

Las Positas College  
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### Course Outline for AJ 88

### THE POLICE AND HOLLYWOOD

Effective: Spring 2017

#### I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

AJ 88 — THE POLICE AND HOLLYWOOD — 3.00 units

This course will explore the evolution of how American police have been depicted in movies and television since the silent era and the "Keystone Cops" to today's TV reality shows such as "Cops." This course will look at how the media influences public opinion about the police and how the police are influenced by their depiction in movies and TV.

3.00 Units Lecture

#### Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

#### Discipline:

|                       | <u>MIN</u> |
|-----------------------|------------|
| <b>Lecture Hours:</b> | 54.00      |
| <b>Total Hours:</b>   | 54.00      |

#### 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. Understand the historical and contemporary influences of popular media on the public's perception of the police
- B. Discuss the public's perception of police practices (e.g. The CSI Effect)
- C. Articulate the differences between the news media and entertainment media's influence on the public's perception of the police
- D. Explain the historical evolution of the portrayal of the police as it relates to movies and TV (e.g., "Keystone Cops", 1940s film noir, "Adam-12", etc.)
- E. Discuss the influence of popular media on policing, both at the officer and departmental levels.

#### V. CONTENT:

- A. An Overview of the Police in the Media
  1. Before motion pictures, 1850 to 1900
  2. The advent of the motion picture industry
  3. Early films depicting the police
- B. The Political Era of Policing's influence on Films
  1. Tammany Hall 1850s to 1930s
  2. Political reforms influence on popular and news media
  3. The "Roaring '20s" and Prohibition influence on the movies
  4. The advent of the Hays Code and its influence on police portrayal
- C. The pre-war depiction of the individual officer in the movies
  1. The Beat Cop
  2. The bumbling detective
  3. The hard-nosed private eye
  4. The Gangster movies
- D. The post-war depiction of the police to 1960
  1. The classic western sheriff (High Noon, Rio Bravo, etc.)
  2. Film Noir and police corruption
  3. Police Procedurals (The Naked City, The FBI Story, etc.)
- E. The Advent of TV and its influence on the police
  1. Early TV shows depicting the police (Dragnet, M-Squad, etc)
  2. 1960-70s influences on police shows (Adam-12, the Rookies, etc)
- F. Real life depicted in the movies
  1. NYPD Corruption Hearings and "Serpico"
  2. Racial tensions and "In the Heat of the Night"
  3. Women entering policing and "Police Woman"
- G. Today's social media influence on the police
  1. Youtube videos of arrests
  2. Police Dashcam/body cameras
  3. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram postings of police videos
- H. The news media's role in shaping public opinion about the police

1. The media's reliance on the police
2. The police reliance on the media
3. "If it bleeds, it leads" stories on TV news
4. Print media's influence on the police
- I. The public's role in how the media influences them
  1. The public's desire for efficient policing
  2. Separating fact from fiction
- J. The police responsibility to the public
  1. What they can and cannot do legally compared to TV and movies
  2. Myth of policing vs. the reality of policing and why it is important to know the differences.

#### VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Written exercises and case studies** -
- B. **Guest Lecturers** - News and popular media personalities, police personnel
- C. **Research** -
- D. **Lecture** -
- E. **Discussion** - Discussing different shows and movies after viewing
- F. **Audio-visual Activity** - Portions of various TV shows and movies depicting the police

#### VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Watch a series of film clips from the early 1900s to today and complete a compare and contrast paper on the similarities and differences.
- B. Watch historical TV news about police actions and compare the reports to contemporary news reports in class and create news report of an assigned actual police incident.
- C. Homework assignments answering assigned topical questions
- D. Written analysis of an assigned movie or TV show

#### VIII. EVALUATION:

##### A. **Methods**

1. Exams/Tests
2. Quizzes
3. Papers
4. Oral Presentation
5. Home Work

##### B. **Frequency**

1. A midterm and final examination will be conducted
2. Periodic quizzes throughout the semester
3. Three (3) research or compare/contrast papers to be completed
4. Oral reports, as necessary
5. Homework assignments related to class content will be assigned as needed.

#### IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Colbran, M. (2014). *Media Representations of Police and Crime Shaping the Police Television Drama* (1st ed.). New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
2. Surette, . (2015). *Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage.
3. Robinson, M.B. (2014). *Media Coverage of Crime and Criminal Justice* (2nd ed.). Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

#### X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: