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)

Date: 10/29/08

Chair/Director (Signature)
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.

HUMANITIES, FINE ARTS AND DESIGN [HU]
Through the examination of the tropes of alienation in film and television students broaden and deepen their consideration of the variety of human experience.
Arizona State University Criteria Checklist for

HUMANITIES, FINE ARTS AND DESIGN [HU]

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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasize the study of values, of the development of philosophies, religions, ethics or belief systems, and/or aesthetic experience.</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of written, aural, or visual texts, and/or the historical development of textual traditions.</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of material objects, images and spaces, and/or their historical development.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>In addition, to qualify for the Humanities, Fine Arts and Design designation a course must meet one or more of the following requirements:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Concerns the development of human thought, including emphasis on the analysis of philosophical and/or religious systems of thought.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Concerns aesthetic systems and values, literary and visual arts.</td>
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<td>c.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasizes aesthetic experience in the visual and performing arts, including music, dance, theater, and in the applied arts, including architecture and design.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deepen awareness of the analysis of literature and the development of literary traditions.</td>
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**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.

- Courses devoted **primarily** to developing skill in the use of a language — **However, language courses that emphasize cultural study and the study of literature can be allowed.**

- Courses which emphasize the acquisition of quantitative or experimental methods.

- Courses devoted **primarily** to teaching skills.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Prefix</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FMS</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>Signs of Aliens</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Emphasize the study of values, of the development of philosophies, religions, ethics or belief systems, and/or aesthetic experience.</td>
<td>Examines the development of the trope of alien in aesthetic experience.</td>
<td>See syllabus course description p. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of written, aural, or visual texts, and/or the historical development of textual traditions.</td>
<td>Focuses on the comprehension and interpretation of visual texts from film and television.</td>
<td>See syllabus for Assignments, Readings, and Screenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.b. Concerns aesthetic systems and values, literary and visual arts.</td>
<td>Explores representation of women and racial minorities through the trope of the alien (alienation).</td>
<td>See syllabus for Assignments, Readings, and Screenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. c. Emphasizes aesthetic experience in the visual and performing arts, including music, dance, theater, and in the applied arts, including architecture and design.</td>
<td>The aesthetic experience shapes the reception of the visual text.</td>
<td>See syllabus for Assignments, Readings, and Screenings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 used 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 bulletin 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 thee 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>401+ Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>372 - 400 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>360 - 371 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>352 - 359 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>332 - 351 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>320 - 331 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>312 - 319 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>280 - 311 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>240 - 279 Points</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>000 - 239 Points</td>
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**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
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)
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)
UNIT IV: RACE, GENDER & SEXUALITY II

Lesson 09: Trek on the Silver Screen (Friday, 1/9)
Reading: Star Trek and History, Chapter 3 (Daniel Bernardi, 1988)
Screening: Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country (Nicholas Meyer, 1991)
Media Clip: Star Trek VI (Nicholas Meyer, 1991)
Lecture: What’s the link between aliens and Liberal-Humanism?
iModule: Diegetic Logics
eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 10: Trek in the 1980s (Saturday, 1/10)
Reading: Star Trek and History, Chapter 4 (Daniel Bernardi, 1988)
Lecture: What’s the link between aliens and Neoconservativism?
iModule: Chronotopes
Critical Review 2: Due to your instructor as an email attachment on 1/10 at 5:00pm MST.
eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 11: Scopophilia (Monday, 1/12)
Reading: “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (Laura Mulvey, 1985)
Screening: Barbarella (Roger Vadim, 1968)
Media Clip: Barbarella (Roger Vadim, 1968)
Lecture: What’s gender but alienation?
eBoard: Discuss with Classmates

Lesson 12: Sexuality (Tuesday, 1/13)
Reading: “Sexuality and Identity” (John Kilgore, 1986)
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?
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