# New Course Proposal Checklist

Submission Date: March 20, 2017  
Department: Communication Studies  
Course Title: Focus on Film – Special Topic Goes Here  
Prepared by: Department Chair, Deborah Dunn

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Deborah Dunn  
Department Chair (signature)  
3/20/17  
Date
NEW COURSE PROPOSAL: FOCUS ON FILM
(PREVIOUSLY COM 195 – SPECIAL TOPICS)

Submission Date: March 20, 2017
Department: Communication Studies
Course Title: Focus on Film: Specify Topic Here
Prepared by: Deborah Dunn, Professor, Communication Studies (with support of Communication Studies Department and conversations with Provost Mark Sargent).

Background:
In 2014 Provost Mark Sargent agreed to pilot test 2-4 Focus on Film classes. The Academic Review Committee of the Senate approved the Com 195 Courses Fall 2014. Last fall, 2016, Mark Sargent indicated that he would be willing to continue to fund the extra unit pay for faculty taking on this course. The course has now been successfully offered/taught 4 times, which means it’s time to make it a regular course offering rather than relying on the 195 special topics designation.

Catalog Description:
Focus on Film. (1 Unit) Explores and conceptualizes a select dimension of the craft of filmmaking, including expressive properties and codes of cinema in mainstream and alternative traditions of film. Students are encouraged to learn how films work, what techniques filmmakers use to achieve desired effects, and how to "read" film. May be repeated up to 4 times for 4 units as topics vary. Credit/No Credit.

Typically Meets Over One Weekend:
Friday 4:15 – 9:30 5.25 Hours
Saturday 9:00 – 4:15 7.25 Hours
12.5 Hours (750 Minutes of Instruction – Allowing time for two longer meal breaks (dinner on Friday, lunch on Saturday)

Readings assigned/completed before first class meeting.
Paper/Essay Due One Week Later. Paper and Course graded Credit/No Credit

Previous Topics:
• Focus on The Documentary
• Focus on Film: War & Cinema
• Focus on Science Fiction (Team taught with Wayne Iba in Computer Science)
• Focus on Screwball Comedies

Thus far, topics have generally covered classic film genres. This has been the preference of the instructor, but is not a guiding or limiting factor.

The course counts as major/minor credit for Communication Studies, and should count for elective credit toward graduation for non-majors/minors. Once it’s a regular offering, other departments/programs may well allow this course to count for elective credit in their majors.

Brief Rationale:
There are many enrolled (and potential) students eager to study film and broadcasting. There have been plans to launch a film or film and media minor. Film is a powerful global means of communicating stories. Film has incredible power to both shape and reflect global culture. To study film involves a study of culture, a study of storytelling, a study of artistic and technological vision, and a study of social change.
The study of film is interdisciplinary in the sense that it involves culture, technique, vision, technology, the arts, language, psychology, politics, history, marketing, philosophy, and engineering. This course will specifically engage skills of visual and verbal literacy, creativity, collaboration, and writing.

Though these courses may certainly spur interest in film (in general) or in other topics, the course itself will not require a major research paper, and films shown as part of class do not require the same rental fees as films shown as a social event. So we do not expect a lot of additional resources, other than classroom space (not usually a problem late Friday and Saturday), usual equipment, and faculty time. Again, this course has now been successfully offered/taught 4 times.

Typical Use of Class Time:
Enrolled students will receive a selection of readings (in keeping with the unit load) in advance to prepare them for the films/weekend/discussions. Students will also receive a “film grammar” or terms to come to know (long shots, panning, backlighting, jump cuts, etc.) for the purposes of observation, analysis, and discussion.

Students will arrive on the Friday having completed the assigned readings and ready to enter into the course. After brief administrative tasks, the class will likely begin with a short lecture, then transition into the first film. From then on, film clips will be interspersed with discussion, lecture, free-writing, and breaks. At the conclusion of the course, an essay prompt will be distributed, and the students then have a week to complete the essay. When the completed essay is turned in and graded, the student will then earn credit (or not), but will not receive a letter grade.

The class time will vary depending on the focus and professor. In some cases, full feature films will be shown, while in other cases clips of films will suffice. If doing “shorts” many films may be shown. The time must be managed well to avoid long periods during which students just sit. Short breaks and moving to have discussions outdoors or in different locations in the building or classroom is helpful.

The kinds of readings will also vary by focus, genre, and professor. Some might focus almost exclusively on the art of filmmaking, while others may focus on rhetorical influence, cultural meaning, or personal impact. Theoretical perspectives may vary from critical to interpretive to effects-focused, again depending on the focus, genre, and professor.

