Dr. Buckman

Humanities and Religious Studies 181: Contemporary Directions in Film (Area C4)

Office: Mendocino 2020/Office Phone: 278-5335/I am not on campus MWF
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:45-3:15pm and 5:00-5:30pm, Thursday 9-10:15am, and by appointment

e-mail: abuckman@saclink.csus.edu (This is preferable to the SacCT e-mail and more frequently checked.)

Required Texts and Materials:

- Required Texts: Contemporary American Cinema
  subscription to Netflix for semester (~$6/month for cheapest plan)
  packet from University Copy and Print
- Access to SacCT for discussion list, notes, and quizzes (online.csus.edu)
- Access to internet to watch select videos. You also may purchase or rent the actual DVDs if you wish, of course. The Sacramento Public Library system is also a good source for video/DVD.

NB: Credit Hours: This syllabus is constructed using the standard of the Carnegie Student Hour, which is the standard unit used by university accreditors for measuring student classroom and work hours per credit offered. For a 3-credit course, which this is, three hours are spent per week in class and six hours are spent on homework per week. This may be an average rather than an indicator of how much time is spent per week in the classroom.

Catalog Description: Examination of contemporary film and film criticism from an interdisciplinary perspective, stressing the links between film, literature, the visual arts and society

Course Description and Expectations: We will be examining trends in film from the mid-20th century to the present and following a largely historical pattern. Much of the course (in this iteration) will focus on American films, but we will discuss Indian, English, and German films as well as perhaps others. We will be combining our discussion of film with a discussion of cultural and aesthetic movements as well. Please remember that this course is meant to foster appreciation of a variety of films.

Watching unfamiliar films is one aspect of the course. Students are expected to have reading assignments (as well as other assignments) prepared as indicated in the syllabus or otherwise noted. Although this is an enjoyable class (or so I hope), it is also a serious academic one. You will not do well in the class unless you attend the entire class regularly, pay close attention to the films, and complete reading and writing assignments, exams, and quizzes. Although we will not be able to cover a discussion of all the material in the text fully, you will be responsible for familiarity with the information presented in the text: make note of questions you have and bring them to class. If you have a question or problem with class, please come and talk to me. BE PRO-ACTIVE!

Learning Goals: Upon completion of HRS 181, successful students will be able to:

- Appreciate and analyze a variety of films
- Compare and contrast theoretical approaches to filmmaking
- Demonstrate visual literacy
- Apply the techniques of formal analysis to film
- Understand and analyze the ways in which film contributes to and reflects the representation of diverse peoples.
- Understand current developments within 20th and 21st century filmmaking
Class Policies and Procedures:

Behavior: Respect for both one’s classmates and professor is appropriate to the college environment. This includes making a positive contribution to the course and not distracting from the learning of others: come on time, turn off all electronics, pay attention, and don’t leave during class. Tardiness is not acceptable since 1) it disrupts both other students and the professor and 2) you may miss valuable information. Therefore, please do not enter the classroom if you are more than 5 minutes late. Students should not leave class early unless they have a compelling reason and should, if at all possible, notify the instructor prior to class and sit near the doors. Students who use electronics in class or are otherwise disruptive will be asked to leave.

Participation: This class depends upon the full engagement of students with the material and the class itself. I expect students to participate in discussions on a regular and informed basis. Participation depends on positive contributions to class meetings. Simply being in attendance does not qualify as participating in the class. You CAN receive a failing participation grade even if you attend every class. Disruptive (and rude) behavior works against you in your participation grade.

Discussion list: To enhance participation and discussion of films, there will be a discussion board available on SacCT. Posts must be made within one week after viewing, or they will not be accepted as enhancing class participation. I will delete any messages posted after the due date. Students will be expected to respond in an intelligent manner to films shown in and/or readings assigned for the class. Responses should show an understanding of class materials as well as some analysis of them. Brief summaries without analysis will not be counted, nor will responses that don’t follow the rudiments of grammar and mechanics: this is not text messaging. Simply stating whether you liked the film is not considered useful participation. Try to analyze some cinematographic aspect of the film – how did it work? Adequate responses should probably be at least a good-sized paragraph. Respect of other students is also mandatory, so flaming will be counted against your participation grade. Students should show original thought and depth in their response. All students should read these posts, since students often post excellent points about the films in question. More guidelines may be posted on SacCT.

Attendance Policy: While it is very important to be present for class, I will not take attendance after the second week of classes. Quizzes and in-class assignments may not be made up. If you are consistently absent, you cannot make a contribution to class participation, and, thus, that grade will go down.

