

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY EAST/TEMPE CAMPUS
GENERAL STUDIES PROGRAM COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM

Courses submitted to the GSC between 2/1 and 4/30 if approved, will be effective the following Spring.

Courses submitted between 5/1 and 1/31 if approved, will be effective the following Fall.

(SUBMISSION VIA ADOBE.PDF FILES IS PREFERRED)

DATE 10/27/08

1. ACADEMIC UNIT: Film and Media Studies

2. COURSE PROPOSED: FMS 370 "Signs of Aliens" 3
(prefix) (number) (title) (semester hours)

3. CONTACT PERSON: Name: Daniel Bernardi Phone: 480-965-6493
Mail Code: 0402 E-Mail: daniel.bernardi@asu.edu

4. ELIGIBILITY: New courses must be approved by the Tempe Campus Curriculum Subcommittee and must have a regular course number. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact the General Studies Program Office at 965-0739.

5. 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.

Core Areas

Literacy and Critical Inquiry—L
Mathematical Studies—MA CS
Humanities and Fine Arts—HU
Social and Behavioral Sciences—SB
Natural Sciences—SQ SG

Awareness Areas

Global Awareness—G
Historical Awareness—H
Cultural Diversity in the United States—C
(Note: one course per form)

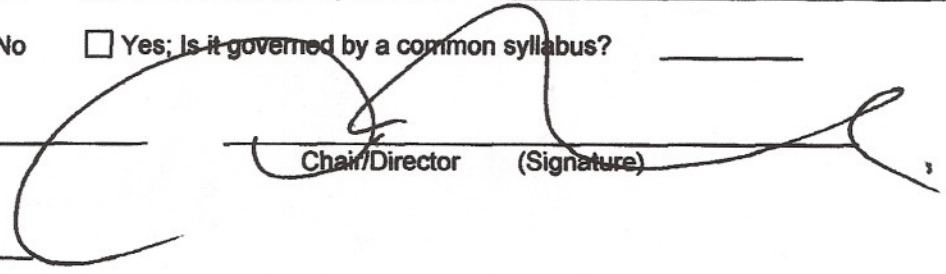
6. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED.
(1) Course Description
(2) Course Syllabus
(3) Criteria Checklist for the area
(4) Table of Contents from the textbook used, if available

7. *In the space provided below (or on a separate sheet), please also provide a description of how the course meets the specific criteria in the area for which the course is being proposed.*

CROSS-LISTED COURSES: No Yes; Please identify courses: TCL 370

Is this a multisection course?: No Yes; Is it governed by a common syllabus? _____

Daniel Bernardi
Chair/Director (Print or Type)


Chair/Director (Signature)

Date: 10/29/08

Arizona State University Criteria Checklist for

CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES [C]

Rationale and Objectives

The contemporary "culture" of the United States involves the complex interplay of many different cultures that exist side by side in various states of harmony and conflict. The history of the United States involves the experiences not only of different groups of European immigrants and their descendants but also of diverse groups of American Indians, Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans--all of whom played significant roles in the development of contemporary culture and together shape the future of the United States. At the same time, the recognition that gender, class, and religious differences cut across all distinctions of race and ethnicity offers an even richer variety of perspectives from which to view ourselves. Awareness of our cultural diversity and its multiple sources can illuminate our collective past, present, and future and can help us to achieve greater mutual understanding and respect.

The objective of the Cultural Diversity requirement is to promote awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity within the contemporary United States through the study of the cultural, social, or scientific contributions of women and minority groups, examination of their experiences in the U.S., or exploration of successful or unsuccessful interactions between and among cultural groups.

