

**SYLLABUS HANDOUT**

**Film History and Appreciation**

**Humanities 2310 SA**

Winter Quarter 2008-2009

Janice M. Vierk, Ph.D.

**WELCOME TO METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

## Metropolitan Community College

### Film History and Appreciation

#### **COURSE IDENTIFICATION**

Title: Film History and Appreciation  
Prefix/Section: HUMS 2310 SA  
Course Hours: 4.5  
Begins/Ends: 12/01/08 – 02/25/09  
Meeting Day/Time: MW – 12:00 – 1:55  
Last Day to Withdraw: 02/10/09  
Delivery Type: Classroom  
Class Location: Sarpy/Room 115

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Instructor's Name: Janice Vierk, Ph.D.  
Office Location: Sarpy Center 133  
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Academic Program Area: Communications and Humanities  
Academic Dean: Susann Suprenant, Ph.D.  
Dean's Office Phone: (402) 738-4590

#### **IMPORTANT DATES**

Check out Metro's Academic Calendar <http://www.mccneb.edu/academics/calendar.asp?Theme=2>

**Note:** No voice mail, email, or web page access during the holiday break (Dec. 23 – Jan 1)

#### **COURSE INFORMATION**

##### Course Description:

In HUMS 2310/Film History and Appreciation students learn how to apply the following aspects of film making (photography, mise en scene, movement, editing, sound, acting, drama, story, writing, ideology, theory, and history) to film analysis with an emphasis on understanding the difference between realism and formalism in film.

Course Prerequisites: English Comp. I (or comparable) or HUMS 1000 (Art of Being Human)

### Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, the students will be able to support a thorough analysis of a film applying criticism of:

- photography,
- mise en scene,
- movement,
- editing,
- sound,
- acting,
- drama,
- story,
- writing,
- ideology,
- theory,
- history
- a variety of film genre: Silent Films, Film Noir, Documentary, Western, Musical

### Required Supplemental Materials:

Giannetti, Louis, *Understanding Movies*, current edition.

### Class Structure:

This class will consist of:

- lectures,
- discussion,
- film viewing,
- film analysis
- reading,
- writing,
- formal and informal presentations,
- exams,
- service learning component with the Omaha Film Festival
- field trip to a movie theatre.

### **ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT WORK**

Knowledge of the terms and concepts of this class will be tested through:

- written work,
- testing,
- final presentation of a film scene,
- 4 exams,
- 5 short essays with oral presentations,
- 1 specialty essay on a contemporary director with oral presentation component,
- 1 detailed synthesis essay with an oral presentation.

**A Service Learning component is mandatory in order to pass this class.**

**What is Service Learning?** Service Learning offers a unique opportunity for America's students to get involved with their communities in a tangible way by integrating service projects with classroom learning. Service Learning engages students in the educational process, using what they will learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems/issues. Students not only learn about democracy and citizenship, they also become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform.

**Why is Service Learning Important?** A national study of Learn and Serve America programs suggests that effective service-learning programs strengthen learning, improve grades, increase attendance in school, and develop students' personal and social responsibility.

The opportunity to provide community service for non-profit agencies or businesses is as important today as it has ever been. For some this might mean volunteering at a homeless shelter, a nursing home, a pre-school, a Habitat for Humanities house building, among many other possibilities. Not only does this kind of activity look good on a resume, it also can give the person providing the service a feeling of worth for contributing to the betterment of other people.

#### **Film History and Appreciation Service Learning Project:**

Students will be working with the Omaha Film Festival, a non-profit organization. They will help promote the festival by distributing flyers and posters to businesses, etc., advertising the film festival. They will also work in various capacities during the festival, such as making sure attendees have tickets to the film(s), helping direct people to the correct theatre, and other assignments as they become known. Students will fulfill a minimum of 10 hours of work outside of class time on the festival. They will also receive recognition on their grade transcript for their Service Learning work as well as have the opportunity to mix and mingle with film writers, directors, producers, and other film lovers from Nebraska and beyond. And most importantly, they will be a part of the **Third Annual Omaha Film Festival February 18-24, 2008.**

For general contact information send email to [omahafilmfestival@gmail.com](mailto:omahafilmfestival@gmail.com)

or call 402-203-8173

Festival Director: Jeremy Decker

Executive Director: Jason Levering

Program Director: Marc Longbrake

#### **Grading Policy**

##### **Methods of Assessing Student Progress:**

For a final grade I will consider your attendance (**including being on time for class**), your class participation, and your contributions to group projects and activities. You will receive a number grade on your homework and tests. The grades on your final class presentation will each count twice (one for oral and one for written component). These will be averaged at the end of the quarter and a grade will be assigned, which will also take into account the other class considerations mentioned above.

If you are absent on the day of an exam or oral presentation, you will not be able to make it up or receive credit for it unless you have permission from the instructor because of excused circumstances.

