

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for THEA 12
FILM AS ART & COMMUNICATION
Effective: Fall 2018

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

THEA 12 — FILM AS ART & COMMUNICATION — 4.00 units

Introduction to film as an art form and means of communication. Film history, elements of the film making process, major film traditions and genres.

4.00 Units Lecture

Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

Discipline:

- Drama/Theater Arts

Family: Theater Humanities

	MIN
Lecture Hours:	72.00
Expected Outside of Class Hours:	144.00
Total Hours:	216.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

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

- A. Describe the various elements that go into the making of a film such as cinematography, editing and narrative
- B. Describe how film relates to and incorporates various other art forms such as visual art, music, literature and movement
- C. Differentiate between various styles and genres of film
- D. Describe the major developments in the history of film making, including styles, genres and directors
- E. Discuss current trends in the making, viewing, and distribution of films
- F. Discuss how films relate to the cultural context from which they come
- G. Differentiate between various methods of film criticism
- H. Evaluate how well the various creators of a film (screenwriters, directors, cinematographers, designers and actors) have succeeded in creating a work of art
- I. Write a literate, thoughtful, evaluative essay in response to the viewing of a film, utilizing course vocabulary and concepts
- J. List and describe the steps in creating a film, from original idea to distribution
- K. Use discourse and written work to demonstrate an appreciation for the qualities that are found in good film making
- L. Participate in the creation of a short film – as director, cinematographer, story board artist or actor

V. CONTENT:

- A. Elements of film making
 1. Cinematography
 2. Editing
 3. Composition
 4. Sound and music
 5. Production design
 6. Story telling
 7. Acting
 8. Directing and producing
- B. Major film categories
 1. Fiction
 2. Documentary
 3. Experimental
 4. Animation
 5. American cinema
 6. International cinema
 7. Major film genres
 - a. Silent

- b. Film Noir
 - c. Western
 - d. Musical
 - e. Romantic Comedy
 - f. Epic
 - g. Action
 - h. Science Fiction
 - i. Thriller
- 8. Sources of film ideas/stories
 - a. Adaptations
 - b. Original works
- C. History of film making
 - 1. A decade-by-decade exploration and analysis from the 1890s to the 2000s
 - 2. Current trends and new directions
 - a. Digital film making
 - b. New means of viewing and distribution
- D. Ways to view and critique films
 - 1. Artistic analysis/formalism
 - 2. Ideological approach/socio-political
 - 3. Cultural/historical
 - 4. Auteur/biographical
 - 5. Mythic/psychological
 - 6. Genre
 - 7. Putting the critique into written form
- E. The business of film making
 - 1. Creating the ideas – development
 - 2. Gathering the resources – financial, personnel, locations
 - 3. Pre production
 - 4. The filming process
 - 5. Post production
 - 6. Release/distribution
- F. The making of a short film

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. Entire class and small group discussion
- C. Hands-on activity – creating a short film with other members of the class in small groups
- D. Reading assignments in the text and from handouts
- E. Written assignments such as film critiques
- F. In-class viewing of films
 - 1. Examples of films
 - a. Western: Shane
 - b. Avant-Garde: En Chien Andalou
 - c. Film Noir: The Big Sleep
 - d. Musical: Singin' in the Rain
 - e. Science Fiction: The Day the Earth Stood Still
 - f. Documentary: Roger and Me
 - 2. Films and videos about films
 - a. Inside Hitchcock
 - b. American Cinema series

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. In groups of four, create a five minute film using the assigned “open scene” dialogue. All groups will use the same scene, but create their film using techniques and style of different genres (e.g., film noir, slapstick comedy; avant garde, science fiction, etc.) B. After watching Alfred Hitchcock’s Rear Window, write a three page critique of the film, making reference to the “signature” elements within the film. C. After reading Chapter 11 of Movies and Meaning, write a five page critical analysis of one of the models of film theory, using as an example one of the films shown in class.

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

- 1. Exams/Tests
- 2. Quizzes
- 3. Projects
- 4. Group Projects
- 5. Class Participation
- 6. Other:
 - a. Written film reviews
 - b. Participation in the group project of creating a short film

B. **Frequency**

- 1. Several quizzes throughout the semester with a possible mid-term (2-3x)
- 2. Written review after most films reviewed (2-3x)
- 3. Film making project near the end of semester (1x)
- 4. Final exam (1x)

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*. 9th ed., Longman, 2014.
- 2. Dick, Bernard *Anatomy of Film*. 5th Rev ed., Bedford/St. Martins, 2005.
- 3. Prince, Stephen. *Movies and Meaning; an Introduction to Film*. 6th ed., Allyn and Bacon, 2012.
- 4. , Jon Lewis. *Essential Cinema: An Introduction to Film Analysis (with MLA Update Card)*. 1st ed., Wadsworth Publishing, 2017.
- 5. Corrigan, Timothy. *The Film Experience: An Introduction*. 5th ed., Macmillan, 2018.
- 6. Doughty, Ruth , and Christine Etherington-Wright. *Understanding Film Theory*. 2nd ed., Macmillan Education UK,, 2017.
- 7. Handouts bound together to create a class reader
 - 1. Films vs. Video
 - 2. Screenplay formatting
 - 3. Creative personnel involved in creating a film

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. Video cameras used in final project