Academic Integrity: Please turn in work that is solely your own. Appropriate credit must be given to the work of others, including DVD commentary. Credit includes the proper use of paraphrasing and quoting as well as citations within and at the end of the paper. If you are unsure about what this means, please come and speak with me. PLAGIARISM HAS SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES, INCLUDING THE FAILURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT, FAILURE OF THE COURSE, AND/OR EXPULSION FROM THE COLLEGE. YOU WILL RECEIVE A ZERO FOR THE ESSAY AND THUS LIKELY FAIL THE COURSE IF YOU PLAGIARIZE. REWRITES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED.

Formatting of Essays: Essays should be typed, double spaced, and have 1” margins with Times New Roman 12 font and black ink. Please staple your essays PRIOR to class. Don’t use a cover or a folder. At the top of the first page, single spaced, include a descriptive title for your paper in addition to tagging information (your name/my name/the date).
Grading: The course syllabus indicates the dates of exams and due dates of papers. 100 points are available for the course. Neither the course nor the assignments are graded on a curve.

Midterm: 20 points; Essay: 25 points; Final: 20 points; Discussion: 15 points; Quizzes: 20 points
(all scores will be recorded out of 100, however, for ease of understanding: ex. a 24/25 on the midterm will be recorded as a 96/100)

Due Dates:
Tests: Tests are scheduled as indicated on the class calendar. Make-ups are not permitted unless a compelling and verifiable emergency interferes, ex. death or severe illness. Make-ups are given at the convenience of the test giver. The CSUS calendar, which lists exam week, is available far in advance of classes: http://www.csus.edu/acaf/calendars/. DO NOT SCHEDULE VACATIONS DURING EXAMS. If you have done so, please drop the class.

Also, be sure that your employer is willing to work with you re: exams.

Papers:
1. Your essay must be turned in prior to the beginning of class on the date it is due. Essays should be turned in via the online course delivery system. I must be able to open any attachments (must be in MS Word).
2. If you have problems completing an assignment, you must talk to me BEFORE it is due so that we may work out an alternative. If you don’t discuss an extension with me, the paper will not be accepted. Any extensions must be approved in writing. Late papers will be penalized 5 points if they come in after 1pm and 5 points for every day thereafter (including weekends → 10 points).

Schedule of Reading and Viewing: (subject to change at instructor’s discretion)
8/30 Week 1 Introduction
8/30 Introductory remarks; quiz on syllabus. For Thursday, watch My Man Godfrey on Netflix.
9/01 A Short Overview of Film History – read 415-446 from Looking at Movies
The Hollywood Standard: clips in class: Singin’ in the Rain
For next week: watch Bonnie and Clyde on Netflix
9/6 Week 2 The Demise of the Studio System and the 1960s
9/06 3-61 CAC
9/08 62-107 CAC; quiz online
For next week: watch Superman on Netflix
9/13 Week 3 The 1970s, the Blockbuster
9/13 124-183 CAC
9/15 184-208 CAC; quiz online
For next week: watch Full Metal Jacket on Netflix
9/20 Week 4 TBA; quiz online on Thursday, 9/22
For next week: watch Do the Right Thing on Netflix
9/27 Week 5 The 1980s and Politics
9/27 223-279 CAC
9/29 280-315 CAC; quiz online
For next week: watch Silence of the Lambs on Netflix
10/4 Week 6 The 1990s and Changes
10/04 325-397 CAC
10/06 398-438 CAC; quiz online; Run Lola Run
For next week: watch The Crying Game on Netflix

10/11 Week 7
10/11 TBA
10/13 midterm
For next week: watch Pulp Fiction

10/18 Week 8 Read: Into the 21st Century, from American Cinema, American Culture, pp 385-419
10/18 385-397 CAC; essay due
10/20 398-418 CAC; quiz online
For next week: watch Firefly, at least numbers 1, 8, 14 (pilot, “Out of Gas,” and “Objects in Space”) on Netflix

10/25 Week 9 Genre, Film and Smart TV
10/25 watch Serenity on Netflix for next time
10/27 quiz online
For next week: watch Starz Inside: Anime: Drawing a Revolution and Ghost in the Shell on Netflix

11/01 Weeks 10 -11 Anime, Animation, Digital Cinema and the Web
11/01 14-34 from Anime: from Akira to Howl’s Moving Castle. For Thursday: watch Toy Story 3 on Netflix
11/03 quiz online
For next week: watch Dr. Horrible’s Sing-Along Blog on Netflix (or iTunes or Hulu);
also watch Starz Inside: Comic Books Unbound

11/08 Week 11
11/08 TBA
11/10 quiz online
For next week: watch Ang Lee’s Eat Drink Man Woman on Netflix

11/15 Week 12 Globalization and International Cinema
11/15 Read chap 14, pp302-361: from Introduction to Film Studies
11/17 quiz online; watch Bride and Prejudice in class

11/22 Week 13
11/22 cont. B&P
11/24 closed campus
For next week: watch Billy Elliott on Netflix

11/29 Week 14 Discuss Billy Elliott, musicals
12/06 Week 15 Wrap Up and Review
12/13 Final