New Course Request

Indiana University

South Bend Campus

Check Appropriate Boxes:

- Undergraduate credit [x]
- Graduate credit [ ]
- Professional credit [ ]

1. School/Division: Liberal Arts and Sciences
2. Academic Subject Code: HIST-A
3. Course Number: 373 (must be cleared with University Enrollment Services)
4. Instructor: Nashel, Jonathan
5. Course Title: American History Through Film
   Recommended Abbreviation (Optional): (Limited to 32 Characters including spaces)

6. First time this course is to be offered (Semester/Year): Fall 2009
7. Credit Hours: Fixed at [3] or Variable from [ ] to [ ]
8. Is this course to be graded S-F (only)? Yes [ ] No [x]
9. Is variable title approval being requested? Yes [ ] No [x]
10. Course description (not to exceed 50 words) for Bulletin publication:
    
    This course will analyze films about America since 1865. The movies will be representative of a particular historical period or they will provide a commentary on a specific issue. Both forms will provide a gateway to how Americans have come to think about their own history.

11. Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at [3, 0] or Variable from [ ] to [ ]
12. Non-Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at [0, 0] or Variable from [ ] to [ ]
13. Estimated enrollment: [30] of which [0] percent are expected to be graduate students.
14. Frequency of scheduling: Every 2 years
15. Will this course be required for majors? No [ ]
16. Justification for new course: Add more 300 level courses for majors and minors
17. Are the necessary reading materials currently available in the appropriate library? Yes [ ]

18. Please append a complete outline of the proposed course, and indicate instructor (if known), textbooks, and other materials.
19. If this course overlaps with existing courses, please explain with which courses it overlaps and whether this overlap is necessary, desirable, or unimportant.

A copy of every new course proposal must be submitted to departments, schools, or divisions in which there may be overlap of the new course with existing courses or areas of strong concern, with instructions that they send comments directly to the originating Curriculum Committee. Please append a list of departments, schools, or divisions thus consulted.

Submitted by:

[Signature]

Department Chairman/Division Director

Date 7/14/09

Approved by:

[Signature]

Assoc Dean

Date 8/31/09

Dean of Graduate School (when required)

Date

Chancellor/Vice-President

Date

University Enrollment Services

Date

After School/Division approval, forward the last copy (without attachments) to University Enrollment Services for initial processing, and the remaining four copies and attachments to the Campus Chancellor or Vice-President.
American History Through Film
Jonathan Nashel

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Office hours: Monday and Wednesday: 2:30-5:30pm, Tues: 5:30-6pm, and by appointment
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e-mail: jnashel@iusb.edu

In this course we will view, analyze, and discuss films with an emphasis on America history since 1865. We will watch a number of movies, from the earliest silents to the most recent Hollywood blockbusters. The movies we will examine will either be representative of a particular time in some way (e.g. a film set on the eve of WWII that depicts the reasons why America should take part in the war), or they will provide a commentary on a given issue that concerned Americans at the time (e.g. the fear of atomic war which can be seen in a number of science fiction films of the 1950s). We will analyze both kinds of films and use them as a way to understand how Americans have come to think about their own history.

Finally, even though watching films is fun, in this course I want you to consider each film as a primary document that must be "read" as a way to understanding American history. You will need to take notes during the showing of all films, come to class already having done the readings, not eat during the showing of films, not fall asleep during the showing of films, and be prepared to discuss the message that each film has.

Ground rules:
1. Attend class regularly and participate in class discussions. Attendance will be taken for each class. If you miss more than 2 classes your grade will drop at least one full letter grade. If you are more than 10 minutes late for a class I will consider you absent for that class. There is no need to call me and tell me that you will be missing a class.
2. Complete the reading assignments, papers, and exams on their appropriate dates. You are allowed the option of rewriting your paper if you hand it in on time.
3. You need to see the films I have bolded in their entirety before each class. These are available at all video stores in the area. Some of them are on reserve at the Library as well.
4. Written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, stapled, and have 1" margins.
5. Please do not tape record the class--no exceptions.

