

Department: Modern & Classical Languages

Course No.: 1110 [110]

Credits: 3

Title: Introduction to Film Studies

Contact: Roger Travis

Content Area: CA1

Catalog Copy: CLCS 1110: Introduction to Film Studies

Either semester. Three credits. Introduction to film and film studies. Tools for analyzing and reading film. Techniques and language of film as well as film theories will be introduced.

Course Information: This course is an introduction to film and film studies. The course will provide students with the necessary tools and language to 'read' and analyze film. Both the technical processes and the theories of film will be discussed. The class texts and films will reflect a variety of national traditions from the U.S. through Europe to the developing world. Course assessments will include short writing assignments, quizzes and small group discussions.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed.: The Program in Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies is housed in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages. The Program offers an MA and PhD in Film Studies and the Department is home to the Film Minor. This course would provide an introduction to CLCS' particular approach to film studies, as well as the Film Minor. The Drama Department offers an introduction to film, though research and conversations have shown that it differs greatly in its approach compared to this proposed CLCS course. This course is appropriate for inclusion at the 100 level as a general introductory survey course on film. Given the wide appeal of film, it is expected that the course's inclusion in GEOC would attract a wide variety of students. It is additionally expected that the class will be large even in its introductory semester, continuing to grow in subsequent offerings. As the Program in Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies is home to Graduate Students in Film Studies, it is believed that Departmental Staff with the assistance of their graduate students will handle the teaching load

CA1 Criteria: There is no shortage of evidence to suggest that our students watch films. Quite often they have a more than nascent understanding of them as a unique art form, though they just as frequently are not equipped with the skills to articulate their own analyses. This class is intended to give students the voice and form necessary to do so. The Program in Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies reflects an inherently interdisciplinary approach to study. Rather than focusing perhaps on cinema as filmed theater, the proposed course will cover a variety of approaches to this important and widely disseminated art form.

Role of Grad Students: Departmental Staff with the assistance of their graduate students will handle the teaching load.

SYLLABUS:

CLCS 110: Introduction to Film Studies

This course is an introduction to film and film studies. The course will provide students with the necessary tools and language to 'read' and analyze film. Both the technical processes and the theories of film will be discussed. The class texts and films will reflect a variety of national traditions from the U.S. through Europe to the developing world. Course assessments will include short writing assignments, quizzes and small group discussions.

Introduction: Birth of Cinema, Form and Narrative

This week will be designed to introduce students to the mechanics and objectives of the course. Students will be introduced to the field of film studies, particularly as to how we will approach films in this course. Material will begin with the birth of cinema and the development of cinematic narrative. (Lumière Brothers, Edison)

Week 2 Continuation of Form and Narrative

Students will be introduced to the principles of form and the basic elements of narrative such as plot, character, setting, etc. Tools for analysis of form and narrative will also be introduced. (Glossary handouts this week, Birth of a Nation)

Week 3 Mise-en-Scene, Design and Cinematography

Mise-en-scene will be defined and students will explore how and why it is used by various filmmakers. Design components such as lighting, sets, costumes and other elements will be explored in depth. (Citizen Kane, Monsoon Wedding, Dogville)

Week 4 Continuation of Mise-en-Scene, Design and Cinematography

Students will be introduced to the terminology used to discuss cinematography as well as the role of the director. Students will also learn how cinematography complements narrative and mise-en-scene. (M, Cleo from 5 to 7)

Week 5 Editing

The manipulation of film shots and the terminology associated with film editing will be introduced. Some historical background to ideological editing such as Intellectual Montage will be discussed. (Vertov, Casablanca)

Week 6 Editing Continued (Sound and Other Techniques)

Discussion of the use of editing and other techniques to compliment narrative and cinematography. Filmic processes and exposures, as well as the use of sound in production will be explored. (Vertigo, Battle of Algiers, Marriage of the Blessed))

Week 7 Classic Hollywood, Vertical Integration and the Studio System

A brief history of the American Studio system and its influence on cinema. (42nd Street, The Maltese Falcon)

Week 8 Break

Week 9 The '60's

Ideological and political movements in film signify the break with Classical Hollywood. We will discuss the significance of this period as we transition to the second half of the semester. (Breathless, Look Back in Anger, The Joke)

Week 10 Auteurism

Auteur theory and its influence will be discussed from an historical point of view as well as a contemporary one. (Truffaut, The Coen Bros.)

Week 11 Psychological Criticism: Freud

Students will learn to approach films from a basic Freudian psychoanalytic perspective. (Peeping Tom, Disco Pigs)

Week 12 Politics and Film

Students will explore how film has historically been used for political agendas. (Burn, Triumph of the Will, Death of Stalinism in Bohemia)

Week 13 Feminism

Students will discuss several prominent feminist theorists as well as cultural theory in terms of film analysis. (Mulvey, Gledhill, Thelma & Louise, Klute)

Week 14

This week will be used for students to begin to explore other theories such as post-modernism. Students will watch a film in its entirety that exemplifies all of the topics covered earlier in the semester. (Pulp Fiction, The Limey)

Week 15 Review