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Sam Houston State University



PART I – Course Information

Course Type

☒ Existing/Restructured

☐ New Course Proposed Fall 2013

If new, have you submitted a Form B to the SHSU Curriculum Committee? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Course Prefix & Number: MCOM 2351

Course Title: Film History and Criticism

Course Catalog Description (Copy and paste from online catalog for existing courses):

This course uses the film medium to integrate cinematic history and criticism. Production elements such as lighting, sound and character development, as well as genres, themes and narrative pattern will be analyzed.

Course Prerequisites: none

Available Online? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Anticipated (Semester:)

Number of Sections to be Offered per Year: 2

Estimated Enrollment per Section: 50

Course Level (freshman, sophomore): Sophomore

Requestor Full Name (designated department rep – contact person): Debbi Hatton

E-Mail Address: hatton@shsu.edu


Approvals

Department Chair:

Signature 

Date 9-9-15

Academic Dean:

Signature 

Date 9-15-15

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PART II – THECB Foundational Component Areas

See Appendix for full description of each component area.

Select Component Area: V. Creative Arts

How Component Area Addressed: This course will focus on the exploration and appreciation of the art and history of film and filmmaking. Students will learn to critically assess cinematic expression for historical and cultural perspectives in both artistic content and public response. Throughout this course, students will develop a historical appreciation of film based on a survey of cinematic traditions and acquire a deeper understanding of the filmmaking process and its many variables, including script writing, cinematography, lighting, editing, sound mixing and film aesthetics used to successfully create a meaningful, sensory experience for viewers.

PART III – Course Objectives

Insert the appropriate course objectives stated in student learning outcomes (e.g., Students completing the course will be able to...)

Objective 1: Define basic film vocabulary, describe developmental stages of cinema, differentiate studio and location shooting, summarize factors contributing to cinema's growth as a mass media, appreciate the role of artistic play in early filmmaking.

How will requirement be addressed (including strategies and techniques)?

This course will examine how the use of camera angles, editing, lightning, sound and acting give meaning to film. Students will critically watch silent films and discuss and analyze each using appropriate terminology relating to particular cinematic practices and structures.

Describe how requirement will be assessed: Direct assessment will occur through questions in a comprehensive examination and weekly projects related to independent viewing and research assignments. Indirect assessment will consist of informal discussion and questioning regarding the readings and the lectures. Class-related social media activity will also serve as an indirect assessment tool.

Objective 2: Compare significant movements in global cinema, such as Hollywood, Asian, European, and African, and their diverse technological, economic, and social determinants. Recognize and explain the effect of World War II on international cinema. Evaluate social meaning created by various artistic styles in foreign filmmaking.

How will requirement be addressed (including strategies and techniques)?

Students will watch international films from varying periods in world history. They will create written assignments and video blogs drawing information from the films and other cultural, historic and political artifacts.

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Describe how requirement will be assessed: Direct assessment will occur through questions in a comprehensive examination. Written analysis and video projects will also serve as indicators of student performance.

Objective 3: Differentiate analog and audio visual technologies and describe effects on cinema and culture. Judge the meaning and understanding of "cinema" and "film" in the digital media environment.

How will requirement be addressed (including strategies and techniques)?

This course will explore the impact of technological developments on film production and evaluate the importance of innovation in recent history of cinema. Students will watch and review contemporary films and discuss their role in pop culture and modern society. Students will also explore how technology and media convergence have affected film consumption, delivery and exhibition.

Describe how requirement will be assessed: Direct assessment will occur through questions in a comprehensive examination and weekly projects related to independent viewing and research assignments. Indirect assessment will consist of informal discussion and questioning based on the readings and the lectures. Class-related social media activity will also serve as an indirect assessment tool.

Objective 4:

How will requirement be addressed (including strategies and techniques)?

Describe how requirement will be assessed:

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Objective 5: _____

How will requirement be addressed (including strategies and techniques)?

Describe how requirement will be assessed: _____

PART IV – THECB Skill Objectives

Address each of the required THECB skill objectives that the course addresses and explain how the requirement is addressed, specific strategies to address the objective(s), and how each objective will be assessed. ***Address ALL skill objectives associated with the selected Component Area. (See Appendix)***

1. Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information

How will requirement be addressed (including strategies and techniques)?

This course examines the history of film, the role of filmmakers as gatekeepers, tastemakers, and consumer guides and the impact of films on today's society. This course will deepen critical understanding of film as mass media and broaden knowledge of filmmaking's artistic process and social and political influence. Students will analyze film as a medium of information, conveyor and creator of mass culture and a form of aesthetic expression.

Describe how requirement will be assessed: Weekly critical film reviews and reaction papers along with comprehensive exams.

2. Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication

How will requirement be addressed (including strategies and techniques)?