Of Particular Interest in Communication Studies:
This course may address fundamental processes and implications of rhetorical influence, point of view, perception, communication lenses, communication strategies, the marriage of storytelling with a technological and visual aesthetic, etc. This course will also engage questions of what it means to be human, to be a storytelling creature, to be users and abusers of symbols. Further, the practice gained in group discussion, active listening, appreciative inquiry, and media literacy are valuable lifelong communication skills.

For More Detailed Examples, please see prior syllabi.
There’s a pitch in baseball called a screwball, which was perfected by a pitcher named Carl Hubbell back in the 1930s. It’s a pitch with a particular spin that sort of flutters and drops, goes in different directions, and behaves in very unexpected ways... Screwball comedy was unconventional, went in different directions, and behaved in unexpected ways... ”Andrew Bergman

Professor: Deborah Dunn, Ph.D.,
Professor of Communication Studies
Deane Hall 101 (x6780)
dunn @ westmont.edu

Course: Com195-1 (1 unit; Credit/No Credit)

Meets: January 13 4:20 – 9:20  Adams 216
January 14 9:00 – 4:30  Adams 216

Introduction & Central Questions:
Film, generally, is a powerful means of communicating stories – it has incredible power to both shape and reflect global culture. To study film, movies, or cinema involves a study of culture, a study of storytelling, a study of art and technological vision, and a study of social change. The study of film is interdisciplinary in the sense that it involves culture, technique, vision, the arts, language, communication, psychology, politics, history, marketing, philosophy, and engineering.

The fundamental objective of this course is that you learn to perceive, understand, and evaluate films more effectively, with greater assurance, validity, and pleasure. To achieve this, we will explore the basic principles and techniques of filmmaking. How do movies work? What do filmmakers do to produce the desired effects in a viewer? How do we come to know what the “desired” effects are? How do we “read” films?

Screwball comedies serve as a window on America in the 1930s – a time of severe economic depression as well as changing norms regarding class, gender, and social institutions (such as marriage). The films also showcase Hollywood attempts to work within the strict guidelines of the first major attempt at film censorship, the Hays Code.

Outcomes:
- Students will learn basic terms for talking about film and cinema, or a grammar of film
- Students will develop a budding appreciation for the art of cinema
- Students will develop tools for identifying particular film genres
- Students will gain awareness of how film rhetorically influences audiences to see and perceive and look in particular ways (conditioned by genre, filmmaker perspectives and agendas, visual storytelling, and technology); this awareness will lead to more adept critical thinking and analytical skills.
- Through group discussion, students will practice listening and speaking with people holding different views and coming from different intellectual and cultural contexts.
To this end, you will be asked to look at things you’ve typically ignored or perhaps not noticed. You may find, at first, that your attention to these new skills, terms, and techniques distract you from what makes a movie “fun” to watch. Stick with it. Hopefully, you’ll integrate new perceptual skills with the old, and your experience of movie watching will have expanded — along with your enjoyment.

**Assignments & Requirements for Full Credit:**
- Preparatory Readings for Discussion and Use in Essay
- Quiz on Readings (Given Friday Afternoon)
- Essay — Due January 22, 2017 before midnight via turnitin.com
- Full Attendance both Friday & Saturday

**Required Texts:**
It's helpful if we share a common vocabulary to talk about film -- James Monaco’s classic text, *How To Read a Film*, is highly recommended. There are two chapters that are **required** — and I've placed my rough outline of the chapters online if you find that useful. You might also look over the Chandler guide, or even bring a printed copy to class to refer to during discussions. The Corrigan reading may help you when it comes time to write your own essay.

  - (Chapter Three: Film Terms and Topics for Film Analysis and Writing)
  - Chapter Three — The Language of Film: Signs and Syntax
  - Chapter Five - Film Theory: Form and Function

The other readings are specific to the screwball comedy films. **Choose three of these**, and be prepared to discuss in class (also useful for writing final essay).

Choose Three Screwball Comedy Readings:

**Course Policies:**
- Come to class prepared -- read what is assigned and organize your thoughts and notes before class.
- Written assignments must be neatly typed and are due when specified — if the essay is not submitted, you will not earn credit for the course.
- Please use your computer, tablet, or other electronic device responsibly and unobtrusively.
- Please remember to turn your phone ringer off while class is in session.
- See the Westmont policy on attendance, in particular: “... when a student persistently neglects class assignments or has excessive absences, the faculty member may request the
student withdraw from the class or may notify the student that he or she has been terminated with a grade of F in that particular class." Since this class only meets two days, your attendance both days is required.