Criteria for Determining Final Course Grade:

Total points at the end of the course will be computed according to:

A = 90 - 100

B = 80 - 89

C = 70 - 79

D = 60 - 69

F = below 60

Make-up Procedure and Late Assignments:

- Late papers will carry a penalty of being lowered one letter grade and will not be accepted more than one week late (two class periods).
- **You will receive a number grade considered a temporary grade. If you want to increase the grade you have until the very next class to revise the piece per the instructor's comments. Turn the revised work in with the work the instructor has commented on (usually in red ink) the very next class period.**
- If you fail to submit a revised paper in the time allotted, the temporary grade will become the permanent grade.
- If you do not turn in the copy the instructor had marked on (in red ink usually), you will not increase the grade and the temporary grade becomes the permanent grade.

Maintenance of Student Records:

With rare exceptions, student papers will be returned the very next class meeting.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAM;**

Metropolitan Community College is committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning. You may be asked to help us to accomplish this objective. For example, you may be asked to respond to surveys or questionnaires. In other cases, tests or assignments you are required to do for this course may be shared with faculty and used for assessment purposes.

**USE OF STUDENT WORK:**

By enrolling in classes offered by Metropolitan Community College, the student gives the College license to mark on, modify, and retain the work as may be required by the process of instruction, as described in the course syllabus. The institution shall not have the right to use the work in any other manner without the written consent of the student(s).

**INSTRUCTOR'S EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS**

**Attendance Statement:**

**Attendance is mandatory!** The success of this class, because of the way it is structured, is determined by regular class participation. So it is for your benefit and the benefit of all of the students for everyone **to be present and on time for each class.** If circumstances occur that you must miss class, please let the instructor know in

advance, if possible, or as soon as possible after the fact. Office and home phone numbers are provided on the first page of the syllabus.

- **More than two unexcused absences lowers your grade by five points per absence.**
- **Three unexcused absences in a row means you are automatically withdrawn with an Instructor Withdrawal (IW) from the class.**
- **Excessive and habitual lateness for class will also adversely affect your grade (five points will be deducted from your grade for every three tardies). You are tardy if you are one minute late.**
- **you may also be automatically withdrawn (IW) from the class for excessively late or missing homework.**
- **If you are absent on the day you are scheduled to give a speech or take an exam, you will NOT be able to make it up, resulting in grades of zero, unless exceptional circumstances occur and are accepted by the instructor.**

#### **Communication Expectations:**

When you communicate with others in this course, you must follow the Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.mccneb.edu/catalog/studentinformation.asp>), which calls for responsible and cooperative behavior. Please think critically, ask questions, and challenge ideas, but also show respect for the opinions of others, respond to them politely, and maintain the confidentiality of the thoughts expressed in the class. You may also wish to review information at <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/.html>.

#### **Cell Phones: Because cell phones are becoming more and more distracting in the classroom,**

- **Please have cell phones turned off completely, not even on vibrate, while you are in class**
- **No text messaging during class.**
- **If you are texting during class, the instructor will take your phone for the remainder of the class period.**
- **If you make a call before or after class or at break time, do so in the hallway or outside since students and the instructor are likely to be present and don't need to hear the conversation.**
- **If, for a very important reason discussed previously with the instructor, you need to have your cell phone on in class, have it on vibrate, and if it's an emergency and the phone needs to be answered immediately, leave the room as quietly as possible.**
- **An emergency phone call is the only time to leave the classroom to answer the phone**

#### **Classroom Behavior: Showing mutual respect for each other in the classroom is paramount and will include:**

- **Staying seated unless a classroom activity includes movement**
- **Waiting for the break before going to the rest room or getting a drink except in case of emergency**
- **Being respectful when someone is speaking by not interrupting and not carrying on side conversations**
- **No harassing of fellow students either vocally or physically**

**Classroom Concerns: Because of the need for vigilance within our schools, it is important to know what campus/center and room you are in. This is the first information you would give to Campus Security (402-457-2222) or the police (911) in case of an emergency.**

## ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT:

Students are reminded that materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection. Additional information about copyright is provided on the library website at <http://www.mccneb.edu/library>, by your instructor, or by the College's Copyright Officer. In response to incidents of student dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.), the College imposes specific actions that may include receiving a failing grade on a test, failure in the course, suspension from the College, or dismissal from the College. The disciplinary procedures are available in the Advising/Counseling Centers or at [http://www.mccneb.edu/procedures/V-4\\_Student\\_Conduct\\_and\\_Discipline](http://www.mccneb.edu/procedures/V-4_Student_Conduct_and_Discipline). **Also, your instructor has access to and may use if deemed necessary a tool called Turn-it-in.com to determine if any student work has been plagiarized.**

## STUDENT WITHDRAWAL:

If you cannot attend and complete this course, you should officially withdraw by calling Central Registration at 402-457-5231 or 1-800-228-9553. Failure to officially withdraw will result in either an instructor withdraw (IW) or failing (F) grade. The last date to withdraw is noted on the CLASS IDENTIFICATION section or first page of this syllabus.

