

ACCD Saturday High Introductory Narrative Film Summer, 2006

Syllabus

Meeting number	Date	Subject
1	6-3-2006	Five favorite films? All That Jazz, Bubble Boy, Austin Powers, BSG
2	6-10-2006	<i>Gunsmoke</i> non-linear editing demo, After Effects, Premiere, PhotoShop, Maya, commercial samples
3	6-17-2006	Casablanca
4	6-24-2006	First Assignment due: Show a relationship forming or ending
-	7-1-2006	Holiday
5	7-8-2006	Citizen Kane
6	7-15-2006	2nd Assignment due: Make a film about a secret
7	7-22-2006	Lighting demo , Dean Collins lighting
8	7-29-2006	Third assignment due: Show a clash of cultures or ideas (like <u>Witness</u>)
9	8-5-2006	Zardoz , Special visual effects
10	8-12-2006	The Graduate , Optional fourth assignment: Make a film that makes the audience cry.

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Rosemead, CA 91770-2013

Credits for visual effects include:

Titanic	Garfield	Cat Woman
T2	Scooby Doo 2	Constantine
X-Men2	The Fifth Element	Serenity
Gigli	Terminator II - 3D	CSI
Daredevil	X-Men	Battlestar Galactica
The Abyss	"V" – The Final Battle	Ant Bully
True Lies	Red Planet	Zathura
Ed Wood	Waterworld	
Pillsbury Doughboy	Apollo 13	
RoboCop	T2- 3D	
Snow Dogs	Sixth Day	
Reign of Fire	Stuart Little 2	
Kangaroo Jack	Spiderman	
SuperNova	Elf	

Around the 7th week of class, we will meet at the North Hillside campus, rm#113

First Assignment due: 6-24-2006

Show a relationship forming or ending between two or more vertebrates. Do not make a film about a person's relationship with his computer, TV or himself.

ACCD has VHS/VHSC and DVD playback. For DV cameras, bring your camcorder and A/V cable, or dub your project to VHS, DVD or QT, AVI, WMV, CDV

Optional accessories:

- Wide angle adapter, such as Sony, Kenko, etc. (\$40-\$120)
- Tripod with fluid head Velbon, etc (\$30-)
- Spare batteries (\$60-)
- Wireless microphone, such as Radio Shack (\$80-), Samson or Sony (\$120-)

Any 8mm, Hi8, VHS, VHS-C, Digital8 or DV camera is fine. If you are going to *buy* a camera, mini DV is best, start at \$250-. You can't go wrong with a Sony, although many other brands will work. Manual exposure capability is very useful. I usually shop at Circuit City, etc.

If you don't have editing equipment at home, you can work with another student's home setup, or pay a lab fee to Art Center to use editing computers at the South campus.

Be sure to put your name and telephone number on each videocassette that you turn in. Please edit in black at the beginning and end of the assignment.

For non-linear editing

Any late model Macintosh or Windows machine with a Firewire connection is fine. A DVD burner is also recommended

If you need your older Windows machine upgraded for video editing, I suggest: <http://www.r-tech.com> (818) 347-1100, Canoga Park

http://catalog.belkin.com/IWCatProductPage.process?Merchant_Id=&Section_Id=1657&pcount=&Product_Id=88962

Costs

The equipment and material costs for the class can be quite low.

Video cameras costs between \$200- and \$2500-. There are four assignments, most of which can be shot in a day.

Many students borrow video cameras from schools, family or friends, thus eliminating the main class cost. Videotape is inexpensive. It is hard to imagine videotape costs being more than \$30- per assignment and videotape is reusable.

I have taught this class to hundreds of students. There is no significant relationship between the quality of equipment or the money spent on assignments, and the quality of the work.

Professional filmmaking is very costly, but this class need not be expensive. We want to see how well your ideas create an intellectual and emotional response in the audience.

Philosophies

Be sure to show a change in your characters. It is best if the characters are different at the end of the film than they were at the beginning. Ideally, films will be about transcendence, resurrection and epiphany. A great artist reveals to the audience the secrets of the universe. Your characters must have flaws, which they will overcome during your movie.

Some films speak to the viewer's heart and emotions. Other films speak to the brain and to the intellect. If a film is too intellectual and dry, audiences will be bored. If the film has only action and gross emotion, the audience will feel that the experience is superficial. The best movies speak to both the heart and brain at the same time.

Almost all films that you see in a theater contain the four assignments in this class: Make a film about a relationship starting or ending, make a film about a clash of cultures or ideas, make a film about a secret and make a film about what is really important in life.

