**English 4/Understanding Film and Media 2022-23**

**Dual Credit Class between Sentinel High School and the Montana State University**

**Course Description:**

English 4/ Understanding Film and Media is an introduction to the study of motion pictures. You will be introduced to the technical concepts in the study of moving images as well as a range of critical lenses through which we can understand film. We will watch a wide selection of films from different countries and different periods in movie history. This course is divided into three units.

**Aesthetics**

This class examines film making as an art form. We will learn the technical language of film and look carefully and critically at how films are constructed. We will examine how specific cinematographic techniques and editing influence the viewer and how the film’s form and narrative structure shape its meaning. This portion of the course provides you with the necessary terminology to analyze moving images.

**Commercial Cinema and Alternatives to Commercial Cinema**

Students will explore film as art, entertainment, and business. We will explore how film has developed physically, socially, and technologically since its creation. We will look at the various phases of film production and the myriad of jobs in the industry. This exploration also includes an examination of genre, documentary, experimental film, and animated film.

**Ethics and Politics**

Many, if not most, films have at their center some ethical issue or dilemma. Students will learn to identify, characterize and write clearly about filmic expressions of these dilemmas. We will apply ideas from various moral philosophers throughout the year to gain a deeper understanding of both film and ethics. Additionally, students will learn to be critical viewers of film particularly in images of race, gender, and sexuality. Students will explore and reflect on ways in which culture influences film, and conversely how film shapes American culture.

**Learning Objectives**

1. Students will hone interpretive skills by recognizing patterns and details in film.
2. Students will describe, evaluate, and interpret film through speaking and writing.
3. Students will differentiate between formalist and realist films.
4. Students will demonstrate fundamental skills in the close formal, thematic, and generic analysis of film
5. Students will make short videos to demonstrate their knowledge of film conventions.
6. Students will learn the language of moral philosophy and apply ethical theories to films.
7. Students will explore and write about the political ideology in films.
8. Students will research film auteurs and examine the idea of authorial analysis of film.

**Graded Components**

1. In-class written responses after films
2. Reading quizzes
3. Ten take-home papers (2-3 pages)
4. Research paper and presentation: the film auteur (6-8 pages)
5. Class discussions and participation
6. Group video projects
7. First semester and final comprehensive in-class exam

**Instructed by Sarah Pohl**

* Master’s in Philosophy w/ Emphasis in Teaching Ethics, University of Montana
* Minor in Film Studies, University of Montana
* B.A. Teacher Education Program, Secondary English

**Textbook and Readings**

David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith, *Film Art: An Introduction*. 11th Edition (2016).

Louis Gianetti *Understanding Movies*. 14th Edition (2018)

**Additional Readings:**

* “African Americans and American Film,” in Benshoff, H.M. and S. Griffing’s *America on film: representing race, class, gender, and sexuality at the movies* (2009)
* *“*The Allegory of the Cave,” Plato
* “Existence Precedes Essence” in *The Philosophy Book* (2017)
* “Exploring the Visual Parameters of Women in Film,” (Laura Mulvey and John Berger) in Benshoff, H.M. and S. Griffing’s *America on film: representing race, class, gender, and sexuality at the movies* (2009)
* “I Want a Black Director,” August Wilson (1990)
* “Kantian Ethics” in Lewis Vaughn’s *Beginning Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (2014)
* “Radical Freedom,” Jean-Paul Sartre in Denise, White, Peterfreund’s *The Great Tradition in Ethics* (2007)
* “Utilitarianism” in Lewis Vaughn’s *Beginning Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (2014)
* “Virtue Ethics” in Lewis Vaughn’s *Beginning Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (2014)

