

Department: Modern and Classical Languages

Course No: CLCS 3211

Credits: 3

Title: Indigenous Film Worldwide

Contact:Roger Travis

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

Diversity: CA4-Diversity and Multiculturalism- International

Catalog Copy: CLCS 3211 Indigenous Cinema Worldwide

A survey of films by and about Indigenous, American Indian, First Nations, Native, and Aboriginal people. Course will focus on contemporary films and artists.

RATIONALE FOR ACTION REQUESTED

This is an existing course for which I am proposing an Area 1 and 4 Intl designation.

The Course Information and Content Area sections below explain the request for the proposal.

Course Information:

For much of the world's history, the stories of Indigenous people have been told by others. In today's global theater this situation is rapidly changing. Indigenous stories are told through a multitude of styles and media, and this course will survey those intersections as well as the meetings of history, literature and film. The focus will be on narrative film and contemporary cinematic authors and artists while providing the background for the works they present.

Students will keep an electronic journal (a blog on a closed social networking site) of responses to the films and readings (minimum of 300 words, though in previous classes I have found that most students average 5-600 word entries), as well as provide discussion points for each class meeting.

At midterm, students provide a detailed draft proposal for their final projects. Those final projects are 8-10 page papers that focus on a comparative study of at least three films (two of which must be from different culture groups) viewed during the course (students may substitute a film of their own choosing with instructor approval), integrating primary and secondary textual resources with their own close readings of the films.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed:

The course will increase the critical and reflective abilities of the students as they are exposed to and contend with U.S., Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand policies toward the Indigenous

people of each area as well as the cinematic production of each country. In lectures, readings, and film screenings they will confront the often contentious relationships between non-Native people (be they filmmakers, government officials, academics or others) and the Indigenous people they purport to represent.

In examining the self-representation of Indigenous people through the medium of contemporary narrative film, students will not only understand the importance of the ability to tell one's own story, they will also understand that film has historically been the site of some of the most pernicious and persistent stereotypes of Native people. As they begin to place the production of differing Indigenous cultures in comparative analyses, they will not only recognize the diversity of expression between Native and non-Native artists, but also within the realm of Indigenous artistic production.

CA1 Criteria:

The proposed 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.

Students often have a more than nascent understanding of film 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. Analytical methods will include social, cultural, historical, and political approaches.

CA4 Criteria:

By engaging with the cinematic productions under study through the eyes, voices and hands of the artists, students will gain a more thorough understanding of Indigenous people's past, present and future on the world stage. Particular emphasis will be placed on the widely varied experiences and productions of Indigenous artists from the across Americas and the Pacific, as well as the common concerns that these disparate groups share. Diversity and multiculturalism are addressed through the visual, aural, and written arts, accessing a range of student learning styles. Film and video are increasingly important media in education and are familiar to most students. This course will support the University's focus on actively engaging students in critical thinking in an interdisciplinary framework. While the course is offered as a survey meant to cover a broad range of works within a large subject area, students will be expected to actively participate in class discussion, select works of their own choosing for study, and in effect, offer up their own "story" by the end of the class.

International:

A main focus of the class will be a comparative framework that will include the history as well as the differing cultural, social, political, and economic concerns of the Indigenous people of the Americas, Australia and New Zealand (Aotearoa).

SYLLABUS:

CLCS 3211 Indigenous Film Worldwide – Native North America Focus

For much of the history of this country, the stories of American Indians have been told by non-Indians. This is no longer the case, and the stories now told are as wide and varied as the people themselves. The telling of these tales is through a multitude of styles and media, and this course will survey those stories as they appear on film. We will necessarily examine films that are 'revisionist' yet still represent the views of non-Natives – we do this in order to better understand what Native people are saying when their voice is being heard. We will focus on Native American/First Nations artists while providing the background for the narratives they tell. In attempting to understand their stories and our own, we will gain a more thorough understanding of America's past, present, and future on the world stage.

CLCS 3211 Indigenous Film Worldwide – Native North America Focus

Tuesday June 3rd

Introduction

Redskin Blues (1932) RKO Radiopictures/*Trudell* (2005)/*The Canary Effect* (2007)

Thursday June 5th

Black Robe (1991) dir. Bruce Beresford

A non-Native produced film from Canada that treats part of their early colonial period. This film along with selected others will be useful in helping us situate film produced by Native American/First Nations artists

Tuesday June 10th

Thunderheart (1992) dir. Michael Apted

A non-Native produced film from the US that is a dramatic rendering of incidents on the Pine Ridge Reservation in the 1970s.

Thursday June 12th

Chiefs (2002) dir. Daniel Junge

Tuesday June 17th

Naturally Native (1998) dir. Jennifer Wynne Farmer

Thursday June 19th

Atanarjuat (2001) dir. Zacharias Kunuk

NO CLASS

Tuesday June 24th

Thursday June 26th

A Thief of Time (2004) dir. Chris Eyre

A Native-directed film based on a novel written by a non-Native about Native people. And, it's a mystery!

Tuesday July 1st

Four Sheets to the Wind (2007) dir. Sterlin Harjo

Thursday July 3rd

The Brave (1997) dir. Johnny Depp

Tuesday July 8th

Mystery Native Theater 3000!

Thursday July 10th

The Colony (2007), *From Cherry English, Red Right Hand*, (2005) dir. Jeff Barnaby, *Gesture Down [I Don't Sing]* (2006) dir. Cedar Sherbert, *LYE* (2006) dir. Dax Thomas

We will view these shorter films from young Native/First Nations directors as we consider where North American Indigenous film may be heading.

Texts:

Kilpatrick, Jacquelyn. *Celluloid Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999

Singer, Beverly. *Wiping the Warpaint Off the Lens*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

PAPERS, GRADES, etc.

You can turn papers in late; that's up to you. For every day late you will lose one full letter grade. I'll collect papers at the beginning of class on the day they are due. That constitutes "on time." For weird weather, unforeseen closures, or cancellations, the same concept applies – due at 6:00 p.m. the day we would normally have class.

You will keep an electronic journal (a blog on a closed social networking site) of responses to the films and readings (minimum of 300 words, though in previous classes I have found that most students average 5-600 word entries), as well as provide discussion points for each class meeting.

At midterm, you will provide a detailed draft proposal for your final project. The final project is an 8-10 page paper that focuses on a comparative study of at least three films (two of which must be from different culture groups) viewed during the course (you may substitute a film of your own choosing with instructor approval), integrating primary and secondary textual resources with your own close readings of the films.

Final grades will be determined using the following percentages:

94 - 100 % A	73 - 76 % C
90 - 93 % A-	70 - 72 % C-
87 - 89 % B+	67 - 69 % D+
83 - 86 % B	60 - 66 % D
80 - 82 % B-	59 % and below F
77 - 79 % C+	

Final grades will be composed of your semester's work:

Participation 25%
Responses/Blog 25%
Mid Term Exam 25%
Final Exam 25%

Finally, I'll add it again here, because I'm a HUGE fan of communication. Any questions, concerns, comments, or if you need to get in touch with me:

theo.vanalst@gmail.com
Office Hours – Arjona 112 Mon. 3-5

Best wishes, and welcome to class!