In a narrative, the flaws of the characters are the fuel for the plot.

The three-act structure (beginning, middle and end) will be discussed.

The purpose of writing is to reveal the secrets of the universe to the audience.

When you make a film, remember the six "W" of journalism:

Who
What
Where
When
Why
How

What are your five favorite films and why?

Storytelling

My description of good story telling may seem somewhat artificial and arbitrary, but please read on.

Most films start out with a main character, the hero, who has a character flaw. The story springs from the protagonist's weaknesses as a human being.

Almost all films contain conflict. Examples include man vs. man, man vs. machine, man vs. god, man vs. nature and man vs. himself.

The most interesting and insightful conflicts involve man's conflict with himself. To give a film more levels, other types of conflict are usually included, but man vs. himself is at the root of the structure.

For example:

- In The Wizard Of Oz, Dorothy has conflicts with the witch and the wizard. But her real conflict is with herself. She is unhappy in Kansas, because it is boring. She takes her family and other loved ones for granted. Eventually, she realizes her failure as a human being, and repents with the statement, "There's no place like home."
- In The Bridge Over The River Kwai, Alec Guinness is a W.W.II British POW forced by the Japanese to build an enemy bridge. The Japanese are the obvious enemy (man vs. man), but the film eventually rises to an even deeper level when Guinness becomes so fixated on the bridge, that he tries to prevent its destruction by the allies. Guinness becomes his own worst enemy (man vs. himself) when he tries to protect the bridge, even though he is endangering the life of his allies.
- In The Graduate, Dustin Hoffman is looking for the meaning of life in the confused America of the 1960's. He rejects his parent's bourgeois lifestyle, even though he has nothing superior to replace it with. He is passive in his struggle, and is easily seduced by an older woman, even though she has made all of the failed lifestyle choices that Hoffman rejects. Hoffman transcends his weaknesses when he overcomes his passivity, and when he realizes that his parent's life choices weren't so bad.
- In Superman, Clark Kent is in love with Lois Lane. But Lois is a superficial woman, and is not attracted to the unglamorous Clark. Lois only loves Superman, but Clark wants Lois to love the real, mild mannered Clark, not the Superman Clark. Lois is Clark's Achilles Heel, for Clark is superhuman in all ways except for his obsessive attraction to the gold digging Lois. Kryptonite is a metaphor for Lois, since the only weaknesses that the otherwise omnipotent Superman is his vulnerability to a woman and a poisonous rock.

- In Casablanca, Humphrey Bogart was a good person, but he has been turned into an evil cynic when he was hurt by love. He eventually overcomes his self pity (man vs. himself), becomes a do-gooder again, repents, kills Nazi's and transcends his failures as a human being.
- In Witness, Harrison Ford comes to realize that no matter how much he loves his Amish lover, their religious beliefs and lifestyles are incompatible. They must separate and live apart. Man vs. himself.
- In Good Will Hunting, Will's mathematics mentor is aware of Will's superior intellectual talent, but he is disturbed that, paradoxically, Will is also a brutal person. There is a similar theme in Amadeus. Salieri is jealous of Mozart since his own work is mediocre and Mozart expresses musical genius without. Mozart is a hedonistic young boor, and Salieri complains to God that Mozart doesn't deserve to have such talent, and that God should have given the gift to Salieri.
- In Star Wars, Luke Skywalker's flaw is that he is bored with farming. He wants to be a man of the world, but he lacks the spirituality to properly do so. He initially rejects the "Force" (god), and only achieves success when he transcends his superficiality in this coming of age tale. Luke also discovers that he cannot have everything that he wants in life, without exhibiting patience. Luke is attracted to Princess Leia, but she loves Hans Solow. Also, he discovers that the Princess is really his sister, and he accepts his new relationship with her. Luke also comes to terms with his father, Darth Vader.

Star Wars Episode 4

Han Solo learns to place loyalty over money.

Luke learns to put his faith into the Force (God), and rely less on his intellect.

Han has a love/hate relationship with Princess Leia, resolved in a later episode

Luke is in a love triangle with Han and the Princess, resolved in a later episode

Star Wars Episode 5

Leia realizes that she is attracted to "bad boy" men, scoundrels like Han Solo.

Leia reduces some of her false pride against Han.

Han becomes less of a scoundrel

Luke is too impatient to be a Jedi, and leaves Jedi School prematurely

Star Wars Episode 6

Luke ignores Yoda's advice and rushes to confront Darth Vader before his Jedi training has been completed. Luke is told that he must not face Vader in haste, since he would be exposing himself to the anger of the dark side of the force.

