General Education and I-Series Course Submission and Review

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CMLT280 Film Art in a Global Society

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General Information

Title	Film Art in a Global Society
Course Number	CMLT280
College	ARHU – Arts and Humanities
Department	English
Submitted By	Thomas Colborn Moser Jr

CORE Information

CORE Fundamental Studies	No
CORE Distributive/Advanced Studies	(HA) – The History or Theory of the Arts
CORE Diversity	Yes

General Education Information

Fundamental Studies	None
Distributive Studies	Humanities
Diversity	Understanding Plural Societies

Course Questions

General Questions

Please give a brief description of the course:

The world of film has fundamentally changed since the end of the Second World War. Besides Bollywood (India), even Nollywood (Nigeria) challenges the primacy of the Hollywood entertainment film. We also live in an increasingly international environment of business and filmmaking, with digital video, DVDs and the internet making it easier to produce film and easier for an interested audience to consume film from around the world. National cinema still exists, but its functions – and its vocabularies – have expanded. This course begins with a traditional National Cinema approach and considers the issues related to that categorization. We then consider film according to the definitions of First (Hollywood/Entertainment), Second (Art) and Third (Political) Cinema and, briefly, their relation to Neo-Realism and the French New Wave. The majority of the course will consider the relation of traditional National – and non-entertainment – cinema to the films being made today for National and International audiences. The primary focus will remain films made for reasons other than simply entertainment. Specifically, these internationalizing films will be discussed in the context of presenting "truth" in film, the use of the personal story, and the use of traditional genre film forms. A major goal of this course is to expose you to a sampler of the many different ways of making non-Hollywood entertainment films and, in doing so, to consider different narrative forms, aesthetic standards, and levels of political and social content than you might think is normal (or even possible) if you have watched only Hollywood-style film.

Please list any pre- or co-requisites for this course:

None

If there are pre- or co-requisites, please justify them with respect to their appropriateness for a General Education course:

N/A

Please list any restrictions (e.g. majors only) placed on this course:

None

What is the approximate course size (students/academic year)?

205

Please describe how student learning will be assessed (i.e. exams, homework, papers, group projects, etc.):

Grade Breakdown: Discussion Section: 25%* Midterm Exam: 20% First Paper: 10% Final Paper: 20% Final Exam: 25% WARNING: MORE THAN THREE ABSENCES FROM ANY OF THE CLASS MEETINGS WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT YOUR GRADE. IF YOU MISS DISCUSSIONS AND/OR DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES, THE ENTIRE DISCUSSION SECTION GRADE (25% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE) MAY BE RENDERED AS A ZERO, REGARDLESS OF GRADES FOR OTHER WORK DONE FOR THE CLASS. Unexcused late work will not be accepted. *The discussion section grade includes participation in class discussion, writing assignments, blog entries and comments, and other work not specified on this syllabus.

Comments on the course that you feel may be useful for the review process. Also, if this is an existing course that you are planning on making changes to via VPAC (i.e. changing the title), please list those proposed

changes here:

This is a long-standing and popular course. We are submitting it without any significant changes.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are phrased as "*At the completion of this course, students will be able to…*". Answers are expected to demonstrate how the course will (1) give students the ability to meet the learning objective and (2) determine that students were successful in meeting the learning objective.

Learning outcomes in this color are REQUIRED

Humanities

Courses in the humanities disciplines study history and the genres of human creativity, and they include courses in the practice of architecture and the visual, literary and performing and creative arts. Under "Humanities," students will find courses in cultures and literatures in any language, creative writing, art, architecture, art history, classics, history, linguistics, philosophy, and the performing arts (dance, music, theatre) and their histories.

Must address **at least 4** of the following Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to...

...demonstrate familiarity and facility with fundamental terminology and concepts in a specific topical area in the humanities.

CMLT 280 teaches students the basic vocabulary and concepts used in the analysis of narrative film. The course is set up to introduce students to fundamental elements of cinematic language as these are taken up and revised in many areas of the globe. The course opens with a consideration of the National Cinema approach and addresses issues related to that categorization. Students then learn about film according to the definitions of First (Hollywood/Entertainment), Second (Art) and Third (Political) Cinema and, briefly, their relation to Neo-Realism and the French New Wave. The course focuses on the relation of the traditional functions of National – and non-entertainment – cinema to films being made for National and International audiences today. The course examines several key formal and technical aspects of filmmaking: settings and costumes; acting and movement; shot selection and camera movement; point of view, mise en scene and montage; editing; and sound. Students will develop a working knowledge of the different formal and technical choices available to filmmakers, and the specific effects that those choices create onscreen through the analysis of examples shown for the class and discussed in the lectures. Over the course of the semester, students are expected to master the basic principles of film form and to use those principles in their written work, on-line posts, and examinations.

...demonstrate understanding of the methods used by scholars in a specific field in the humanities.

CMLT 280 introduces students to the ways in which film scholars in different global contexts understand and make sense of media and popular culture. Students often come into the course assuming that films communicate with audiences in a simple, direct, and transparent fashion. By learning how to analyze the formal structures at work in the films shown for class, students access a key insight of film studies: that even the most apparently simple pieces of film entertainment involve complex orchestrations of film technique, narrative patterning, and cultural reference in order to communicate with audiences. In CMLT 280, particular attention is given to films made for reasons other than simply entertainment. Specifically, these internationalizing films are discussed in the context of presenting "truth" in film, the use of the personal story, and the use of traditional genre film forms. Writing assignments, topics for discussion board posts, and exam questions are developed to encourage and evaluate critical thinking.

...demonstrate critical thinking in the evaluation of sources and arguments in scholarly works, or in the evaluation of approaches and techniques in the visual, literary, or performing arts.

