



## ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

### 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 4-8-09

1. ACADEMIC UNIT: Film and Media Studies

2. COURSE PROPOSED: FMS 468 Crime and Violence in American Film

(prefix ) (number) (title) (semester hours)

3. CONTACT PERSON: Name: Aaron Baker Phone: 965-6747

Mail Code: 0402 E-Mail: Aaron.Baker@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. **(Please submit one designation per proposal)**

#### Core Areas

Literacy and Critical Inquiry–L ☐  
Mathematical Studies–MA ☐ CS ☐  
Humanities, Fine Arts and Design–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 ☐

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.***

FMS 468 asks students to think critically about filmic representations of crime and violence in terms of how they identify causes and solutions for these social pathologies. The readings, written assignments and course discussion also ask students to examine how assumptions about racial, ethnic and class identities contribute to our understanding of crime, violence and how to control these behaviors.

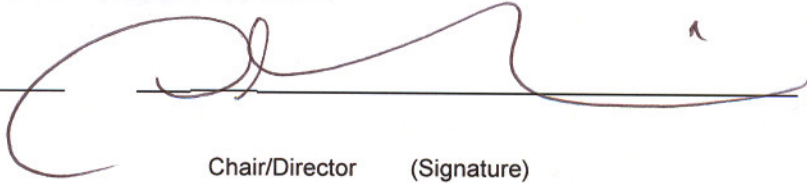
CROSS-LISTED COURSES: ☒ No ☐ Yes; Please identify courses: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this amultisection course?: ☒ No ☐ Yes; Is it governed by a common syllabus? \_\_\_\_\_

Daniel Bernardi

Chair/Director (Print or Type)

Date: 4/13/09



Chair/Director (Signature)

## **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 <i>either</i> 1, 2, or 3 <i>and</i> at least one of the criteria under 4 in such a way as to make the satisfaction of these criteria A <b>CENTRAL AND SUBSTANTIAL PORTION</b> of the course content.			
YES	NO		Identify Documentation Submitted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Emphasize the study of values, of the development of philosophies, religions, ethics or belief systems, and/or aesthetic experience.	Course Description on syllabus; page 3 below.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of written, aural, or visual texts, and/or the historical development of textual traditions.	Course syllabus; page 3 below
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3. Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of material objects, images and spaces, and/or their historical development.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. In addition, to qualify for the Humanities, Fine Arts and Design designation a course must meet one or more of the following requirements:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Concerns the development of human thought, including emphasis on the analysis of philosophical and/or religious systems of thought.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Concerns aesthetic systems and values, literary and visual arts.	Course syllabus; page 3 below
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. Emphasizes aesthetic experience in the visual and performing arts, including music, dance, theater, and in the applied arts, including architecture and design.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Deepen awareness of the analysis of literature and the development of literary traditions.	
		<b>THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE:</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courses devoted <b>primarily</b> to developing a skill in the creative or performing arts, including courses that are <b>primarily</b> studio classes in the Herberger College of the Arts and in the College of Design.</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courses devoted <b>primarily</b> to developing skill in the use of a language – <b><u>However, language courses that emphasize cultural study and the study of literature can be allowed.</u></b></li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courses which emphasize the acquisition of quantitative or experimental methods.</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courses devoted <b>primarily</b> to teaching skills.</li> </ul>	

Course Prefix	Number	Title	Designation
FMS	468	Crime and Violence in American Film	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.

Criteria (from checksheet)	How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)	Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)
1. Emphasizes the study of values	FMS 468 focuses on how value judgements impact our understanding of crime and violence	Specific values examined include self reliance and individual achievement, social responsibility, the value of human life and the right to wealth and private property.
2. Concerns the interpretation of visual texts	FMS 468 examines how American films represent crime and violence.	The readings, lectures, and assignments all ask students to interpret films.
4 b. Concerns aesthetic systems	In FMS 468 students analyze how aesthetic systems within films represent value judgments about the causes of crime and violence and the best responses to these problems	All of the assigned readings and lectures focus on how the aesthetic formal systems of film representation convey value judgments about crime and violence.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