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

| ASU--[C] CRITERIA | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES | | | |
| YES | NO | | Identify Documentation Submitted |
| | | 1. A Cultural Diversity course must meet the following general criteria: | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The course must contribute to an understanding of cultural diversity in contemporary U.S. Society. | |
| | | 2. A Cultural Diversity course must then meet at least one of the following specific criteria: | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | a. The course is an in-depth study of culture-specific elements, cultural experiences, or cultural contributions (in areas such as education, history, language, literature, art, music, science, politics, work, religion, and philosophy) of women, racial minority groups, and/or ethnic minority groups within the United States. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | b. The course is primarily a comparative study of the diverse cultural contributions, experiences, or world views of two or more ethnic or racial minority groups in the U.S. | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | c. The course is primarily a study of the social, economic, political, or psychological dimensions of relations between and among racial, ethnic, and gender groups in the U.S. | |

In the space provided below (or on a separate sheet), please also provide a description of how the course meets the specific criteria in the area for which the course is being proposed.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES [C]

This course promotes awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity within the contemporary United States through the study of the social significance of alienation as an aesthetic expression and value system in the context of religion, race, gender and sexuality.

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FMS/TCL/REL 370
Signs of Aliens:
Semiotics of Film and Popular Culture
(Winter 2008)

Professor: Dr. Daniel Bernardi (a.k.a. DrB)
Email: daniel.bernardi@asu.edu
Course URL: <http://www.asu.edu/courses/fms370/>
Office Hours: By Appointment

COURSE OUTLINE

This class focuses on the sign of the alien – an otherwise trivial element of popular culture that nonetheless carries a number of profound and troubling ideologies: xenophobia, racism, misogyny, fatalism, utopianism, etc. Indeed, signs of aliens can be found in many forms and in various places: globular clusters in rocks, words in literature, tales on the radio, images in motion pictures, bumper stickers and other commodities, digital bits on the Web. This course assumes that signs of aliens tell us more about ourselves than they do about life beyond our planet. Thus, we will not debate the truth or falsity of extra-terrestrial existence (though we will discuss the meaning of truth and falsity). Instead, we will employ semiotics and cultural studies to uncover the social significance of alienation as an aesthetic expression and value system in the context of religion, race, gender and sexuality.

Although this course is Web-delivered, it is neither automated nor self-paced. You are expected to engage in all learning tasks. To access the class website, you can use your personal computer, one in the library, and/or computer labs at ASU. Check the class website for a list of these labs and their hours of operation.

Reading: There is one required book for the class, Daniel Bernardi's *Star Trek and History: Race-ing Toward a White Future*. You will likely need to buy it either at the [ASU bookstore](#) or from an online distributor such as [Amazon.com](#). It will take at least two weeks for the book to arrive, so be sure to order it well before class begins. You will also be reading a few articles, all of which have been posted to the virtual classroom in the Learning Tasks section. To honor copyright law, they have been password protected. The teaching team will email you the passwords before the first day of class. Read the book and articles carefully and on time, as they form the basis of both the eBoard discussions and the exams.

Screenings: You are responsible for screening one film or television program per lesson. The specific titles are listed under the Lesson section. You can purchase the titles through [Amazon](#) (or another on-line distributor) or rent them at your local video store. Several are available at the [ASU library](#). A fast and effective way to secure the films is to open a [NetFlix](#) account. It is your responsibility to

secure and watch the films. Don't watch them for entertainment. Take notes and view the screenings numerous times. The screenings also form the basis of both written work and exams.

Academic Dishonesty: You are expected to turn in original work for this course. Quotations or ideas paraphrased from other work must be properly cited. Taking credit for another's ideas or writing is plagiarism, which is a serious violation of the [University's Code of Academic Integrity](#). In the "Student Academic Integrity Policy" manual, ASU defines "'Plagiarism" [as] using another's words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another's work or materials and for acknowledging and documenting the source appropriately." Academic dishonesty, including inappropriate collaboration, will not be tolerated. There are severe sanctions for cheating, plagiarizing and any other form of dishonesty.

GRADED WORK

We expect every student to leave this course with a better – more insightful – understanding of the function of alienation in American popular culture, as well as some of the methods use to analyze signs of alienation in popular text (e.g. semiotics, cultural studies, social history, psychoanalysis, etc.). Along the way, we ask that you complete several interactive reading reviews, engage in all learning tasks, and answer and ask questions on our electronic bulletin board.

Participation (100 Points): You are responsible for participating in the threaded discussions that take place on the electronic bulleting board (eBoard). You should post two substantive comments or questions per Lesson. A "substantive" post is one that is thoughtful, developed and connected to the lesson topic; typically, substantive posts are more than three sentences long. These posts must keep up with the progress of the course. You cannot, for example, go back to the eBoard and post to a Lesson after it has been completed and expect for the posts to be counted toward your participation grade. The teaching team will keep track of your participation, including assessing the value of what you bring to this interactivity. Refrain from flaming or ad hominem comments. Please be rigorous but constructive.

