

FILM AND CULTURE
THR 163.xxx - SAMPLE SYLLABUS - COURSE REFERENCE #XXXXX
DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL: School of Theatre

INSTRUCTOR: (Info)
PHONE: (Info) E-MAIL: (Info)
OFFICE: (Info) OFFICE HOURS: (Info)

LOCATION:
Lectures: 50 min / twice a week
Lab: 120 min / once a week

Course Description:

Introductory level class that introduces key concepts of film appreciation and the relationship between cinema and cultural history.

Students will develop an appreciation for how films not only reflect a culture, but also how films might critique, reshape, and impact the "real world." Students will be asked to understand film from not only their own personal perspective, but also the perspective of a wide range of film audiences, according to gender, class, race, religion, political orientation, etc.

Required Texts:

The required texts for the course will be made available electronically to students via the campus library website and/or D2L.

Course assignments:

The course is broken into four units of 3-4 weeks each.

EXAMS: Each unit will have an exam which tests the students on material covered in screenings, lecture, and assigned readings. Exams will include required written essays requiring each student to engage social and cultural issues raised by the films, readings and discussions in the unit. Supports Core Objectives 1, 2 and 4, and Student Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4.

UNIT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (2): In addition, students will be required to write short (3-4 page) papers for Unit #4 and one of the other three units. (Students will choose which other unit they do a writing assignment for). In each paper the students will take on cultural issues raised by the films in that unit through analysis and evaluation, developing and expressing ideas based on information synthesized from discussion, readings and lectures. In the Unit #4 paper students will specifically take on issues of intercultural experience and resulting questions of civic responsibility and community engagement. Supports Core Objectives 1, 2 and 4, and Student Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4.

MAINSTAGE REVIEW: Students will also be required to attend one SFA Mainstage production and write a 3-4 page review comparing that play with the filmed version. By analyzing and evaluating both versions of the story students will develop and express ideas about the cultural contexts and effects of the story and how these differ when seen in the contrasting frames of live theatre and cinematic media. Supports Core Objectives 1 and 2, and Student Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4.

GROUP PROJECT: Finally, students will engage in a group project that will be presented during the final week of class.

In week ten, students will be divided into groups of 3-4 to complete the Group Project. Each group will develop a proposal to "produce" a film based on a real-life event or literary property (novel, story, play) that has NOT yet been produced for the screen. Each completed project will include:

- A written short synopsis of the proposed movie project.
- A visual element to promote the project; this could include a poster, website, promotional video, television commercial, etc.
- A proposal for a special event (fundraiser, colloquium, Q+A, etc.) in conjunction with the project that is designed to reach out to a specific audience.
- An oral presentation in class (15 minutes) that explains and introduces all of the above materials to the class.

Students will be graded on completeness of project, originality, and collaboration (including a self-assessment by group members). Supports Core Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4, and Student Learning Outcomes 1, 3 and 4.

Grading:

Attendance:	10%
Unit Writing Assignment:	20% (10% each)
Mainstage Review:	10%
Group Project:	20%
Exams:	40% (10% each)

CORE OBJECTIVES:

1. **Critical Thinking Skills:** to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
2. **Communication Skills:** to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
3. **Teamwork:** to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared goal or purpose.
4. **Social Responsibility:** to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will gain an understanding of a variety of cinematic works as products of specific cultures, times, and places (supports objectives 1, 4)
2. Students will gain an understanding of critical commentary about film from a multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary perspective (1)
3. Students will develop their abilities to analyze, write about, and discuss cinema as a cultural artifact, both informally and through formal group presentation (1, 2, 3)
4. Students will learn basic concepts regarding the relationship between film and culture, including: concepts of national and regional identity; the relationship between the film "text" and audiences of differing perspectives and backgrounds; and the

relationship between film and other forms of cultural production such as history, literature, music, art and theatre. (1, 3, 4)

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to <http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/>

Proposed course schedule:

