

Coffeyville Community College

ENGL-297

COURSE SYLLABUS

FOR

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FILM

Jed Claybrook

Instructor

COURSE NUMBER: ENGL-297 **COURSE TITLE:** Contemporary American Film

CREDIT HOURS: 3

INSTRUCTOR: Jed Claybrook

OFFICE LOCATION: 215 Arts and Sciences Building

OFFICE PHONE: 620.251.7700 ext. 2060

OFFICE HOURS: See schedule posted on office door

PREREQUISITE(S): English Composition I with a C or above

REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS: Boggs, Petrie, *The Art of Watching Film* 6th ed. Reader: Collection of Articles on Reserve at library includes *Dramatica* and TBA readings.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Analyzes modern American films with particular attention to storytelling techniques, genre, cinematic rendering and thematic meaning. Films will be examined against the backdrop of their specific historical-socio-political context.

EXPECTED LEARNER OUTCOMES:

By the completion of the course, the student will have:

1. Learned how to write critically about film.
2. Learned how to recognize different film genres, storytelling structures, and filming techniques.
3. Described the difference between literary techniques employed by the novel and those employed by screenplay.
4. Identified both what a theme is and how it is incorporated into a film.
5. Described filming techniques used to dramatize a story (sound, lighting, camera, motion and editing).
6. Know how to create a critical essay using three aspects and connect them with the theme and subject matter of the film.

LEARNING TASKS AND ACTIVITIES:

UNDERSTAND WHAT MAKES A MOVIE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ART

1. Identify how to read a movie if there is no text. (Knowledge)
2. Compare movies to books, plays and other literary forms. (Evaluation)
3. Demonstrate narrative versus episodic story structure. (Application)
4. Distinguish between advocacy or inculcation. (Comprehension)

EXPLAIN THEMATIC ELEMENTS

1. Point out how theme is expressed non-verbally. (Synthesis)
2. Interpret film as modern day fables or morality tales. (Evaluation)

DEMONSTRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF EDITING/SOUND AND THEME

1. Describe what a film's primary focus is: plot, emotional effect or mood, character style or structure or ideas. (Knowledge)
2. Explain universality. (Comprehension)

DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF VISUAL DESIGN

1. Compare color versus black and white. (Evaluation)
2. Explain screen format. (Comprehension)
3. Relate setting and its effects. (Synthesis)
4. Describe studio versus location shootings. (Knowledge/Analysis)

EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL IMAGE

1. Summarize the problems of adaptation. (Comprehension)
2. Point out the challenges of point of view. (Analysis)
3. Explain images as the language of the senses. (Comprehension)
4. Relate the different cinematic points of view. (Analysis)

DEMONSTRATE CRITICAL ANALYSIS/FILM REVIEWS

1. Summarize the interrelationship between setting and character or setting and plot. (Comprehension)
2. Describe how lighting contributes to overall emotional attitude or tone of a film. (Knowledge)
3. Identify how visual techniques are employed to comment on or interpret action. (Analysis)

EXPLAIN WHAT MAKES A STORY AND DETERMINES HOW TO TELL IT

1. Break down film as social/political advocacy. (Analysis)
2. Describe narrative structure: character point of view. (Knowledge)
3. Explain the concept of film reality versus illusion. (Comprehension)
4. Summarize use of irony and juxtapositioning. (Synthesis)

ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES:

Grades of A = 100-90
 B = 89-80
 C = 79-70
 D = 69-60
 F = 59- 0

are given in this course. Incompletes given at the semester end will only be given if previously agreed upon by the student and instructor with a specific time designated for the completion of the incomplete work.

Requirements and final evaluation: A student's final grade will be based on the following:

Midterm: 20%
Analysis of Published Review: 30%
Analysis of Thematic Emphasis: 30%
Final Exam: 20%

Tests must be taken on the scheduled day. Only if arrangements are made with the instructor prior to the original test date will a student be allowed to take a test late, and then it must be taken before the second class period following the test.

**ATTENDANCE
POLICY:**

Students are expected to attend all classes. It is the responsibility of the student to make definite arrangements with the instructor for make-up work BEFORE going on field trips or other college-sponsored events. No more than three absences will be allowed during the semester without a grade penalty. A student may be withdrawn from any class for excessive absences. See Attendance Policy in the College Catalog. Class periods, assignments and tests that are missed without prior arrangement with the instructor may not be made-up unless unusual circumstances prevail and at the instructor's prerogative.

**STUDENT
STATUS:**

If a student has been dismissed from school by the administration for any reason, that student will not be allowed to complete the class. The student will be assigned a failing grade, and missed class assignments, lectures, or test cannot be made up. If a student is dismissed from school prior to the deadline to drop a class, a student can drop the class.

PLAGIARISM:

It is expected that all work, both written and oral, is the original work of the student. When using someone else's words or ideas, be sure that those passages are clearly cited. Plagiarism is a serious charge, but if work is determined to be **willfully** plagiarized, a failing grade for that assignment will be given and the final grade in the course will be jeopardized. Any form of cheating will not be tolerated.

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor with prior notice to the student.