**Feature-Length Films (See unit descriptions for additional films)**:

* Big Sky Documentary Film Fest Selections
* *Black Widow* (2021) Cate Shortland
* *BlacKkKlansman* (2018) Spike Lee
* *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) Arthur Penn
* *Casablanca* (1942) Michael Curtiz
* *Citizen Kane* (1940) Orson Welles
* *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022) Dan Kwan and Daniel Scheinert
* *Get Out* (2017) Jordan Peele
* *The Graduate* (1967) Mike Nichols
* *Lick the Star* (1998) Sophia Coppola
* *Macbeth* (2015) Justin Kurzel
* *Macbeth* (2021) Joel Coen
* *Parasite* (2019) Bong Joon Ho
* *Pulp Fiction* (1994) OR *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019) Quentin Tarantino
* *Singin’ in the Rain* (1952) Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly
* *The Social Dilemma* (2020) Jeff Orlowski
* *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018) Peter Ramsey, Bob Persichetti, and Rodney Rothman

**Also***:*

* *The Cutting Edge* (2004) Wendy Apple
* *Visions of Light* (1992) Arnold Glassman, Todd McCarthy, Stuart Samuels
* *Killing Us Softly 4* (2010)Jean Kilbourne

**Novels/Plays**

*Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley

*The Pearl* by John Steinbeck

*There There* by Tommy Orange

*Fences* by August Wilson

*Macbeth* by William Shakespeare

**A note on COURSE WORKLOAD:**

This is a college-level class. In addition to watching films, students must complete significant reading and writing assignments, to be completed outside of class**. The amount of writing and its evaluation is more than what is assigned in regular English 4. In addition, the reading pace in this class is faster than in regular English 4.** In other words, we are not just “watching movies” throughout the year. This is an intensive writing course with an emphasis on analysis and critical thinking.

**Screening Policy**

We will watch most of the required feature-length films in class. Please do not come to class late or leave class early (this includes packing up early), as this is disruptive to those around you. We will also watch 2-3 films at the Missoula Roxy Theater. If you miss a film screening for any reason, **you are responsible for watching the film on your own**. Most films are available through Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, as well as YouTube.

**Permission to View R-rated Material**

This class will screen media that contains explicit violence, adult themes, coarse language, depictions of sex, and material that many might find offensive. If this might be an issue, reconsider taking this class.

**Course Format**

This is a year-long course, taught in conjunction with English 4. In addition to the MCPS English 4 curriculum, approximately 2/3 of the year will be spent viewing, discussing, and writing about film.

Two introduction to film textbooks will supplement the traditional English 4 curriculum. There will be oral projects/presentations throughout the school year. All activities are aligned to state standards. **OPTION OF DUAL CREDIT with Montana State University course FILM 101IH (Understanding Film and Media).**

**An Overview of Our Year**

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| **September** | **October** | **November** | **December** | **January** | **February** | **March** | **April** | **May-June** |
| ***The Big Burn*** | **Film & Ethics Readings** | ***Fahrenheit 451*** | ***Macbeth*** | **Film Text/**  **Director**  **Research** | **Film Text/**  **Doc. Film Fest** | ***There There***  **Race/ Gender Readings** | ***There There***  **Race/ Gender Readings** | ***Fences***  **Film** |

**Grading**

If you take this class for college credit, you will have both an English 4 grade and an Understanding Film and Media grade. Everything we do in this class—film included—meets the Missoula County Public Schools English 4 standards. Therefore, your English 4 grade will include every assignment we do this year. It will be recorded in Q, and you can access it at any time. BUT, not all we do this year will be film related, and half of our assignments do not fulfill the requirements to get college credit in FILM 101IH. **Therefore, your film grade stands alone.** In other words, you can’t rock your English grade if you don’t also rock your film grade, but your film grade (on your college transcript) can be much higher than your English grade.

**Standards**

We cover all of the standards required in an English 4 class: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. What makes this class unique is that we accomplish much of our curriculum through the medium of film. In our film class, you will make claims about the films and clips we view (e.g. “What is the point of the film? What is the primary formalist element in the film and how does it shape the film’s meaning?”) In addition, your senior research paper entails researching a specific director (their style, biography, political influence, films, etc.). The research process is the same, the skills required to succeed are the same, your assignment will be as long, and you will be held to the same rigor and expectations as your peers in regular English 4. These are just a few of the many examples.