Students will write reviews of films, looking at narration, character development and genres, and create video blogs in which they discuss the meaning and imagery of films. This course will engage in social media using a class hashtag that students will use to live-tweet reactions to the film narrative. Students will either create or choose an audio backdrop for silent films, representing the era, mood and symbolism of the work.

Describe how requirement will be assessed: Assessment will occur through observation of student social media debates, real time electronic feedback and video critiques.

3. Empirical and Quantitative Skills: to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions

How will requirement be addressed (including strategies and techniques)?

Describe how requirement will be assessed: _____

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4. Teamwork: to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal

How will requirement be addressed (including strategies and techniques)?

In this course, students will work in small groups to build a class wiki designed to engage them in interactive, critical discussion of the class texts. They will also work together to evaluate film vocabulary, concepts, and other essential foundational elements of film theory.

Describe how requirement will be assessed: Direct assessment will occur through monitoring of the group wiki. Further assessment will occur through the monitoring of group discussions following the viewing of specific works via electronic media .

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5. Personal Responsibility: to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

How will requirement be addressed (including strategies and techniques)?

Describe how requirement will be assessed:

6. Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

How will requirement be addressed (including strategies and techniques)?

Through the dissection of cultural, societal, political and other narratives, students will develop a deeper understanding and empathy for a large cross-section of the global population. Students will discuss how films can serve as a catalyst for activism and social change or as an artistic reflection of the human condition.

Describe how requirement will be assessed: Direct assessment will occur through comprehensive examinations and bi-weekly responses to international films and reading assignments.

PART V – SHSU Core Curriculum Committee Requirements

1. Using a 15-week class schedule, identify the topics to be covered during each week of the semester. Provide sufficient detail to allow readers to understand the scope and sequence of topics covered.

Week 1	Introduction to Film History and Criticism
Week 2	Early cinema
Week 3	Transitional era
Week 4	Silent Film Art
Week 5	Silent Avant-garde cinema
Week 6	Hollywood and Japan
Week 7	Post 1945 realism
Week 8	The Swollen 50's
Week 9	The New Wave
Week 10	New Hollywood
Week 11	Radical Directors and Globalism in the 1970's
Week 12	Hong Kong Action Cinema
Week 13	New Boundaries in World Cinema
Week 14	American Independent Cinema
Week 15	The Global Blockbuster

2. Attach course syllabus

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Syllabus Attached? ☒ Yes ☐ No

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Appendix: THECB Component Area Descriptions and Skill Requirements

I. Communication (Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.)

II. Mathematics (Courses in this category focus on quantitative literacy in logic, patterns, and relationships. Courses involve the understanding of key mathematical concepts and the application of appropriate quantitative tools to everyday experience.)

III. Life and Physical Sciences (Courses in this category focus on describing, explaining, and predicting natural phenomena using the scientific method. Courses involve the understanding of interactions among natural phenomena and the implications of scientific principles on the physical world and on human experiences.)

IV. Language, Philosophy, and Culture (Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.)

V. Creative Arts (Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.)

VI. American History (Courses in this category focus on the consideration of past events and ideas relative to the United States, with the option of including Texas History for a portion of this component area. Courses involve the interaction among individuals, communities, states, the nation, and the world, considering how these interactions have contributed to the development of the United States and its global role.)

VII. Government/ Political Science (Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.)

VIII. Social and Behavioral Sciences (Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.)

Required Skill Objectives

Foundational Component Areas	CT	COM	EQS	TW	SR	PR
Communication	✓	✓		✓		✓
Mathematics	✓	✓	✓			
Life and Physical Sciences	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Language, Philosophy & Culture	✓	✓			✓	✓
Creative Arts	✓	✓		✓	✓	
American History	✓	✓			✓	✓
Government/Political Science	✓	✓			✓	✓
Social and Behavioral Sciences	✓	✓	✓		✓	

FILM HISTORY AND CRITICISM

Syllabus

Course Description

This course uses the film medium to integrate cinematic history and criticism. Production elements such as lighting, sound and character development, as well as genres, themes and narrative pattern will be analyzed. Emphasis is placed on writing critically about the film. The course is organized into three units that survey the historical development of silent, sound, and digital cinema. Mark Cousins' book and documentary provide a central axis, introducing important filmmakers and movements. The objectives are to deepen your critical understanding of the medium and to broaden your knowledge of film cultures and world cultures.

Required Materials

Cousins, Mark. *The Story of Film*. 2nd ed. London: Pavilion, 2012.

The Story of Film: An Odyssey. Dir. Mark Cousins. Hopscotch, 2011. Film.

Other texts will be made available online.

