Why go to all the trouble to figure out underlying meanings when you can just sit back and watch the show? In-depth exploration can make watching films more interesting, more fun, and more useful. Almost all movies contain many more ideas and much more information than comes across on a superficial viewing. As with all the arts, the more you discover and understand about the aesthetic principles governing the work, the richer your experience of that work will be. And finally, a close examination leads to an understanding of how the media use values, social expectations, and widely shared beliefs and structures to affect viewers.


Catalogue Description:
An introduction to the esthetics of cinema with special attention to the evolution of a critical theory of cinema within the framework of twentieth century arts and ideas.

Course Description and Objectives:
By way of a critical examination of film, this course seeks to allow students to become more than passive viewers of movies. As Richard Barsam points out in Looking at Movies, “[e]verything we see on the movie screen—everything that engages our senses, emotions, and minds—results from hundreds of decisions affecting the interrelations of formal cinematic elements: narrative, composition, design, cinematography, acting, editing, and sound.” With this in mind, this course asks students to “look at movies with an understanding and appreciation of how filmmakers make the decisions that help them tell a story and create the foundation for its meaning.”
Required Reading:
Ed Sikov: *Film Studies*
Cynthia Weber: *Imagining America at War*
David Slocum, ed.: *Hollywood and War The Film Reader*

Special Note: This is going to be a rather different film class than you might be expecting. I’ve decided to do a whole semester on War and Politics. Now we will talk about film in general, but I am much more interested in how film is used as a way to think about our cultural experiences. One of the problems with war films, is that the majority of what I want to show are far too long for our class sessions, so we will have to talk about this on the first night. If you are not interested in really discussing film, this may not be the course for you. You want to keep in mind that the assignments you will be asked to write will require you to think about not just the film but the period in which the film was made—so the course will be interdisciplinary. Don’t panic, I will help you through and we’ll all make it through to the end. As to our reading. There is no easy way to read these books. The best would be if you had them read before the class started, but I don’t expect that is practical. But I’m going to assign all the reading up front. We will also talk about that the first night of class. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Requirements:
1) Students are required to do all the reading. Although there will be no in-class tests or quizzes, your essays should reflect your understanding of the material.
2) Students will be given three short essay assignments (2-3 pages) during the course of the semester. *(Due dates and point totals for assignments are listed below.)*
3) Students will be given a final take home assignment, 4-5-pages. Requirements for this essay assignment will be posted on SacCT toward the end of the semester.
4) Students are required to be prepared to discuss the material. If I have to call on students, I will, but I much prefer that students are willing to participate.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:
The Sac State Catalogue says the following about Academic Honesty:

> The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento expects that faculty, staff, and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades. Students are expected to know and abide by university policy about cheating, including plagiarism. The entire document, Policies and Procedures Regarding Academic Honesty, may be found on the university’s web site.

Cheating will not be tolerated in this course. If you cheat by using disallowed sources, copying from someone else’s paper, or plagiarizing, you will receive a failing grade for the course. You are also subject to being expelled from the university.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICIES:
Cell Phones are not permitted for use in classroom during class sessions unless there is an emergency. This includes listening to messages, texting, e-mailing, etc. Turn phones to vibrate when you enter the room. If you are using a Cell Phone in the classroom during a class session you will be asked to leave the room for the rest of the session. You may use a computer in class.
to take notes or to check relevant course material. If you have other work to do on your computer, or simply want to play games or watch videos, do those things somewhere else!

**GRADE BREAKDOWN:**
- 200-190=A
- 189-184=A-
- 183-176=B+
- 175-166=B
- 165-160=B-
- 159-156=C+
- 155-146=C
- 145-140=C-
- 139-136=D+
- 135-126=D
- 125-120=D-
- 119-000=F

**ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:**
- First Assignment (20 Points): September 22
- Second Assignment (40 Points): October 13
- Third Assignment (40 Points): November 24
- Final Assignment (100 Points): December 15

**Course Outline:**
- **Week One: September 1**
  - Opening discussion
- **Week Two: September 8:**
  - Film: Rambo: First Blood II
- **Week Three: September 15**
  - Discussion
- **Week Four: September 22:**
  - Film: Paths of Glory
  - First Assignment Due
- **Week Five: September 29**
  - Film: All Quiet on the Western Front
- **Week Six: October 6**
  - Discussion
- **Week Seven: October 13**
  - Film: The Way We Were
  - Second Assignment Due
- **Week Eight: October 20**
  - Film: The Sands of Iwo Jima
- **Week Nine: October 27**
  - Film: Flags of Our Fathers
Week Ten: November 3
Film: Letters from Iwo Jima
Week Eleven: November 10

Week Twelve: November 17
Discussion

Week Thirteen: November 24
Film: Platoon
Third Assignment Due

Week Fourteen: December 1
Film: Full Metal Jacket

Week Fifteen: December 8
Discussion

Week Sixteen: Finals Week: December 15
Final Assignment Due: December 15