After Luke's Jedi Knight training is complete, he realizes that he must now confront Vader, now that he is ready.

Luke realizes that Leia is his sister, which closes his romantic possibilities with her, but opens up many new doors.

Will Luke's compassion for his father Darth Vader be Luke's undoing?
Luke says that he must confront Vader, since that is the only way that Vader can rediscover the good and love in himself.

The emperor attempts to convince Luke to give into his anger, which would connect Luke to the Dark Side of the Force.

The Emperor tries to kill Luke, but Darth Vader is drawn back to the good side of the Force, kills the Emperor and saves his son Luke.

As a result of his heroic actions, Vader is dying. Vader desires for Luke to see Vader without his mask, as Vader really is.

Later, Luke cremates his father on Endor.

Three act structure

The conflict between man and himself is usually executed in a three-act structure. The first act contains the beginning, the second act the middle and the third act the end. The first act is usually thirty pages long (and thirty minutes), the second act is sixty minutes (sixty pages) and the third act is thirty minutes (thirty pages).

During the first act, the characters and situations are exposed to the audience (exposition). Everything is fine until an earth-shattering event occurs which creates a fork in the road for the hero. This fork in the road is called the first act break, separates the first and second acts and is usually thirty minutes into the movie. The hero voluntarily or involuntarily is forced onto a new road, where he will be confronted with his failures as a human being.

Ninety minutes into the film, another event occurs (the break between the second and third acts) which again propels the protagonist into her final transcendence over her flaws. The climax of the film occurs in the third act and the denouement.

This structure may feel very mechanical, uncreative, arbitrary and theoretical. But it is completely hard wired into the human brain to thirst for this type of story telling. This narrative structure has dominated literature for thousands of years, and probably always will.

Character Arc

Here is a quote from Stephen Schiff, the author of the recent Lolita movie starring Jeremy Irons:

“In the world of screenplay development, there is an invidious term that makes me flinch whenever it enters the conversation-and it does at every "story meeting." I am referring to "character arc." A movie character can't spend his allotted two hours of screen time being inert; he has to change, to develop-to put it disgustingly, he has to learn something. I hate this rule, and yet it is one of the great rules of narrative. A character without an arc is in grave danger of being merely a sitcom figure (In fact, one of the things that distinguishes sitcoms from movies is that the sitcom characters have static traits and impulses from which they keep acting, week after week. No one on Seinfeld had an arc.) In the Iliad, Achilles had an arc. Othello, Macbeth, Hamlet, and Lear had arcs; Michael Corleone had an arc; so did Bonnie and so did Clyde.”

Exposition vs. plot

Exposition is the act of expounding, setting forth or explaining. Plot is the succession of incidents or events.

In Austin Powers, there is a character called Basal Exposition. His name is an in-joke about lame screenplay exposition. Basal means the standard low level of activity of an organism, such as when at rest.

Grips tell a joke: “Enough of this exposition, let’s blow something up.

Purgatory, to Hell, to Heaven

Most narrative films involve a character traveling from Purgatory, down to Hell, and then back to Heaven. An example of this is The Game, starring Michael Douglas. Douglas’s character is wealthy, but is selfish and spiritually empty. He thinks that he is happy, but he isn’t. Douglas’s brother, Sean Penn, sends Douglas on a journey through Hell, which breaks Douglas of his selfishness. Penn does this out of love for his brother. Douglas eventually ends up in a state of grace, and spiritually travels to Heaven.

The film Seven is similar, although Brad Pitt’s character never makes it back to heaven like Michael Douglas does. Pitt is a rookie detective, and thinks that he is intellectually and spiritually ready for Homicide police work. As he investigates the crime, he travels down into Purgatory, and as the murder eventually involves him personally, he receives a rude awakening, and ends up in a symbolic Hell.

How to make the audience cry

If you look at a movie like *Monsters, Inc.*, the audience cries at the end. This happens because Sully and Boo learn to love one another, and then they are traumatically separated. Since the audience really cares about these two characters, the viewer feels the pain of the protagonists. When they are reunited at the end (and Boo exclaims “Kitty”), the audience is relieved of their pain, and feels a bittersweet pleasure that Boo remembers Sully.

Sizzle vs. the Steak

Let’s say that you are at a restaurant and you order a steak. Part of the attraction of the food will be the sizzle, the appetizing sound of the meat cooking. But this doesn’t mean that the food will taste good. This is called the issue of the Sizzle and the Steak.