Films can be streamed through the [library](#) or other services (Netflix, Hulu+, iTunes, Amazon)

Coursework

We will read, watch, and write each week, progressing through Cousins' book and documentary by chapter and episode. Important films and other texts will be interspersed in this chronology. Students will complete assignments, writing exercises, and three exams to achieve the objectives for each unit. Work submitted over 24 hours prior to the deadline will receive 10% extra credit; after the deadline, grade drops by 25% every 12 hours.

Units & Weekly Schedule

(subject to change)

Unit 1: Silent Cinema (1895-1928)

Objectives: Define basic film terms, describe developmental stages of cinema, differentiate studio and location shooting, summarize reasons for cinema's growth as a mass medium, appreciate artistic play with this specific medium

Week 1 August 26 (Weds.) Introduction

Read Cousins "Introduction"

Watch *Hugo* (Dir. Martin Scorsese, USA, 2011)

Assignment due Friday 8/28 midnight

Week 2 August 31 Early Cinema

Read Cousins chapter 1 and watch episode 1

Watch films posted online, including *A Trip to the Moon* (Dir. Georges Méliès, France, 1901)
Assignment due Wednesday 9/2 midnight
Written composition due Thursday 9/3 midnight

Week 3 September 8 (Tues.) Transitional Era

Read film terminology article & Cousins chapter 2, and watch episode 2
Watch short films posted online
Assignment due Thursday 9/10 midnight

Week 4 September 14 Silent Film Art

Read Cousins chapter 3 and watch episode 3
Watch *The Last Laugh* (Dir. F.W. Murnau, Germany, 1924)
Assignment due Wednesday 9/16 midnight
Written composition due Thursday 9/17 midnight

Week 5 September 21 Silent Avant-Garde Cinema

Read article (to be announced)
Watch *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dir. Dziga Vertov, USSR, 1929)
Unit 1 exam due Thursday 9/20 midnight

Unit 2: Sound Cinema (1928 - 1990)

Objectives: Compare among Hollywood, European, Asian, and African cinema movements, recognize and explain the effect of World War II on cinema, evaluate the meaning created by various film styles.

Week 6 September 28 Hollywood and Japan

Read Cousins chapter 4 and watch episode 4
Watch *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Prod. Walt Disney Co., USA, 1937)
Assignment due Wednesday 9/30 midnight

Week 7 October 5 Post-45 Realism

Read Cousins chapter 5 and watch episode 5
Watch *Rome, Open City* (Dir. Roberto Rossellini, Italy, 1945)
Assignment due Wednesday 10/7 midnight
Written composition due Thursday 10/8 midnight

Week 8 October 12 The Swollen Fifties

Read Cousins chapter 6 and watch episode 6
Watch *Ugetsu* (Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi, Japan, 1953)
Assignment due Wednesday 10/14

Week 9 October 19 New Waves

Read Cousins chapter 7 and watch episodes 7 and 8
Watch *Daisies* (Dir. Vera Chytilova, Czechoslovakia, 1966)
Assignment due Wednesday 10/12 midnight
Written composition due Thursday 10/22 midnight

Week 10 October 26 New Hollywood

Watch Cousins episode 9
Watch *Badlands* (Dir. Terrence Malick, USA, 1973)
Midterm exam due Thursday 10/29 midnight

Week 11 November 2 Radical Directors and Globalism in the 1970s

Read Cousins chapter 8 and watch episode 10
Watch *Black Girl* (Ousmane Sembène, Senegal/France, 1973)
Assignment due Wednesday 11/4 midnight

Week 12 November 9 Hong Kong Action Cinema

Read Cousins chapter 9 and watch episodes 11 and 12
Watch *A Better Tomorrow* (Dir. John Woo, Hong Kong, 1986)
Assignment due Wednesday 11/11 midnight
Written composition due Thursday 11/12 midnight

Unit 3: Digital Cinema (1990 - present)

Objectives: Differentiate analog and digital audiovisual technologies, describe the effect of this technology on cinema and on culture, judge the meaning of 'cinema' and 'film' in the digital media environment

Week 13 November 16 New Boundaries in World Cinema

Read article online and watch Cousins episode 13
Watch *The Piano* (Dir. Jane Campion, New Zealand/Australia, 1993)
Assignment due Wednesday 11/18 midnight

Week 14 November 23 American Independent Cinema

Watch Cousins episode 14
Watch *Slacker* (Dir. Richard Linklater, USA, 1991)
Written composition due Tuesday 11/24 at 9pm

Week 15 November 30 Global Blockbuster

Read Cousins chapter 10 and watch episode 15

Watch *Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi* (Lucasfilm, USA, 1983/1997)
Assignment due Thursday 12/3 midnight

Final Exam due Wednesday 12/9 midnight

Grading

15% Unit 1 exam
20% Weekly assignments
20% Biweekly written responses to films and readings
20% Midterm exam
25% Final exam

Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see Dean of Student's Office.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20..." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf

Students with Disabilities Policy

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they

be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

