



ACTIVE VIEWING

Sometimes (let's be honest, most times) it's great to sit down and let a movie wash over you — to experience it without thinking too much.

This is not how we'll be watching movies in this class. But don't worry — most of the movies we'll be watching together are even better when you're concentrating on what they're saying, and what insights we might get from them.

We'll be using an approach called *active viewing*. This involves paying close attention and taking notes while watching the movies. But to help you, here are some simple guidelines:

Come prepared. Make sure you are primed before each movie, by having read the week's chapter and completed the pre-reflection.

Pay attention. Every aspect of a movie — from the music, to the atmosphere, to the subtle expressions and body language of actors — can convey information, and spark new ideas. Pay attention to everything!

Focus. Before each movie, you should have identified three ideas or topics in your pre-reflection. Actively look for anything in the movie that is relevant to these, and that stimulates interesting and new insights into them.

Be inspired. Embrace the serendipity of new and novel ideas and insights that you weren't expecting.

Make connections. Look for common threads between different movies. These might be similar ideas, or different perspectives on the same idea. But they could also be as simple as the same actor, or producer, or composer, being associated with different movies, or similar settings or locations, or narrative arcs. Be imaginative in the connections you make!

Listen to more than the words. The soundscape (including the music) of a movie carries with it an amazing amount of information, and can change how you perceive the movie!

Be critical — but don't get lost in your critique. Be critical of the movie — challenge its assumptions, its plausibility, its use or misuse of reality and fiction, its story telling. But don't let these spoil your enjoyment — “bad” movies can still inspire great ideas!

Make notes. Don't assume you'll remember any of those great ideas that struck you in the middle of a scene, if you didn't write them down.

Enjoy the movie. Active viewing should never mean boring viewing!