Unit One: American Film / American History

Week One: Topic: Understand "Reel" History vs. "Real" History

Film: Glory (1989, 118 minutes)

Reading:

Reviews of Glory:

Paul Finkelman, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 77, No. 3 (Dec., 1990) (p. 1108)

Gerald Horne, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (Oct., 1990) (pp. 1141-1143)

Barbara Correll, Rem(a)inders of G(l)ory: Monuments and Bodies in "Glory" and "In the Year of the Pig", *Cultural Critique*, No. 19, The Economies of War (Autumn, 1991) (pp. 141-177)

Stoddard, Jeremy D., and Alan S. Marcus. "The Burden of Historical Representation: Race, Freedom, and 'Educational' Hollywood Film." *Film & History* 36.1 (2006): 26-35.

Week Two:

Topic: Hollywood's History of Itself - Self-Reflexivity

Film: Singin' in the Rain (1952, 103 minutes)

Reading:

Telotte, J. P. "Ideology and the Kelly-Donen Musicals." *Film Criticism* 8.3 (1984): 36-46.

Feuer, Jane. "The Self-Reflective Musical and the Myth of Entertainment." From Genre: The Musical (Rick Altman, ed.) Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981: 159-174.

Week Three: **Unit #1 Assignment Prompt Issued**

Topic: The Documentary Tradition

*Incl. instruction on written communication skills

Film: Incident At Oglala, (1992, 89 minutes)

Reading:

Maslin, Janet. Review, *New York Times*: 8 May 1992

James, Caryn. Review, *New York Times*: 10 May 1992

Johnson, Brian D. Review, *Maclean's*: 27 July 1992

Weinraub, Bernie. "Robert Redford Speaks out His Mind on Truth, Justice and Hollywood," *New York Times*, May 4, 1992.

Week Four: Topic: War and Peace

Film: Full Metal Jacket (1987, partial)

Clips from: The Big Red One, Saving Private Ryan, They Were Expendable

Reading:

Slocum, J. David. "Cinema and the Civilizing Process: Rethinking Violence in the World War II Combat Film." *Cinema Journal* (44:3), Spring 2005: 35-63

Suid, Lawrence H. and Robert Brent Toplin. Review of Saving Private Ryan. *Journal of American History*: (85:3), December 1998: 1185-6.

Landon, Phil. "Realism, Genre, and Saving Private Ryan." *Film and History* (28:3-4), Sep-Dec 1998: 58-62.

Unit Two: Between Media

Week Five: **EXAM #1/ Unit #2 Assignment Due**

Topic: From Page to Screen

Film: All the President's Men (1975, 138 minutes)

Reading:

Kraft, Elizabeth. "All the President's Men as a Woman's Film." *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 36.1 (2008): 30-37.

Week Six: Topic: From Stage to Screen

*Incl. instruction on critical thinking

Film: Cabaret (1972, 124 minutes)

NOTE: this week would feature a film based on the same source material as a current SFA Mainstage production.

Reading:

Belletto, Steven. "Cabaret and antifascist aesthetics." *Criticism* 50.4 (2008): 609-630

Morris, Mitchell. "Cabaret", America's Weimar, and Mythologies of the Gay Subject. *American Music* Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp. 145-157

Clark, Randy. "Bending the genre: The stage and screen versions of Cabaret." *Literature Film Quarterly* 19.1 (1991): 51

Week Seven: **Unit #2 Assignment Prompt Issued**

Topic: From Screen (Little) to Screen (Big)

Film: South Park: Bigger, Longer, Uncut (1999, 80 minutes) plus episode of "South Park"

Reading:

Gournelos, Ted. "Blasphemous Allusion." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* April 2009 33:2 143-168

Gardiner, Judith Kegan. "Why Saddam Is Gay: Masculinity Politics in South Park—Bigger, Longer, and Uncut." *Quarterly Review of Film & Video* 22.1 (2005): 51-62.

