Course information:
Copy and paste current course information from Class Search/Course Catalog.

Subject POS  Number 294  Title Watching Politics: How Films Explain American Politics
Is this a cross-listed course?  No
Is this a shared course?  (choose one)  If so, list all academic units offering this course  No
Course description:

Requested designation: Humanities, Fine Arts and Design-HU
Note: a separate proposal is required for each designation requested

Eligibility:
Permanent numbered courses must have completed the university's review and approval process.
For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact the General Studies Program Office at (480) 965-0739.

Area(s) proposed course will serve:
A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study.

Checklists for general studies designations:
Complete and attach the appropriate checklist
- Literacy and Critical Inquiry core courses (L)
- Mathematics core courses (MA)
- Computer/statistics/quantitative applications core courses (CS)
- Humanities, Fine Arts and Design core courses (HU)
- Social and Behavioral Sciences core courses (SB)
- Natural Sciences core courses (SO/SG)
- Global Awareness courses (G)
- Historical Awareness courses (H)
- Cultural Diversity in the United States courses (C)

A complete proposal should include:
- Signed General Studies Program Course Proposal Cover Form
- Criteria Checklist for the area
- Course Syllabus
- Table of Contents from the textbook, and/or lists of course materials

Contact information:
Name  Kim Fridkin
Phone  965-4195
Mail code  3902  E-mail: fridkin@asu.edu

Department Chair/Director approval: (Required)
Chair/Director name (Typed): Kim Fridkin  Date: 6/13/13
Chair/Director (Signature):

Rev. 1/94, 4/95, 7/98, 4/00, 1/02, 10/08, 11/11/12/11, 7/12
Rationale and Objectives

The humanities disciplines are concerned with questions of human existence and meaning, the nature of thinking and knowing, with moral and aesthetic experience. The humanities develop values of all kinds by making the human mind more supple, critical, and expansive. They are concerned with the study of the textual and artistic traditions of diverse cultures, including traditions in literature, philosophy, religion, ethics, history, and aesthetics. In sum, these disciplines explore the range of human thought and its application to the past and present human environment. They deepen awareness of the diversity of the human heritage and its traditions and histories and they may also promote the application of this knowledge to contemporary societies.

The study of the arts and design, like the humanities, deepens the student’s awareness of the diversity of human societies and cultures. The fine arts have as their primary purpose the creation and study of objects, installations, performances and other means of expressing or conveying aesthetic concepts and ideas. Design study concerns itself with material objects, images and spaces, their historical development, and their significance in society and culture. Disciplines in the fine arts and design employ modes of thought and communication that are often nonverbal, which means that courses in these areas tend to focus on objects, images, and structures and/or on the practical techniques and historical development of artistic and design traditions. The past and present accomplishments of artists and designers help form the student’s ability to perceive aesthetic qualities of art work and design.

The Humanities, Fine Arts and Design are an important part of the General Studies Program, for they provide an opportunity for students to study intellectual and imaginative traditions and to observe and/or learn the production of art work and design. The knowledge acquired in courses fulfilling the Humanities, Fine Arts and Design requirement may encourage students to investigate their own personal philosophies or beliefs and to understand better their own social experience. In sum, the Humanities, Fine Arts and Design core area enables students to broaden and deepen their consideration of the variety of human experience.

Revised October 2008
Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

**ASU - [HU] CRITERIA**

**HUMANITIES, FINE ARTS AND DESIGN [HU]** courses must meet *either 1, 2, or 3 and* at least one of the criteria under 4 in such a way as to make the satisfaction of these criteria a **CENTRAL AND SUBSTANTIAL PORTION** of the course content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Identify Documentation Submitted</th>
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1. Emphasize the study of values, of the development of philosophies, religions, ethics or belief systems, and/or aesthetic experience.

2. Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of written, aural, or visual texts, and/or the historical development of textual traditions.

3. Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of material objects, images and spaces, and/or their historical development.

4. In addition, to qualify for the Humanities, Fine Arts and Design designation, a course must meet one or more of the following requirements:
   a. Concerns the development of human thought, including emphasis on the analysis of philosophical and/or religious systems of thought.
   b. Concerns aesthetic systems and values, literary and visual arts.
   c. Emphasizes aesthetic experience in the visual and performing arts, including music, dance, theater, and in the applied arts, including architecture and design.
   d. Deepen awareness of the analysis of literature and the development of literary traditions.

**THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE:**

- Courses devoted primarily to developing a skill in the creative or performing arts, including courses that are primarily studio classes in the Herberger College of the Arts and in the College of Design.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASU - [HU] CRITERIA</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Courses devoted primarily to developing skill in the use of a language. However,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language courses that emphasize cultural study and the study of literature can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be allowed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Courses which emphasize the acquisition of quantitative or experimental methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Courses devoted primarily to teaching skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Course Prefix | Number | Title | Designation
---|---|---|---
POS | 294 | Watching Politics: How Films Explain American Politics | HU

Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the specific designation criteria. Please use the following organizer to explain how the criteria are being met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (from checksheet)</th>
<th>How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)</th>
<th>Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students will increase their understanding of political films as visual and aural texts by learning about film techniques and aspects of film production. In addition, students will learn about the history of the political film in the U.S.</td>
<td>These topics will be covered explicitly during the first 1/2 of the course (Sections I-III of the syllabus), but implicitly during the remainder of the course. Fifteen chapters in two textbooks will explicitly deal with these issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d</td>
<td>By learning about the history of political film as well as the techniques used in filmmaking, students will gain a deeper awareness of the analysis of the film as an aural and visual texts.</td>
<td>We will cover these topics in detail in the first 1/2 of the course in Section I-III. For example, Chapter 2 of the Christensen and Hass text is titled, &quot;The Making of a Message: Film Production and Techniques and Political Messages&quot; (page 41-60).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Catalog Description:

**Watching Politics: How Films Explain American Politics**
The course will trace the evolution of American Politics over the last century by examining how film portrays (1) major political events (2) as well as changes in the role of race, class, gender, and sexuality in American politics.
POS 294: Watching Politics: How Films Explain American Politics

Spring 2014
Classroom: 
Office Hrs
Class Time:

Professor Kim Fridkin
fridkin@asu.edu
Office: 6752 Coor Hall

Purpose of Course: In this course, we will rely on visual and aural texts (i.e., film) to trace the evolution of American Politics over the last century. The course will examine the major historical events (i.e., the Depression, the Holocaust, the Vietnam War, 9/11) by looking at films written during or about these events. The course will also examine how the nature of political film has changed over the same time frame. Furthermore, since the political history of the United States involves a diversity of experiences, with different groups playing important roles in the political events of this country, we will spend time examining changes in the role of race, class, gender, and sexuality in American politics.

The requirements for this course are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hourly Exam #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hourly Exam #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly Exam #3</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Required Reading
Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin (2009). *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*. Wiley-Blackwell

Schedule of Topics

I. Understanding and Interpreting Political Films (Week of January 13)
   Benshoff and Griffin, Chapter 1
   Christensen and Hass, Chapter 1-3

II. The Structure and History of Filmmaking (Week of January 20)
   Benshoff and Griffin, Chapter 2
   Christensen and Hass, Appendix 1

III. Political Films By Decade
     1910s-1930s (Week of January 27)
     Events to Be Covered: World War I, The Great Depression
     Readings: Christensen and Hass, Chapter 4-5
     Film to Be Viewed: Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

     1940s-1950s (Week of Week of February 3)
     Events to Be Covered: World War II, Authoritarianism, Communism
     Readings: Christensen and Hass, Chapter 6-7
     Film to Be Viewed: The Manchurian Candidate

     1960s-1970s (Week of February 10)
     Events to Be Covered: Vietnam War, Civil Rights, Watergate,
     Readings: Christensen and Hass, Chapter 8-9
     Film to Be Viewed: All the President’s Men

     1980s (Week of February 17)
     Events to Be Covered: New Patriotism and Capitalism, Iran-Contra Scandal
     Readings: Christensen and Hass, Chapter 10
     Film to Be Viewed: Silkwood

     1990s and Beyond 9/11 (February 24)
     Events to Be Covered: Collapse of Soviet Union, 2000 Election, 9/11, Recession,
     Readings: Christensen and Hass, Chapter 11
     Film to Be Viewed: Wag the Dog

IV Political Films by Topic

   Ethnic Minorities and Film (Week of March 3-Week of March 17)
   Readings: Benshoff and Griffin, Chapters 3-7
   Films to Be Viewed: Do The Right Thing; Little Big Man
Class and American Film (Week of March 24-Week of March 31)
Readings: Benshoff and Griffin, Chapters 8-9
Films to Be Viewed: *Meet John Doe, Norma Rae*

Gender and American Film (Week of April 7-Week of April 14)
Readings: Benshoff and Griffin, Chapters 10-13
Films to Be Viewed: *State of the Union, The Contender*

Sexuality and American Film (Week of April 21)
Readings: Benshoff and Griffin, Chapters 14-15
Film to Be Viewed: *Milk*

**V. What We Know from Political Film** (Week of April 28)
Readings: Benshoff and Griffin, Chapters 17, Christensen and Hass, Chapter 15
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