**Additional Policies**

**Late Assignment Policy**

**LARGELY, I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK.** Regularly completed homework is essential to successful learning. Students will be given one “Free Pass” to turn in one late assignment per quarter. A student may use this pass up to one week after it is due. **Otherwise, any work not turned in *at the start of class* on the date it is due results in a zero for that assignment. If a student turns in an assignment late, but on the same day it is assigned she/he will receive 50% credit. The student may not turn in the assignment the next day for credit**. **Late *larger* assignments (100 points+) are subject to a 10% per day deduction (papers, projects, etc.).** Assignments are posted on the board, on monthly syllabi, and on my website.

**Behavioral expectations**

I expect all students to conduct themselves as honest, responsible and law-abiding members of the academic community and to respect the rights of other students, members of the faculty and staff and the public to use, enjoy and participate in Sentinel High School’s and Montana State University’s programs and facilities. For additional information reference see SHS’s Student Handbook and MSU's Student Conduct Code at: http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student\_conduct/cg600.html .

**Collaboration**

University policy states that, unless otherwise specified, students may not collaborate on graded material. Any exceptions to this policy will be stated explicitly for individual assignments. If you have any questions about the limits of collaboration, you are expected to ask for clarification.

**Plagiarism**

Paraphrasing or quoting another’s work without citing the source is a form of academic misconduct. Even inadvertent or unintentional misuse or appropriation of another's work (such as relying heavily on source material that is not expressly acknowledged) is considered plagiarism. If you have any questions about using and citing sources, you are expected to ask for clarification.

**Academic Misconduct**

Section 420 of the Student Conduct Code describes academic misconduct as including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, multiple submissions, or facilitating others’ misconduct. Possible sanctions for academic misconduct range from an oral reprimand to expulsion from the university.

**Academic Expectations**

* Section 310.00 in the MSU Conduct Guidelines states that students must:
* be prompt and regular in attending classes;
* be well prepared for classes;
* submit required assignments in a timely manner;
* take exams when scheduled;
* act in a respectful manner toward other students and the instructor;
* make and keep appointments when necessary to meet with the instructor.

In addition to the above items, students are expected to meet any additional course and behavioral standards as defined by the instructor.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation(s), you should notify me at the beginning of the year so I can honor your accommodations and help you succeed in my class.

**Schedule of Topics, Readings, Screenings, and Assignments**

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| Topic 1 | Introduction: Formalism and Realism, Photography, Light |
| Screening  Reading | *Parasite* (2019) Bong Joon Ho  *Understanding Movies* Ch. 1 (1-31)  *Visions of Light* (1992) Arnold Glassman, Todd McCarthy, Stuart Samuels  Assignments   * A comparison analysis between *Parasite, The Pearl, and Citizen Kane* * A single scene analysis of how the form shapes its meaning |
| Topic 2 | **Ethics** |
| Screening  Readings | *Pulp Fiction* (1994) Quentin Tarantino  Ethics reading from Aristotle, Kant, Mill, Sartre (Supplemental Reader)  Assignment   * Develop an ethical analysis Quentin Tarantino’s Pulp Fiction using TWO of the three main ethical theories explored in class. |
| Topic 3 | **Mise-en-Scene** |
| Screening  Reading | *Citizen Kane* (1940) Orson Welles  *Understanding Movies* Ch. 2 (46-94)  Assignments   * Scene analysis of *Citizen Kane* & photo capture mise-en-scene shot analysis * Mise-en-Scene Pulitzer Prize photo analysis |
| Topic 4 | **Movement (Cinematography and Character Movement)** |
| Screening  Reading | *Gravity* (2013) Alfonso Cuarόn  *Understanding Movies* Ch. 3 (95-134)  Assignments   * Short film project * Movement (Scene) Analysis of *Gravity* |