The following books are required and should be purchased at the university bookstore:
--Steven Ross, ed., Movies and American Society
--Peter Rollins: Hollywood as Historian
Note:
--all articles are available via OnCourse
--All readings should be brought to class on days when readings from them have been assigned.
--I have placed on reserve a standard American History textbook.
--You should consult the following resources at the Library (in the Reference Section):
--International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers (PN 1997.8)
--New York Times Film Reviews (PN 1997)

Grades will be calculated as follows:
Class Participation/small writing assignments........20%
Midterm...........................................................................20%
Paper..............................................................................30%
Final Exam.................................................................30%

Week 1
Visions of the Civil War
Films: The General, Gone With the Wind, Santa Fe Trail

Week 2
Civil War: later reflections
Films: Birth of a Nation, Abraham Lincoln, Young Mr. Lincoln, Glory
Read: Ross: Introduction; Rollins: Chapter 1

Week 3
America at the turn of the new century
Read: Ross: Chapters 1 and 2

Week 4
WWI in the American Imagination
Films: All Quiet on the Western Front, Duck Soup, Sergeant York, Wilson
Read: Ross: chapter 3; Rollins: chapters 5 and 6

Week 5
"The Dirty Thirties": 1
Read: Ross: chapters 4 and 5; Rollins: chapter 5
Week 6
"The Dirty Thirties": 2
Films: Citizen Kane, The Magnificent Ambersons, Modern Times, Imitation of Life, Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
Read: Ross: chapter 6; Rollins, 49-61; Mintz: 124-134 (on reserve)

Week 7
WWII: getting in
Films: Casablanca, The Maltese Falcon, The Great Dictator, Yankee Doodle Dandy
Read: Rollins: 61-67; Mintz: 157-179 (on reserve)
Midterm exam due

Week 8
WWII: reality, propaganda, homage
Read: Rollins: chapter 7; Bodnar and Wills articles on reserve

Week 9
Post-War America: what next?
Read: Rollins: chapter 8; Jackson article on reserve

Week 10
Post-War America: communism or conformity?
Films: On the Waterfront, How to Marry A Millionaire, Invasion of the Body Snatchers, My Son John
Read: Ross: chapter 7; Rollins: chapter 9

Week 11
Post-War America: atomic fears
Films: Dr. Strangelove, The Day the Earth Stood Still, Them!
Read: Ross: chapter 8; Rollins: chapter 10

Week 12
Civil Rights and Wrongs
Films: Mississippi Burning, Blackboard Jungle, Imitation of Life, The Defiant Ones, Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?
Read: Ross: chapter 9; Toplin: on Mississippi Burning (on reserve)
Week 13
Vietnam: before, during, and after
Films: High Noon, The Green Berets, Apocalypse Now, Born on the 4th of July
Read: Ross: chapter 10; Rollins: chapter 12

Week 14
The 1970s: Watergate, Paranoia, and Disillusionment
Films: Nashville, All the President's Men, The Parallax View
Read: Toplin: All the President's Men (on reserve)
Paper Due

Week 15
Summing Up: American History Through the Looking Glass
Films: JFK, Thelma and Louise
Read: Ross: chapter 11; Toplin: JFK (on reserve)

Final Exam
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Term Paper Assignment
This paper will be 7-10 pages. In it I want you to discuss how one of the themes we have seen in a variety of films (e.g. patriotism, gender roles, and race relations) evolved over time. What is constant? What changes? Why? You will need to bring into your analysis the readings and class discussion as well as a critique of at least four films.
Due 11/29

A late paper will be penalized ½ grade for every day that it is late

For each of your papers, you should include specific examples from the readings, referring to page numbers when you quote a source. Each paper should have an introduction and several well organized paragraphs that give your evidence. You should conclude with a paragraph that summarizes what you have shown to the reader. The final drafts should pay close attention to spelling, proper sentence and paragraph construction, and logical development of ideas.