FMS 468

Crime and Violence in American Film

<http://www.asu.edu/courses/fms468/>

- Baker, Aaron. "Beyond the Thin Line of Black and Blue." In *Bad. Infamy, Darkness, Evil and Slime on the Screen*, edited by Murray Pomerance. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004. Pages 54-63.
- Calwelti, John. "Chinatown and Generic Transformation in Recent American Films." In *Film Genre Reader III*, edited by Barry Keith Grant. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. Pages 243-261.
- Casillo, Robert. "The Society of Transgression: *GoodFellas*." In *Gangster Priest: The Italian American Cinema of Martin Scorsese*, by Robert Casillo. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006. Pages 266-325.
- Dika, Vera. "The Representation of Ethnicity in The Godfather." In *Francis Ford Coppola's Godfather Trilogy*, edited by Nick Browne. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pages 76-108.
- Dowell, Pat and John Fried, "Pulp Friction: Two Shots at Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*." *Cineaste*. Vol. 21, Issue 3 (July 1995): 4 Pages.
- Dyer, Richard. "The Matter of Whiteness." In *Privilege A Reader*, edited by Michael S. Kimmel and Abby L. Ferber. Cambridge, MA: Westview, 2003 21-32.
- Dyson, Michael Eric. "Between Apocalypse and Redemption: Singleton's *Boyz N the Hood*." In *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, edited by Jim Collins, Hilary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins. New York: Routledge, 1993. Pages 209-226.
- Gardaphe, Fred. "Rough Boys: The Gangsters of Martin Scorsese and Michael Cimino." In *From Wiseguys to Wisemen* by Fred Gardaphe. New York: Routledge, 2006. Pages 67-85, 222-223.
- Munby, Jonathan. "The Enemy Goes Public: Voicing the Cultural Other in the Early 1930s Talking Gangster Film." In *Public Enemies, Public Heroes: Screening the Gangster from Little Caesar to Touch of Evil*, by Jonathan Munby.. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. Pages 39-51.

Naremore, James, "The Death Chamber" in *More Than Night: Film Noir In Its Contexts*, by James Naremore. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998. Pages 81-95.

Polan, Dana. *Pulp Fiction*. London: British Film Institute, 2008. 96 pages.

Prince, Stephen. "Introduction." In *Screening Violence*, by Stephen Prince. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999. Pages 1-44.

Rafter, Nicole. " Why They Went Bad: Criminology in Crime Films" and "The Heroes of Crime Films." In *Shots in the Mirror, Crime Films and Society* by Nicole Rafter. Second Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. Pages 61-85, 189-212.

Ray, Robert. "The Thematic Paradigm—The Resolution of Incompatible Values" and "The Left and Right Cycles." In *A Certain Tendency of the American Cinema*, by Robert Ray. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985. Pages 55-69 and 296-318.

Sklar, Robert. "Hollywood and the Age of Reagan," in *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies*, by Robert Sklar. New York: Vintage Books, 1994. Pages 339-356.

West, Cornell. "Nihilism in Black America." In *Race Matters* by Cornel West. New York: Vintage Books, 1994. Pages 17-31.

# FMS 468

## Crime and Violence in American Film

### Summer 2008

**Professor:** Dr. Aaron Baker  
**Email:** Aaron.Baker@asu.edu  
**Office:** LL-645  
**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Course Description:** Crime and violence have been central elements of American cinema throughout its history. Popular critic Roger Ebert has commented that “More than anything else, the American movie audience loves violence.”

In this course we will address three primary aspects of crime and violence in American film: 1) how the depiction of crime and violence in American movies conveys attitudes in our society about their causes and the best responses to these problems; 2) how conceptions of racial, ethnic and class identities figure in the filmic representation of criminal violence and the ways to limit its detrimental effects, and 3) theories about the effects on audiences of viewing crime and violence in films.

Although this course is web delivered, it is neither automated nor self-paced. You are expected to engage in all learning tasks and attend threaded discussions on the eBoard. To access the class website and eBoard, 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 are two required texts that you need to buy for this class: 1) Nicole Rafter’s book *Shots in the Mirror: Crime Films and Society* (Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 2006), and 2) Walter Mosely’s novel *Devil in a Blue Dress*. . You will likely need to buy them either at the [ASU bookstore](#) or from an online distributor such as [Amazon.com](#). It will take at least two weeks for the books to arrive, so be sure to order well before class begins. You will also be reading a number of articles, posted online within the class website. To access an article, go to the Learn Task section and enter the correct password (a password will be sent to you before the first day of class). The articles are linked to the article titles under each lesson on the timeline. To honor copyright law, we ask that you do not share nor distribute these documents. Read the articles carefully and on time, as they form the basis of both electronic bulletin board (eBoard) discussions and graded work.