Critical Review #1 (100 Points): This assignment asks you to critically analyze a film for the way it represents aliens as metaphors of race. Check the website or email your TA for a list of the films you may analyze. You must analyze one of these films. Your grade will be based on the clarity and relevance of your thesis statement, clear and concise writing, and adherence to the assignment guidelines. Your paper must be double-spaced, include one-inch margins all-around, be no less than three (3) pages long, and include:

- 1) A clear thesis statement. Check the class website or email your instructor to find out how to structure a thesis statement. In proving your thesis,

refrain from focusing on thematic elements or dialogue. Instead, focus on the relationship between representation and visual style (i.e. how the representational strategy you elect to analyze is shaped by creative choices).

- 2) An analysis of the representation of race using the reading from Lessons 1 through 5 and one unassigned reading from the bibliography. Make sure to incorporate the many definitions/concepts we have covered in lecture and the readings.
- 3) In your analysis, make sure to discuss at least three scenes that will drive your argument to a conclusion.
- 4) When submitting your paper via email, it must be in Word. You should turn on "Read Receipt" to ensure that we received your paper. Double check to make sure you actually attached the correct paper in the correct format. We do not accept excuses for missed deadlines or papers sent in the wrong format.

Critical Review #2 (100 Points): Learning from our evaluation of your first paper, this assignment also asks you to critically analyze a film for the way it represents aliens as metaphors of gender conflict. Check the website or email your TA for a list of the films you may analyze. You must analyze one of these films. Your grade will be based on the clarity and relevance of your thesis statement, clear and concise writing, and adherence to the assignment guidelines. Your paper must be double-spaced, include one-inch margins all-around, be no less than five (5) pages long, and include:

- 1) A clear thesis statement. Check the class website or email your instructor to find out how to structure a thesis statement. In proving your thesis, refrain from focusing on thematic elements or dialogue. Instead, focus on the relationship between representation and visual style (i.e. how the representational strategy you elect to analyze is shaped by creative choices)
- 2) An analysis of the representation of race using the reading from Lessons 6 through 10 and one unassigned reading from the bibliography. Make sure to incorporate the many definitions/concepts we have covered in lecture and the readings.
- 3) In your analysis, make sure to discuss at least three scenes that will drive your argument to a conclusion.
- 4) When submitting your paper via email, it must be in Word. You should turn on "Read Receipt" to ensure that we received your paper. Double check to make sure you actually attached the correct paper in the correct format. We do not accept excuses for missed deadlines or papers sent in the wrong format.

Critical Review #3 (100 Points): Revising your first or second paper, expand your argument to include a more thorough analysis of the film(s) you analyzed. Incorporate sexuality into your analysis. Incorporate into your paper readings

from the last five lectures of the class, using them to guide your revision. You must cite at least two of these readings in your paper. Your grade will be based on the clarity and relevance of your thesis statement, clear and concise writing, and adherence to the assignment guidelines. Your paper must be double-spaced, include one-inch margins all-around, be no less than five (5) pages long, and include:

- 1) A clear thesis statement. Check the class website or email your instructor to find out how to structure a thesis statement. In proving your thesis, refrain from focusing on thematic elements or dialogue. Instead, focus on the relationship between representation and visual style (i.e. how the representational strategy you elect to analyze is shaped by creative choices)
- 2) An analysis of the representation of race using the reading from lessons 11 through 15 and one unassigned reading from the bibliography. Make sure to incorporate the many definitions/concepts we have covered in lecture and the readings.
- 3) In your analysis, make sure to discuss at least three scenes that will drive your argument to a conclusion.
- 4) When submitting your paper via email, it must be in Word. You should turn on "Read Receipt" to ensure that we received your paper. Double check to make sure you actually attached the correct paper in the correct format. We do not accept excuses for missed deadlines or papers sent in the wrong format.