The same problem exists in art. There are some movies that have lots of pizzazz, but still leave you with an empty feeling spiritually. They have a lot of sizzle, but no steak.

This is also called the issue between form vs. function. A movie can have lots of nice lighting, art direction, music and camera work (form/sizzle), but still be missing a good story and character development (function/steak). On the other hand, certain art films have the opposite problem.

Flashbacks

Flashbacks (i.e. non chronological story telling) are used to keep secrets from the audience.

First, let me explain the importance of *secrets* in a film.

There are many kinds of mysteries in the cinema, secrets that the filmmaker keeps from the audience, secrets that the audience knows (but the characters don't), and most importantly, secrets that the characters keep from one another and from *themselves*.

The lies we tell ourselves...

So, consider this partial list of secrets from *Titanic*:

- The ship is sinking
- Rose is broke
- Rose does not love Cal
- Rose loves Jack
- There are not enough life boats
- The ship is traveling too fast
- Rose attempted suicide
- Jack is handcuffed below decks
- Who is the woman in the drawing?
- Where is the Diamond?
- Jack did not actually steal the diamond
- Rose's granddaughter does not know that Rose was on the Titanic
- Cal does not know that Rose survived

etc.

Almost all films have secrets, they are part of the fuel of the plot. *No secrets, no movie*. It is very difficult to think of many films (or lives) without secrets....so the the artist must immerse inside that richness.

Flashbacks are just a method of revealing secrets to the audience in a certain order. (Flash forwards are foreshadowing, more secrets).

In Casablanca, it is critical that you first see the broken, cynical Bogart before you see the idealistic Rick and Ilsa of Paris. That is one of the secrets, that Rick *used* to be a better man. And telling the story in order would kill that suspense, diminish the epiphany of that revelation. And isn't the young, gentle Scrooge so much more of a shock if you *first* see the cruel old miser? Both Casablanca and A Christmas Carol *could* be told in order, but some things are best kept secret until closer to the end. The mystery disorients the audience, and builds anticipation...and passion.

Additional training

Promax "Video Boot Camp" (800) 977-6629 * <http://www.promax.com>

Suggested Reading

General

Adventures In The Screen Trade
William Goldman, 1989
ISBN 0446391174

Final Cut
Steven Bach, 1983
ISBN1557043744

Indecent Exposure: A True Story of Hollywood and Wall Street
David McClintok, 1982
ISBN 0440140072

Screen Writing

Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting
Syd Fields, 1998
ISBN 156731239X

Making A Good Script Great
Linda Seger
ISBN 0573699216

Cinematography

A Man With A Camera
Nestor Almendros, 1984
ISBN 0374519668

<http://www.hollywoodcamerawork.us>

Anton Wilson's Cinema Workshop
American Society of Cinematographers
ISBN 0935578080

Editing

When The Shooting Stops...The Cutting Begins
Ralph Rosenblum w/ Robert Karen, 1979
ISBN 0306802724

Special Visual Effects

Digital Domain Visual Effects
ILM – Digital Age

Film History

A History Of Narrative Film
David A. Cook, 1996 ISBN0393968197

100 best

One hundred best books of the last century: <http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/events/booklist.html>

One hundred best movies: <http://www.afi.com/tvevents/100years/movies.aspx>

Hurrell glamour photography <http://www.lafterhall.com/hurrell.html>

Casablanca, city, western Morocco, largest city and chief seaport of the country, on the Atlantic Ocean, near Rabat. It is one of the leading commercial cities of North Africa. It has railroads, highways, and an international airport and has one of the largest artificial harbors in the world; most of the foreign trade of Morocco passes through the city. Cereals, leather, wool, and phosphates are the chief exports. Casablanca also is the country's chief industrial center. The leading industries are fishing, fish canning, sawmilling, and the manufacture of furniture, construction materials, glass, and tobacco products. Hassan II University (1976) and the Great Mosque Hassan II are here.

In medieval times Casablanca was a prosperous town known as Anfa. It was destroyed by the Portuguese in 1468 and rebuilt by them in 1515. Following a severe earthquake in 1755, the city was again rebuilt. In 1907 Casablanca was occupied by the French. Under French administration it grew rapidly, and the modern city was built around the old Moorish city.

During World War II, Casablanca was one of the three major landing places in the invasion of North Africa by Allied forces. The city was the site of the Casablanca Conference (January 1943) between U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, at which both leaders pledged that their countries would fight until the Axis powers surrendered unconditionally.