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| Topic 5 | Editing |
| Screenings  Readings | *The Cutting Edge* (2004) Wendy Apple  *Understanding Movies* Ch. 4 (135-174)  Assignments   * Editing Film Short Project and Reflection |
| Topic 6 | **Sound and Dialogue** |
| Screenings  Reading | *The Graduate* (1967) Mike Nichols  *Understanding Movies* Ch. 5 (193-231)  Assignment   * Essay—how is music and sound used in the film to strengthen the film’s meaning? |
| Topic 7 | **Form and Meaning** |
| Screenings  Reading | *Casablanca* (1942) Michael Curtiz  Student Choice Film  *Film Art* Ch. 2 (50-71)  Assignment   * What makes a film a “masterpiece” or canonical? Is *Casablanca* a “cinematic masterpiece”? |
| Topic 8 | **The Film Auteur** |
| Reading | *Understanding Movies* 297-304; 468-474  *Film Art* pg. 34  Assignments   * Senior Research Paper * Director Research Presentation |
| Topic 9 | **Narrative and Narration** |
| Screening  Reading | *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022) Dan Kwan and Daniel Scheinert  *Piper* (2016) Alan Barillaro  *Film Art* Ch. 3 (72-110) Ch. 8 (303-324)  Assignment   * Narrative analysis of *Everything Everywhere All at Once* |
| Topic 10 | **Genre** |
| Screening  Readings | *Get Out* (2017) Jordan Peele  Film Art Ch. 9 (326-349)  Thriller, Horror, Comedy, Sci-Fi article in Supplemental Reader  Assignment   * Genre analysis of *Get Out* |

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| Topic 11 | Documentary |
| Screenings  Reading | Selections from the Big Sky Documentary Film Fest  *Film Art* Ch. 10 (350-369) |
| Topic 12 | **Industry** |
| Screenings  Reading | *Singin’ in the Rain* (1952) Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly OR *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019) Quentin Tarantino  *Film Art* Ch. 1 (2-48)  Assignment   * Analysis: What does the movie say about the film industry? Choice of ethical or gender analysis. |
| Topic 13 | **Experimental Film** |
| Screenings  Reading | *Lick the Star* (1998) Sophia Coppola  *Film Art* Ch. 10 (369-386)  Assignments   * What experimental techniques did you notice in Lick the Star and how do they further the point of the film? * Experimental Film Short Project |
| Topic 14 | **Animation** |
| Screenings  Readings | *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018) Ramsey, Persichetti, and Rothman  *Film Art* Ch. 10 (387-394)  “I Want a Black Director” by August Wilson  Assignment   * *Spiderman* reflection—analysis of animation techniques and an application of Wilson’s “I Want a Black Director” |
| Topic 15 | **Politics of Representation (throughout)** |
| Screenings  Readings | *Macbeth* (2015) Justin Kurzel  *BlacKkKlansman* (2018) Spike Lee  *Killing Us Softly 4* (2010)Jean Kilbourne  *Black Widow* (2021) Cate Shortland  *Bao* (2018, 8 min.) Domee Shi  “Exploring the Visual Parameters of Women in Film,” (Laura Mulvey and John Berger) in Benshoff, H.M. and S. Griffing’s *America on film: representing race, class, gender, and sexuality at the movies*  “African Americans and American Film” in Benshoff, H.M. and S. Griffing’s *America on film: representing race, class, gender, and sexuality at the movies*  Example Assignments   * *BlackKklansman—FINAL: Whole-film stylistic analysis, scene analysis, and choice of gender/race/ethical analysis.* * *Macbeth—*Fidelity and comparison analysis (Kurtzel to Polanski) * Apply the ethical/gender/race theories films throughout the year |