Grading Scale: 0 to 400 Points

| | | | |
|----|-------|------|--------------|
| A+ | ..... | 401+ | Points |
| A | ..... | 372 | - 400 Points |
| A- | ..... | 360 | - 371 Points |
| B+ | ..... | 352 | - 359 Points |
| B | ..... | 332 | - 351 Points |
| B- | ..... | 320 | - 331 Points |
| C+ | ..... | 312 | - 319 Points |
| C | ..... | 280 | - 311 Points |
| D | ..... | 240 | - 279 Points |
| E | ..... | 000 | - 239 Points |

LEARNING TASKS

This course is comprised of 15 lessons. Each lesson includes all or some of the following tasks:

1. Reading: Read a chapter from the assigned book.
2. Reading Review: Reconsider Key Concepts from the Readings
3. Screening: Study Films Screened for Class
4. Website: Surf Relevant Websites
5. iModules: Engage Interactive Learning Modules
6. Media Clips: Review Scenes Referenced in Readings & Lectures

7. Lecture: Listen to Streaming Audio Lectures with PowerPoint Slides
 8. eBoard: Pose and Answer Questions on the Electronic Bulletin Board

UNIT I: METHODOLOGIES

Lesson 01: Etymology And Anatomy (Tuesday, 12/30)

- Reading:** "Alien" (*The Oxford English Dictionary*)
 "Anthropomorphism" (*The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, 2006)
- Audio:** *War of The Worlds*
- Screening:** *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (Robert Wise, 1951)
- Media Clip:** *War of The Worlds* (Byron Haskin, 1953)
The Day the Earth Stood Still (Robert Wise, 1951)
- Lecture:** Why study signs of aliens?
- iModule:** Find the Meaning of the Alien
- eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 02: Modes Of Alien Production (Wednesday, 12/31)

- Reading:** "Alienation" (Tom Bottomore, 1983)
Reading Review
- Screening:** *Alien Nation*
- Media Clip:** *Alien Nation* (Graham Baker, 1988)
Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982)
- Lecture:** What's the importance of Marxist "alienation?"
- iModule:** The Structure of Alienation
- eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 03: Signifying Systems (Friday, 1/2)

- Reading:** "Introducing Semiotics" (Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993)
Reading Review
- Screening:** *Space Balls* (Mel Brooks, 1987)
- Media Clip:** *Alien Autopsy: (Fact or Fiction?)* (Tom McGough, 1995)
Spaceballs (Mel Brooks, 1987)
- Lecture:** Introduction to Semiotics
- iModule:** What is semiotics?
- eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

UNIT II: SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Lesson 04: Scientific Leaps of Faith (Saturday, 1/3)

- Reading:** "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" (Thomas Khun, 1962)
Reading Review
- Screening:** *Contact* (Robert Zemeckis, 1997)
- Media Clip:** *Contact* (Robert Zemeckis, 1997)
 "The Chase" (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*, 1987 – 1993)

Lecture: What's the link between science and aliens?
iModule: Run the Drake
eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 05: The Good Book And/As Sci-Fi (Monday, 1/5)

Reading: "Ufology, God-Talk, and Theology" (Brend Denzler, 2002)
"The Alien Messiah" (Allan Ruppersberg, 1990)

Reading Review

Screening: *Starman* (John Carpenter, 1984)

Media Clip: *Starman* (John Carpenter, 1984)
The Day the Earth Stood Still (Robert Wise, 1951)

Lecture: What's the link between religion and aliens?
iModule: Extraterrestrial Timeline
eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 06: Conspiracy Theories (Tuesday, 1/6)

Reading: "The Truth is Out There" (Jodi Dean, 1997)

Reading Review

WebSite: *Pan Left*

Screening: *The X-Files: Fight The Future* (Rob Bowman, 1998)

Media Clip: *The X-Files: Fight The Future* (Rob Bowman, 1998)
Communion (Philippe Mora, 1989)
Fire in the Sky (Robert Lieberman, 1993)

Lecture: What are the politics of conspiracy narratives?
iModule: Programmed, Categorized or Referenced
eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

**Critical Review 1: Due to your instructor as an email attachment on
1/7 at 9:00am MST.**

UNIT III: RACE, GENDER & SEXUALITY I

Lesson 07: Critical Race Theory (Wednesday, 1/7)