The withdrawal of the French in 1956, after Morocco became independent, caused Casablanca severe economic hardship. A thriving tourist trade and increased industry have restored prosperity. Population (1982 preliminary, greater city) 2,436,664.

Vichy, city in central France, in Allier Department, on the Allier River. Its hot mineral springs, frequented since Roman times, have made it one of the most important spas of Europe. Vichy water is exported in large quantities. After the defeat of France by Germany in 1940, during World War II, Vichy was made the seat of the collaborationist French government under Marshal Henri Pétain and his aide Pierre Laval. The so-called Vichy government was closely aligned with the Germans but exercised some independent control in unoccupied France and the French colonies until late 1942, when Germany occupied all of metropolitan France. The Vichy government continued to exist until 1945. Population (1990) 28,048.

What happened on December 7, 1941?

What makes a Disney Film a classic?

Film	Memorable hero	Secondary Hero	Memorable Villian	Clear Want	Great Moments	Lesson	Mythic Quality
Snow White	Snow White	Dwarves	Queen	To fall in love	"Mirror, mirror", "Heigh-Ho", "Whistle while you work"	Love conquers all	"Pretty is as pretty does", "Beauty is only skin deep"
Pinocchio	Pinocchio	Jiminy Cricket	Honest John/ Gideon, Stromboli, Coahman, Monstro	To be a boy	"When you wish upon a star", "An actors life for me", Monstro	Self Realization is transforming	"Who am I?"
Dumbo	Dumbo	Timothy	Other Elephants	To be accepted	"Pink elephants on parade", "Magic feather"	Believe in yourself	"Each of us has been blessed with unique gifts"
Bambi	Bambi	Thumper	Man	To live in harmony with other animals	"Man was in the forest", "A new prince is born"	We are all part of the cycle of life.	"Life is a cycle, forever renewing"
101 Dalmations	Pongo	Dalmations	Cruella De Vil	To rescue the puppies	"Cruella DeVil", "Cruella's entrance", "Twilight bark"	There is strength in numbers	"We are all dependent upon one another"
Jungle Book	Mowgli	Baloo	Shere Khan	To have a home	"Bare necessities", "Kaa", "Colonel Hath", "King Louie", "the Vultures"	True friendship will last	"We all have a place in life"

Zardoz- The Story

A frightening and nightmarish world of tomorrow is created in an action-packed movie that evokes elements of "Planet of the Apes", "A Clockwork Orange," and Fellini films, while maintaining its own unique and visually breathtaking view of the future.

Starring Sean Connery and Charlotte Rampling, the dazzling special effects and visionary scenario have elevated it to the status of science fiction classic. Welcome to the year 2293, and to a world populated by the inheritors of a devastated Earth. For the Brutals, ignorant peasants who till the land, life is harsh and unforgiving. The only meaningful act is communion with their god Zardoz, who appears once a year as a gigantic flying stone head, collecting their wheat and dispensing their laws.

Zed (Sean Connery) is an Exterminator, a warrior class that enforces Zardoz's repressive, murderous canon on the Brutals. But he is also a genetically and intellectually superior mutant. In a quest to learn more about the universe he inhabits, he stows away within the giant stone head. He is transported to the "Vortex" a protected Utopian paradise inhabited by the Eternals, a race that knows neither birth nor death, established by scientists in the past to preserve the Earth's cultural and technological heritage. Yet for many of its inhabitants this paradise is purgatory. Beset by apathy, devoid of passion, they are doomed to an eternity of meaningless existence. Zed, now in their midst, is the first Outlander, the first true mortal, they have seen in years. And his vitality represents both the only hope of saving their cloistered community, and its gravest threat. His fate is in their hands, but his quest for knowledge compels him to continue seeking the shocking secrets behind their eternal culture, and behind Zardoz--knowledge which may bring about his destruction! Featuring action-packed all-star performances, a complex and visionary story line, awe-inspiring cinematography and special effects, "Zardoz" easily rates as one of the most striking sci-fi fantasy films of all time.