Week Eight: Topic: Haven't I Seen This Before?

Film: Roxanne (1987, 107 minutes)

Reading:

Stiller, Nikki. Review of Roxanne. *Film Quarterly* Vol. 42, No. 1 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 39-43

Malone II, David. "A linguistic approach to the Bakhtinian hero in Steve Martin's Roxanne." *Literature Film Quarterly* 24.4 (1996): 400

Zeck, Jean-Marie. "Stumbling Toward Ecstasy: Cyrano de Bergerac as Comedy in Martin's Roxanne." *Literature Film Quarterly* 27:3, 218

Unit Three: Film, Biography, and Popular Culture

Week Nine: **EXAM #2/ Unit #2 Assignment Due / Production Review Due**

Topic: Film, Music, and Biography

Film: I'm Not There (2007, 135 minutes)

Reading:

Giamo, Benedict. "I'm Not There." *Journal of American History* 95.1 (2008): 285-286.

Garwood, Ian. "Great art on a jukebox: the Romantic(ized) voice of Bob Dylan in I'm Not There." *Film International* (16516826) 7.6 (2009): 6-22.

Week Ten: **Unit #3 Assignment Prompt Issued / Group Project Presentations Assigned**

Topic: The "Arthouse" Film

*Incl. instruction on visual/oral communication skills

*Incl. instruction on teamwork

Film: Exit through the Gift Shop (2010, 89 minutes)

Reading:

Mount, Nick. "Searching for Banksy." *Queen's Quarterly* 117.2 (2010): 262+.

Edelstein, David. "Banksy Tags Himself." *New York* 19 Apr. 2010

Week Eleven: Topic: Film and Fashion

Film: The Devil Wears Prada (2006, 109 minutes)

Reading:

La Ferla, Ruth. "The Duds Of 'The Devil Wears Prada'." *New York Times* 29 June 2006: G1(L)

Karimzadeh, Marc, Irin Carmon, and Cate T. Corcoran. "Fashion's Media Explosion." *WWD: Women's Wear Daily* 192.123 (2006): 10-11.

Unit Four: Film and Subculture(s)

Week Twelve: **EXAM #3 / Unit #3 Assignment Due**

Topic: Film and Youth

Film: Dazed and Confused (1993, 103 minutes)

Reading:

Pilarz, Scott. "Growing up between LSD and R.E.M." *America* 169.16 (1993): 23

Maslin, Janet. "Reviews/Film; Nervously Contemplating Life After High School." *New York Times* 24 Sept. 1993

Parks, Louis B. "Unfazed and hangin' loose." *The Houston Chronicle*. 3 Oct. 1993: 11

Week Thirteen: Topic: Films of Color

*Incl. instruction on social responsibility

Film: Do the Right Thing (1989, 120 minutes)

Reading:

Manley Jr., Theodoric. "Teaching race and ethnic relations: Do the right thing." *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 17.1 (1994): 135

Doherty, Thomas. Review: *Do the Right Thing* by Spike Lee. *Film Quarterly*. Vol. 43, No. 2 (Winter, 1989-1990), pp. 35-40

Sklar, Robert, et al. "What is the right thing? A Critical Symposium on Spike Lee's Do the Right Thing." *Cineaste* 1990 (17:4)

Davis, Zeinabu Irene. "Black Independent or Hollywood Iconoclast?" *Cineaste*; 1990 (17:4)

Week Fourteen: **Unit #4 Assignment Prompt Issued**

Topic: Celebrity Culture

Film: The King of Comedy (1983, 109 minutes)

Reading:

Librach, Ronald S. "Class-Consciousness and Self-Improvement in The King of Comedy." *Film Criticism* 15.2 (1991): 47-62

Sikov, Ed. Review: *The King of Comedy*. *Film Quarterly* Vol. 36, No. 4 (Summer, 1983), pp. 17-21

Week Fifteen-Sixteen:

GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

EXAM #2 / Unit #4 Assignment Due