## **LEARNING SUPPORT:**

MCC's Academic Resource Centers, Math Centers, and Writing Centers offer friendly, supportive learning environments that can help students achieve educational success. Staff members in these centers provide free drop-in assistance with basic computing, math, reading, and writing, skills. Self-paced, computer-assisted instructional support in reading, vocabulary, typing, English as a Second Language, and online course orientation is also available.

Detailed information about the Academic Resource, Math, and Writing Centers is in the Student Handbook, College Catalog, and online at <http://www.mccneb.edu/arc> and/or contact Student Services.

## ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

**If you have a disability that may substantially limit your ability to participate in this class, please contact a Disability Support Services Counselor, located in the Students Services Office on each campus. Metropolitan Community College will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with documented qualifying disabilities. However, it is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. For further information, please visit <http://www.mccneb.edu/dss/> and/or contact Student Services.**

## **TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT:**

**For assistance with student email, passwords, and most other MCC technology, contact the Help Desk at 402-457-2900 or [mcchelpdesk@mccneb.edu](mailto:mcchelpdesk@mccneb.edu).**

## **SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMETNS**

Use the following format for heading all papers which are to be typed and single spaced (the contents of the paper needs to be double spaced):

Chris Credits  
Film History and Appreciation  
Director Report  
January 7, 2008

(Always include a title centered on the page)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Review this class schedule before every class period, noting assignments, readings due, and topics for discussion/lecture. Assignments, deadlines, and film days may change as a result of class needs, and you will be responsible for noting such changes even if you are not present on the day they are announced. Field trips will also be arranged when most timely.

- 12/01 Introduction to class and to each other. Why the label Film? Why not Movies? What do we like/dislike in film and why? Discuss the recent Academy Awards. Discuss and watch a short history of film called *Film History*. Discuss Service Learning component for the third annual Omaha Film Festival.
- 12/03 Silent films. Watch Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights*.
- 12/08 Discuss Ch. 1 "Photography". Discuss director report assignment. (Omaha Film Festival guest speaker – tentative date.)
- 12/10 Discuss Ch. 2 "Mise en Scene". **Tell which living director you plan to report on (no repeat directors will be used).** (Omaha Film Festival guest speaker – tentative date.)
- 12/15 Discuss Ch. 3 "Movement" & Film Noir. **Present oral presentation on technical film term and hand in short written report.** If time, begin watching Film Noir.
- 12/17 **Exam I over Ch. 1, 2, 3, & Film Noir.**
- 12/22 Watch and discuss Film Noir movie and take notes for this essay and for subsequent movies viewed in class.
- 12/23/08 – 01/01/09 Holiday Break
- 01/05 Discuss Ch. 4 "Editing". **Film Noir response essay due** comparing class film and your film and incorporating elements of Film Noir and elements from Ch. 1, 2, & 3. **Director Reports.**
- 01/07 Discuss Ch. 5 "Sound" & Western & Combat films. **Director Reports.**
- 01/12 **Exam II over Ch. 4 & 5 & Western & Combat films.** Begin watching Western.
- 01/14 Watch Western.
- 01/19 No Class: Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration

- 01/21 Discuss Ch. 6 "Actors", including a **written report** on three of your favorite male and three of your favorite female actors and why they are your favorites. **Western movie response essay due** comparing the class film with your film for Western film elements and elements from Ch. 4 & 5.
- 01/26 Discuss Ch. 7 "Drama". Discuss Documentary. **Director Reports.**
- 01/28 **Exam III over Ch. 6 & 7 & Documentary films.**
- 02/02 Watch Documentary film.
- 02/04 Discuss Ch. 8 "Story" & Musicals. **Documentary movie response essay due** comparing the class film with your film for the Documentary genre and elements from Ch. 6 & 7. **Director Reports.**
- 02/09 Discuss Ch. 9 "Writing" & Musicals. **Documentary response essay due** comparing the class film with your film and elements from documentary and Ch. 8. Examine film scripts. **Director Reports.**
- 02/11 **Exam IV over Ch. 8 & 9, Documentary & Musicals.**
- 02/16 Watch Musical.
- 02/18 Discuss Ch. 12 "Synthesis". Discuss Synthesis paper and final presentation. **Musical essay due**, comparing the class film with your film and elements from Ch. 9. **Director Reports.** Discuss Omaha Film Festival, duties, and sign-up times.
- 02/23 **All Synthesis essays due.** Present first half of the Oral Presentations with film clips. Hand in outline used for oral presentation after presentation.
- 02/25 Present balance of Oral presentations with film clips. Hand in outline used for oral presentation after presentation.

**Somewhere during the quarter we will attend a movie at a local film theatre. This will affect the schedule and that information will be provided when known.**