**

There are other films that deal with the downsides of immortality. These include Highlander, Green Mile, AI, Tuck Everlasting, Interview With The Vampire and Cocoon. Indirectly Brigadoon also deals with this issue

art' film', a motion picture made primarily for aesthetic reasons rather than commercial profit, often of an experimental nature or having an unconventional or highly symbolic content, aimed typically at a limited audience. [1925-30]

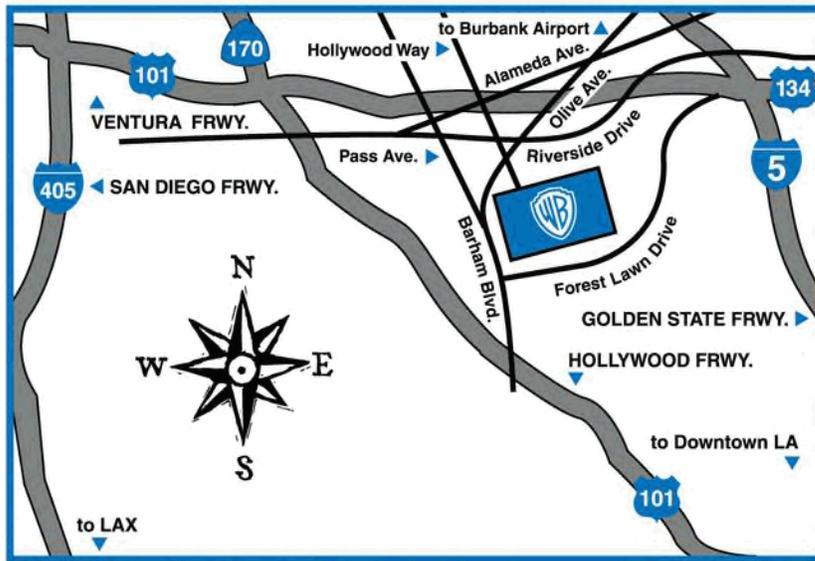
art' house', a motion-picture theater specializing in the exhibition of art films. Also called **art theater**. [1950-55]

fa·ble (fā'bəl), *n.*, *v.*, **-bled**, **-bling**. —*n.* **1.** a short tale to teach a moral lesson, often with animals or inanimate objects as characters; apologue: *the fable of the tortoise and the hare*; *Aesop's fables*. **2.** a story not founded on fact: *This biography is largely a self-laudatory fable*. **3.** a story about supernatural or extraordinary persons or incidents; legend: *the fables of gods and heroes*. **4.** legends or myths collectively: *the heroes of Greek fable*. **5.** an untruth; falsehood: *This boast of a cure is a medical fable*. **6.** the plot of an epic, a dramatic poem, or a play. **7.** idle talk: *old wives' fables*. —*v.i.* **8.** to tell or write fables. **9.** to speak falsely; lie: *to fable about one's past*. —*v.t.* **10.** to describe as if actually so; talk about as if true: *She is fabled to be the natural daughter of a king*. [1250-1300; ME *fable*, *fabel*, *fabul* < AF, OF < L *fābula* a story, tale, equiv. to *fā(rī)* to speak + *-bula* suffix of instrument] —**fa'bler**, *n.*

—**Syn.** **1.** See **legend**.

fa·bled (fā'bəld), *adj.* **1.** celebrated in fables: *a fabled goddess of the wood*. **2.** having no real existence; fictitious: *a fabled chest of gold*. [1730-40; FABLE + -ED³]

http://wbsf.warnerbros.com/vip_tours/vip_tour.html



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DIRECTIONS TO WARNER BROS. STUDIOS - Gate 4

FROM DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES:

- 110 North to the 101 North (Hollywood Freeway)
- Take the Barham Blvd. Exit - continue to signal
- At the signal, turn right onto Barham Blvd.
- Barham Blvd. becomes Olive Avenue - Warner Bros. Studios is on the right
- Turn right into Gate 4
- The VIP Tour parking lot is your first right hand turn

FROM I-5 (Traveling North or South):

- Take I-5 (Golden State Freeway) to 134 Freeway West
- Take the Hollywood Way Exit - proceed to the signal
- At the signal, turn left onto Alameda - get immediately into the left lane
- At the signal, turn left onto Hollywood Way
- Hollywood Way dead ends into Olive Ave and Gate 4
- Proceed straight through the intersection into Gate 4
- The VIP Tour parking lot is your first right hand turn

FROM WEST LA, LA AIRPORT (LAX) OR SANTA MONICA AREA:

- Take I-405 (San Diego Freeway) to 101 South (Hollywood Freeway) to 134 Freeway East
- Exit the 134 Freeway at Pass Avenue
- At the signal, turn right onto Pass Avenue
- Pass Avenue dead ends onto Olive Avenue
- Turn left onto Olive Avenue to Gate 4 (signal)
- Turn right into Gate 4
- The VIP Tour parking lot is your first right hand turn

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