Reading: *Star Trek and History*, Chapter 1 (Daniel Bernardi, 1988)

Reading Review

Screening: *Star Wars: Episode 1* (George Lucas, 1999)

Media Clip: *Star Wars: Episode 1* (George Lucas, 1999)
The Brother from Another Planet (John Sayles, 1984)

Lecture: What's race but "alienation?"

iModule: Ideology in Star Wars
eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 08: Trek in the 1960s (Thursday, 1/8)

Reading: *Star Trek and History*, Chapter 2 (Daniel Bernardi, 1988)

Reading Review

Screening: "Elaan of Troyius" (*Star Trek*, 1966 – 1969)

Media Clip: “Elaan of Troyius” (*Star Trek*, 1966 – 1969)
“Let That Be Your Last Battlefield” (*Star Trek*, 1966 – 1969)
Lecture: What’s the link between aliens and Liberal-Humanism?
iModule: Diegetic Logics
eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 09: Trek on the Silver Screen (Friday, 1/9)

Reading: *Star Trek and History*, Chapter 3 (Daniel Bernardi, 1988)
Reading Review

Screening: *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (Nicholas Meyer, 1991)

Media Clip: *Star Trek VI* (Nicholas Meyer, 1991)
Enemy Mine (Wolfgang Petersen, 1985)

Lecture: What are chronotopes?

iModule: Chronotopes

eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

UNIT IV: RACE, GENDER & SEXUALITY II

Lesson 10: Trek in the 1980s (Saturday, 1/10)

Star Trek and History, Chapter 4 (Daniel Bernardi, 1988)

Reading Review

Screening: “Code of Honor” (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*, 1987 – 1993)

Media Clip: “Code of Honor” (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*, 1987 – 1993)

Lecture: What’s the link between aliens and Neoconservatism?

iModule: Intertextuality

eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

**Critical Review 2: Due to your instructor as an email attachment on
1/10 at 5:00pm MST.**

Lesson 11: Scopophilia (Monday, 1/12)

Reading: “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (Laura Mulvey, 1985)
Reading Review

Screening: *Barbarella* (Roger Vadim, 1968)

Media Clip: *Barbarella* (Roger Vadim, 1968)
Elaan of Troyius” (*Star Trek*, 1966 – 1969)

Lecture: What’s gender but alienation?

eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 12: Sexuality (Tuesday, 1/13)

Reading: “Sexuality and Identity” (John Kilgore, 1986)
Reading Review

Screening: *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Jim Sharman, 1975)

Media Clip: *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Jim Sharman, 1975)
Flash Gordon (Mike Hodges, 1980)

Lecture: How about sex with aliens?

iModule: Rocky Horror Picture Show Homepage
eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

UNIT V: HUMAN ALIENS

Lesson 13: Illegal Aliens (Wednesday, 1/14)

Reading: "Humor as Subversive Deconstruction" (Rosa Linda Fregoso, 1993)

Reading Review

WebSite: Alien Sedition Laws

Screening: *Born In East L.A.* (Cheech Marin, 1987)

Media Clip: *Born In East L.A.* (Cheech Marin, 1987)
ABC News Nightline (1987)

Lecture: Who are the "real" aliens?

iModule: U.S. Citizenship Test

eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 14: Social and Self Alienation (Thursday, 1/15)

Reading: "The Michael Jackson Fact" (Elizabeth Haiken, 1999)

Reading Review

WebSite: *Digital Lavater*

Screening: *Thriller* (John Landis, 1983)

Media Clip: *Thriller* (John Landis, 1983)

Lecture: Is Michael Jackson an alien?

iModule: The Alienation of Michael

eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 15: Preparing for your Final Exam (Friday, 1/16)

Reading: *Star Trek and History*, Chapter 5 (Daniel Bernardi, 1988)

Reading Review

WebSite: *Henry3*

Screening: *Galaxy Quest* (Dean Parisot, 1999)

Media Clip: *Galaxy Quest* (Dean Parisot, 1999)

Lecture: So what about the fan/you?

eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

**Final Exam: Due to your instructor as an email attachment 1/17 by
9:00am MST**