

BUTTE COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

RTVF 15 - Introduction to Film

3 Unit(s)

Prerequisite(s): NONE

Recommended Prep: Reading Level IV; English Level IV

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

51 hours Lecture

This course introduces students to the influence film has on us as an art form and the techniques filmmakers use to make us respond. Students will become familiar with the power of film to influence popular beliefs and attitudes. Students will be able to describe the creative and technical elements artists use to make movies such as scriptwriting, cinematography, editing, music, acting, and art direction.

II. OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Describe the technical elements (cinematography, editing, music, acting, directing style, etc.) in a film and how they are used to communicate the film's major themes.
- B. Analyze how a film reflects the prevailing social and moral attitudes at the time of the film's original release.
- C. Evaluate a film to determine how well it communicates its major themes through the use of various cinematic techniques such as cinematography, editing, musical score, acting and directing style.
- D. Explain how the aesthetic elements of the cinema such as color, set design, costume design, art direction, music help communicate a film's major themes.
- E. Discuss how the viewer of a film is affected by the visual language of cinema.
- F. Assess how past and present films relate to each other and to the viewer.
- G. Compare and contrast Western and non-Western cinema in terms of their cultural similarities and differences.

III. COURSE CONTENT

A. Unit Titles/Suggested Time Schedule

Lecture	
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Hours</u>
1. Why Study Film: Film as Art and Social Mirror	3.00
2. Cinematic Theme and Focus: Determining the major themes of a film and how they reflect prevailing social and cultural values of the time in which the film was produced	6.00
3. Fictional and Dramatic Elements in Film: Form and structure of story, setting, plot, character and those elements reflect and comment on social and cultural concerns	3.00
4. Visual Elements: The role of cinematography and editing in communicating a film's major themes	6.00
5. Color Aesthetics: How black/white or color is used to communicate a film's major themes, establish setting and create mood	3.00

6. Music: The role of music in communicating theme, creating character, revealing emotion and impacting viewer interpretation of cinema's visual language	3.00
7. Theatre vs. Film: A comparison of dramatic art forms	6.00
8. Literature and Film: A comparison of the subjective response to different forms of literary expression	3.00
9. Film Genres: An analysis of different types of films from the past and present to determine how they reflect changing social and cultural values and attitudes	6.00
10. Non-Western Cinema: The influence of non-Western culture in cinematic expression	6.00
11. Director's Style: The influence of the director on the complete aesthetic experience of cinema art	6.00
Total Hours	51.00

IV. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

- A. Lecture
- B. Group Discussions
- C. Collaborative Group Work
- D. Class Activities
- E. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- F. Discussion
- G. Reading Assignments
- H. Multimedia Presentations

V. METHODS OF EVALUATION

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Oral Presentation
- C. Homework
- D. Final Examination
- E. Written Assignments
- F. Written Examinations
- G. Essays and research papers
- H. The course includes a 1500 word writing requirement. The writing requirement may be fulfilled by any combination of essay or paragraph-length exam questions, formal essays or research papers, and/or in-class or out-of-class writing activities.

VI. EXAMPLES OF ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Reading Assignments
 - 1. Read the chapter in the class text on the characteristics of the Film Noir genre with particular emphasis on the role of the cinematography in establishing mood and theme. View a selected film from the Film Noir genre and be prepared to discuss at least three uses of lighting to add meaning to the scene's action and dialog.
 - 2. Read the chapter on film editing in the class text. Then view a selected scene from an assigned film. Be prepared to discuss how editing was used to create the illusion of continuity in the scene with at least three specific examples.
- B. Writing Assignments
 - 1. Write a 2-3 page comparison of the differences between theatrical and film acting based on viewing a selected film. The specific emphasis should be on techniques such as body

language, voice control, facial gestures, makeup and costuming.

2. Prepare a 2-3 page analysis of the story telling techniques found in Hollywood action films of 20th century compared to strategies used in films made after the year 2000.

C. Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Select a film from the class list that has good examples of editing being used to create the “illusion of continuity.” In 2-3 pages, define the “illusion of continuity” according to the class text and describe in detail at least three specific examples of editing being used to make us believe what we see on the screen is real.
2. Choose a book from the class list that has been made into a movie. Watch the film and pick at least one scene in the book that was included in the film. Using the chapter on adaptations in the class text as a guide, write a 2-3 page detailed discussion of at least three issues the film maker faced in translating such elements as dialog, action, character profiles and setting descriptions from print to screen.

VII. **RECOMMENDED MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION**

Textbooks:

- A. Monaco, J.. How to Read a Film. 4th Edition. Oxford University Press, 2009.
- B. Boggs, J. & Petrie, D.. The Art of Watching Films. 8th Edition. McGraw-Hill, 2012.

Materials Other Than Textbooks:

- A. Selected feature films and documentaries about film making and history

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