**Screenings:** You are responsible for screening one film per lesson. You can purchase the titles through [Amazon](#) (or another on-line distributor) or rent them at your local video store or from [Netflix](#). Several are available at the [ASU library](#). Don’t watch these films for entertainment; watch them for study. Take notes and view the screenings numerous times. The screenings also form the basis of both online discussions and the essay assignments.



**Plagiarism Policy:** In order to avoid plagiarism, your papers must provide full citations for all references: direct quotes, paraphrased, summaries, or borrowed ideas. While you are encouraged to develop your thinking with your peers, you cannot use their material without citing it. Work from other courses will not be accepted in this course without explicit, prior permission of both instructors. Allowing your writing to be copied by another student is also considered cheating. Please review the Student Code of Conduct for complete guidelines on academic honesty at <http://www.asu.edu/studentlife/judicial/integrity.html>.

## **GRADED WORK**

We expect every student to leave this course with a better – more insightful – understanding of crime and violence in American film.

**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. We will check them the day after they are due. 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.

**Two Essays (300 Points):** You will be asked to write two (5 page) critical essays that will ask you to apply and build upon the main ideas from the course in relation to the films we have seen as well as others that I assign you. Specific descriptions of these assignments will be sent to your e mail address and posted on the e Board.

### **Grading Scale: 0 to 400 Points**

A+	..... 400+ 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: Assigned Reading on the Topic of the Lesson.
2. Lecture: Listen to Streaming Audio Lectures with PowerPoint Slides
3. eBoard: Pose and Answer Questions on the Electronic Bulletin Board

**Lesson 01:    What is a crime film? (Monday, 7/7)**

**Reading:** "Chapter 2" *Shots in the Mirror* (Rafter, 2006)

**Media Clip:** *Devil in a Blue Dress* (Franklin, 1995)- Clip #1  
*Devil in a Blue Dress* (Franklin, 1995)- Clip #2

**Lecture:** Course Introduction

**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 02:    Gangster Films (Wednesday, 7/9)**

**Reading:** "Public Enemies, Public Heroes" (Munby)

**Screening:** *Little Caesar* (LeRoy, 1931)

**Media Clip:** *Little Caesar* (LeRoy, 1931) – Clip #1

*Little Caesar* (LeRoy, 1931) – Clip #2

**Lecture:** The Gangster Film

**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 03:    Criminology on Film/Film Noir (Friday, 7/11)**

**Reading:** "More than Night: Film Noir and Its Contexts" (Naremore)

**Screening:** *Double Indemnity* (Wilder, 1944)

**Media Clip:** *The Limey* (Soderbergh, 1999) – Clip #1

*Double Indemnity* (Wilder, 1944) – Clip #2

*Mission Impossible II* (Woo, 2000) – Clip #3

**Lecture:** Criminology on Film/Film Noir

**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 04:    Screening Violence (Monday, 7/14)**

**Reading:** "Introduction" (Prince)

**Screening:** *Bonnie and Clyde* (Penn, 1967)

**Media Clip:** *The Godfather* (Coppola, 1972) – Clip #1

*Bonnie and Clyde* (Penn, 1967) – Clip #2

*Mission Impossible II* (Woo, 2000) – Clip #3

**Lecture:** Screening Violence

**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 05:    Justified Violence: The Outlaw Cop (Wednesday, 07/16)**

**Reading:** *A Certain Tendency of the American Cinema*, pp. 55-69 & 296-318 (Robert Ray)

**Media Clip:** *Dirty Harry* (Siegel., 1971) – Clip #1

*Dirty Harry* (Siegel., 1971) – Clip #2

*Unforgiven* (Eastwood, 1992) – Clip #3

*Casablanca* (Curtiz, 1943) – Clip #4

**Lecture:** Justified Violence: The Criminal Cop in *Dirty Harry*

**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Essay #1 due on Wed. 07/16 by 5 p.m.**

**Lesson 06:    The Gangster and Film Authorship (Friday, 7/18)**

**Reading:** "The Representation of Ethnicity in *The Godfather*" (Dika)

**Screening:** *The Godfather* (Coppola, 1972)  
**Media Clip:** *The Godfather* (Coppola, 1972) – Clip #1  
*The Godfather* (Coppola, 1972) – Clip #2  
*The Godfather* (Coppola, 1972) – Clip #3  
**Lecture:** The Gangster and Film Authorship: *The Godfather*  
**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 07:** **Noir History (Monday, 7/21)**