Reasonable Accommodations & Wellness:
If you have special circumstances that we should be aware of, please inform one of us as soon as possible. Students who have been diagnosed with a disability (learning, physical/medical, or psychological) are strongly encouraged to contact the Disability Services office as early as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations are only granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by the Disability Services office. Usually, arrangements must be made well in advance, though it's possible that you won't be aware of an issue until it arises, and since this course happens over the course of one weekend, we may not have the benefit of consulting with our experts on campus. Then we must do our best to accommodate one another; all parties may have to be flexible.

The nature of the course means that we will view images and hear dialogue that are meant to be emotionally powerful, especially regarding some of the most basic (and base) parts of life, including birth, life, and death. If you find yourself feeling offended by images or language, note the nature of the offense (to you, to humanity, to women, etc.) and try to stay present, thinking about how the film is acting upon you and how you are reacting to the film. Sometimes your energy in being offended serves as a good entry into dialogue about the film. Why were these choices made? Were you meant to be offended as a viewer? Does the offense make the film more or less effective? If you cannot bear to engage in films that are made to provoke you, it's probably best if you withdraw from the course. It's not an option to choose which films to watch and still complete the course.

Academic Integrity:
The relationship between students and faculty at Westmont is one of our best features and is informed by our common commitment to living ethically in community. This relationship assumes and requires an atmosphere of mutual trust and collaboration. Thus, how we learn (and teach) is every bit as important as what we learn (and teach). Accordingly, we are committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. You violate the principle of academic integrity when:
- You copy a classmate’s work or allow your classmate to copy your work.
- You fail to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an idea, or a turn of phrase, whether intentionally or unintentionally
- You submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors
- You seek or obtain help on any work that calls for independent work (including take-home exams, homework, and problems to be solved)
- You purchase or download or copy documents or papers and then present them as your own.

Should you violate the principle of academic integrity, you will fail the assignment and the course. See the student handbook for the full college policy.

Friday
- Syllabus & Introductions
- Quiz on Required Readings (and answers)
- Three Film Perspectives & Genre as Social Action
- Introduction to the Screwball Comedy Genre
• Film Clips: *Bringing Up Baby* (1938, Hawks); *To Be or Not to Be* (1942, Lubitsch); *You Can't Take it With You* (1938, Capra); *Nothing Sacred* (1937, Wellman); *The Awful Truth* (1937, McCarey); *It Happened One Night* (1934, Capra)

• Dinner Break

• Screening of *It Happened One Night* (1934, Capra)

• Free Write & Small Group Discussions

Saturday

• Welcome Back! Any thoughts?

• Small Group Discussions: Shumway (1991); Smith (1996)

• Screwball Comedy: Structures of Desire (Ideology, Subjects/Objects of Desire, Sex Without Sex, Luxury as Eroticism/Desire)

• Film Clips: *The Thin Man* (1934, Van Dyke)

• Screening of *My Man Godfrey* (1936, La Cava)

• Discussion

• Lunch Break

• Screening of *His Girl Friday* (1940, Hawks)

• “Disturbing Complexity of Tone” (Robin Wood)

• Legacy of Screwball Comedy & Lingering Tropes

• Film Clips: *What's Up Doc?* (1972, Bogdanovich); *Smokey & The Bandit* (1977, Needham); *Miss Dior – Official Director’s Cut* (2015, Corbijn on.dior.com/missdior); *She's Funny That Way* (2014, Bogdanovich); *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012, Russell); *Something's Gotta Give* (2003, Meyers)

• Concluding Discussion

Essay Due January 22, 2017 by midnight (11:59 p.m.) via turnitin.com

**Essay – Screwball Comedy**

Your task is to write an essay (3-4 pages), typed, double-spaced, citations in MLA or APA format. Be sure to come up with a creative title. A “passing” essay will be edited/proofread, will have a clear & compelling thesis, and will properly cite all sources – incorporate at least two chapters/essays from the course reading list. Save your document as .doc or .docx and include your mailbox number on the cover/first page.

Choose one of the broad topics discussed in class (genre, structures of desire, crafting comedy, etc.) and write about this related to the films we just saw/discussed in class. If you’d like to venture further afield feel free, but you are not required to do any extra research.

Turnitin.com

Class ID: 14443353
Password: JerichoWalls

Again – be sure to clearly state your thesis – and provide evidence from readings and (especially) the films themselves.
FOCUS ON FILM – THE DOCUMENTARY
SPRING 2016

"Are we more interested in what a film is (form) or in how it acts upon us (function)?" – James Monaco

Professor:
Deborah Dunn, Ph.D., Professor of Communication Studies
Deane Hall 101 (x6780)
dunn@westmont.edu

Course: Com195-1 (1 unit; Credit/No Credit)
Meets: January 15 4:20 – 9:30 p.m
       January 16 9:00 – 4:20 p.m.

