
- no real names: only ID numbers or an optional pseudonym
- black ink on white 8.5 × 11 bond paper
- no cover pages and/or folders
- no illustrations and fancy layouts
- no email submissions will be accepted, but keep your “soft copy” just in case
- **the deadline for this paper is 12 noon of 24 March 2009 (Tuesday)**
- any other stipulation will be posted online