**Reading:** " *Chinatown* and Generic Transformation " (Calweti)  
**Screening:** *Chinatown* (Polanski, 1974)  
**Media Clip:** *Chinatown* (Polanski, 1974) – Clip #1  
*Chinatown* (Polanski, 1974) – Clip #2  
*Chinatown* (Polanski, 1974) – Clip #3  
**Lecture:** Noir History in *Chinatown*  
**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 08:** **Murder in Hollywood (Wednesday, 07/23)**

**Reading:** From *Movie Made America*: "Hollywood and the Age of Reagan," "From Myth to Memory," and "Independent Images" pp. 339-82 (Sklar)  
**Screening:** *The Player* (Altman, 1992)  
**Media Clip:** *The Player* (Altman, 1992) – Clip #1  
**Lecture:** Murder in Hollywood: *The Player*  
**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 09:** **Race and the Crime (Friday, 7/25)**

**Reading:** **From "Race Matters" (Cornel West)**  
**Screening:** *Boyz N the Hood* (Singleton, 1991)  
**Media Clip:** *Boyz N the Hood* (Singleton, 1991) – Clip #1  
*Boyz N the Hood* (Singleton, 1991) – Clip #2  
*Boyz N the Hood* (Singleton, 1991) – Clip #3  
**Lecture:** Race and Crime: *Boyz N the Hood*  
**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 10:** **Devil in a Blue Dress (Monday, 07/28)**

**Reading:** *Devil in a Blue Dress* (Walter Mosely novel)  
**Screening:** *Devil in a Blue Dress* (Franklin, 1995)  
**Media Clip:** *Devil in a Blue Dress* (Franklin, 1995) – Clip #1  
*Devil in a Blue Dress* (Franklin, 1995) – Clip #2  
*Devil in a Blue Dress* (Franklin, 1995) – Clip #3  
**Lecture:** Adapting Crime: *Devil in a Blue Dress*  
**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 11:** **Pulp Fiction as Postmodern Crime Film (Wednesday, 07/30)**

**Reading:** *Pulp Fiction* (Polan, 2008)  
**Screening:** *Pulp Fiction* (Tarentino, 1994)  
**Media Clip:** *Pulp Fiction* (Tarentino, 1994) – Clip #1

**Lecture:** *Pulp Fiction* (Tarentino, 1994) Clip #2  
*Pulp Fiction* (Tarentino, 1994) Clip #3  
*Pulp Fiction* as Postmodern Crime Film  
**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 12:**     **Whiteness and Crime (Friday 08/01)**

**Reading:** From *White* (Richard Dyer)  
**Screening:** *Falling Down*, (Schumacher, 1993)  
**Media Clip:** *Falling Down*, (Schumacher, 1993) -Clip #1  
*Falling Down*, (Schumacher, 1993) - Clip #2  
**Lecture:** Whiteness and Crime: *Falling Down*  
**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 13:**     **Celebrating the Criminal (Monday, 08/04)**

**Reading:** Chapter 7 (Raftner)  
**Screening:** *Ocean's Eleven* (Soderbergh, 2001)  
**Media Clip:** *Casino Royale* (Campbell, 2006) – Clip #1  
*The Limey* (Soderbergh, 1999) – Clip #2  
*Ocean's Eleven* (Soderbergh, 2001) – Clip #3  
**Lecture:** Criminal Heroes  
**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 14:**     **Goodfellas and the Gangster Film (Wednesday, 08/6)**

**Reading:** From *Gangster Priest* (Casillo)  
**Screening:** *Goodfellas* (Scorsese, 1990)  
**Media Clip:** *Goodfellas* (Scorsese, 1990) – Clip #1  
*Goodfellas* (Scorsese, 1990) – Clip #2  
*Goodfellas* (Scorsese, 1990) – Clip #3  
*Goodfellas* (Scorsese, 1990) – Clip #4  
*Goodfellas* (Scorsese, 1990) – Clip #5  
**Lecture:** *Goodfellas* Grangster as Transgressive Consumer  
**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Lesson 15:**     **Criminal Cops (Friday 08/08)**

**Reading:** "Beyond the Thin Line of Black and Blue" (Baker)  
**Screening:** *The Glass Shield* (Burnett, 1994)  
**Media Clip:** *The Glass Shield* (Burnett, 1994) – Clip #1  
*The Glass Shield* (Burnett, 1994) – Clip #2  
**Lecture:** Criminal Cops  
**eBoard:** Discuss with Classmates

**Essay #2 due on Friday 08/08 by 5 p.m.**