One of the objectives of CMLT 280 is to encourage students to think critically about visual media and popular culture. To that end, the course develops a cross-cultural and broadly historical perspective on the film medium to help students appreciate how the world of film has fundamentally changed. Bollywood (India) and even Nollywood (Nigeria) challenge the primacy of Hollywood entertainment film. We also live in an increasingly international environment of business and filmmaking, with digital video, DVDs and the internet making it easier to produce film and easier for an interested audience to consume film from around the world. National cinema still exists but its functions – and its vocabularies – have expanded. By comparing how formal elements like camera angle, editing, and montage, for example, or certain conventions, those associated with neo-realism, for example, are reworked and transformed in different national and transnational cinemas, students gain expertise in the evaluation of various approaches and techniques in cinema

...describe how language use is related to ways of thinking, cultural heritage, and cultural values.

Many of the films are not in English. The experience of the defamiliarizing effect of subtitles drives home to students that analysis of the films has to take into account issues of translation, the meaning of gestural and ritual language, and the responsibility to understand a work in relation to its historical and cultural context.

...conduct research on a topic in the humanities using a variety of sources and technologies.

...demonstrate the ability to formulate a thesis related to a specific topic in the humanities and to support the thesis with evidence and argumentation.

...demonstrate understanding of the creative process and techniques used by practitioners in a specific field of the visual, literary, or performing arts.

Understanding Plural Societies

Life in a globally competitive society of the twenty-first century requires an ability to comprehend both theoretical and practical dimensions of human difference. From that perspective, Understanding Plural Societies is the centerpiece of the University's Diversity requirement. Courses in this category speak to both the foundations—cultural, material, psychological, historical, social, and biological—of human difference and the operation or function of plural societies.

Must address **at least 4** of the following Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to...

...demonstrate understanding of the basis of human diversity: biological, cultural, historical, social, economic, or ideological.

...demonstrate understanding of fundamental concepts and methods that produce knowledge about plural societies.

...explicate the processes that create or fail to create just, productive, egalitarian, and collaborative societies.

The idea of national cinema and its distribution was openly embraced by state authorities to promote particular ideas about their societies and also by dissenting voices to mount their resistance. CMLT 280 provides students with an understanding of how films use a variety of tactics to understand, make visible, and, at times, influence social change. The core of the course is the exploration of social inequality and how culture has addressed these inequalities. Through their assignments, students are encouraged to think about what constitutes social change, how it signifies differently in different periods and areas of the world, and what role the imagination plays in the creation or failure of productive, egalitarian, and collaborative societies. Students demonstrate their understanding through assignments that help them to understand film's privileged relationship to these questions. For example, a paper assignment could ask students to analyze the realist vs surrealist aesthetics of contemporaneous films in relation to the politics of social change.

...analyze forms and traditions of thought or expression in relation to cultural, historical, political, and social contexts, as, for example, dance, foodways, literature, music, and philosophical and religious traditions.

CMLT 280 provides students with an understanding of how filmmakers use a variety of tactics to understand, make visible, and, at times, influence social change. Analysis of these political, socioeconomic, technological, and artistic shifts is organized around understanding each film as embedded in its historical period and in relation to other visual and cultural texts in a global framework. The students' written analyses of the films includes attention to sound, dance, religious traditions, dress, foodways, and other non-verbal forms of cultural knowledge and communication.

...articulate how particular policies create or inhibit the formation and functioning of plural societies.

The study of global cinema allows students to look at how particular policies create or inhibit the formation and functioning of plural societies by analyzing the content of films that address these very issues. Orfeu negro [Black Orpheus] the Franco-Brazilian film, provides an example of a film that looks at intersections of race and class in a segregated society. The study of the distribution and reception of these films also illuminates how film can reinforce or challenge international economic and political policies. Hollywood and Nollywood offer respective examples. In relation to Black Orpheus, for example, students are broken up into groups and asked to research the various international responses to the controversial film and present them to the class for discussion of how racial issues, as presented in the film are read differently in different locations and time periods.

...use a comparative, intersectional, or relational framework to examine the experiences, cultures, or histories of two or more social groups or constituencies within a single society or across societies, and within a single historical timeframe or across historical time.

The films in this class are drawn from the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Southeast Asia. The films themselves stage multicultural, multilingual, and transnational encounters that demand comparative and

intersectional frameworks for analysis. Course readings and discussions are arranged to highlight the ways two or more groups can be "in conversation" with others within texts or across geographical and temporal boundaries. Students take on these issues in assigned paper topics that ask them to compare filmmakers from different groups on topics like ideas of freedom and democracy, displacement and migration, conceptions of time and progress, the individual and the larger (national/transnational) society.

...use information technologies to access research and communicate effectively about plural societies.

CMLT 280 makes use of information technologies, including databases and a course discussion board to allow students to communicate their research findings. Online discussion postings must be insightful, based on the movie it references, and include citations (author, page number or scene, etc.) from articles and reviews, along with the student's own thoughts and analysis.

Course Syllabus

View the course syllabus here.

Note: Your browser may download the syllabus, in which case you will have to open it in a separate program, i.e. Adobe Acrobat of Micro$oft Word, in order to view it.

Another Note: Some people are uploading Word .docx files (newer Word format). If your computer doesn't have a fairly recent version of Word installed (2007 or later), your computer won't know what to do with a .docx file and may try to open it as a "zip" file. You will have to either upgrade your version of Word, or install Micro$oft's Compatibility Pack to allow earlier versions of Word to open the file.

Review and Sign-Off

Submission Log

Departmental Review

College Review

Faculty Board: Humanities

Faculty Board: Understanding Plural Societies/Cultural Competence

Date	Submitted By	Comment
Apr 8, 2011	Thomas Colborn Moser Jr	This is the first submission of this long-standing and popular course. It is being submitted without any substantial changes.