Introduction & Central Questions:
Film, generally, is a powerful means of communicating stories – it has incredible power to both shape and reflect global culture. To study film, movies, or cinema involves a study of culture, a study of storytelling, a study of artistic and technological vision, and a study of social change. The study of film is interdisciplinary in the sense that it involves culture, technique, vision, the arts, language, communication, psychology, politics, history, marketing, philosophy, computer science, and engineering.

The fundamental objective of this course is that you learn to perceive, understand, and evaluate films more effectively, with greater assurance, validity, and pleasure. To achieve this, we will explore the basic principles and techniques of filmmaking. How do movies work? What do filmmakers do to produce the desired effects in a viewer? The documentary film, in particular, is usually held to a high standard of enlarging our view of the world, of challenging our beliefs, of shaping conversations, and presenting what is “true” or “real” or fair.

Outcomes:

- Students will learn basic terms for talking about film and cinema, or a grammar of film
- Students will develop a budding appreciation for the art of cinema
- Students will develop tools for identifying particular film genres
- Students will gain awareness of how film rhetorically influences audiences to see and perceive and look in particular ways (conditioned by genre, filmmaker perspectives and agendas, visual storytelling, and technology); this awareness will lead to more adept critical thinking and analytical skills.
- Through group discussion, students will practice listening and speaking with people holding different views and coming from different intellectual and cultural contexts.

To this end, you will be asked to look at things you’ve typically ignored or perhaps not noticed. You may find, at first, that your attention to these new skills, terms, and techniques distract you from what makes a movie “fun” to watch. Stick with it. Hopefully, you’ll integrate new perceptual skills with the old, and your experience of movie watching will have expanded – along with your enjoyment.
Assignments & Requirements for Full Credit:
- Preparatory Readings for Discussion and Use in Essay
- Quiz on Readings (Given Friday Afternoon)
- Essay – Due January 26, 2016 before midnight via email & turnitin.com – prompt to follow
- Full Attendance both Friday & Saturday

Required Texts:
There is one book required in its entirety, and it’s very short (see the title). The Amazon description might excite your interest: “In this concise, crisply written guide, Patricia Aufderheide takes readers along the diverse paths of documentary history and charts the lively, often fierce debates among filmmakers and scholars about the best ways to represent reality and to tell the truths worth telling. Beginning with an overview of the central issues of documentary filmmaking—its definitions and purposes, its forms and founders—Aufderheide focuses on several of its key subgenres, including public affairs films, government propaganda (particularly the works produced during World War II), historical documentaries, and nature films. Her thematic approach allows readers to enter the subject matter through the kinds of films that first attracted them to documentaries, and it permits her to make connections between eras, as well as revealing the ongoing nature of documentary’s core controversies involving objectivity, advocacy, and bias…”

It's helpful if we share a common vocabulary to talk about film -- James Monaco's classic text, How To Read a Film, is highly recommended. There are two chapters that are required – and I've placed my rough outline of the chapters online if you find that useful. You might also look over the Chandler guide, or even bring a printed copy to class to refer to during discussions. The Bruzzi selections might be least familiar, but do your best. Note you will also choose one additional reading to give you a sense of a particular film and what we might call a closer reading.

Required Readings:
  - Part II: The Legacy of Direct Cinema (pp. 67-74)
  - Chapter Six: The Performative Documentary (Barker, Dineen, Broomfield)
- Chandler, D. (2014, October). The 'grammar' of television and film:
  http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/short/grammar.html
  - Chapter Three – The Language of Film: Signs and Syntax
  - Chapter Five - Film Theory: Form and Function

Choose One Close Reading:


Watch One Film Before Friday & Bring Your Notes From Your Viewing

- Alex Gibney's Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room (2004)
- James Marsh's Project Nim (2011)
- Michael Moore's Bowling for Columbine (2002)
- Louie Psihoyos', The Cove (2009)

Recommended Reading As You Write:

  (Chapter Three: Film Terms and Topics for Film Analysis and Writing)

Reasonable Accommodations & Wellness:

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- You fail to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an idea, or a turn of phrase, whether intentionally or unintentionally
- You submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors
- You seek or obtain help on any work that calls for independent work (including take home exams, homework, and problems to be solved)
- You purchase or download or copy documents or papers and then present them as your own.

Should you violate the principle of academic integrity, you will fail the assignment and the course. See the student handbook for the full college policy.

**Proposed Order of Inquiry (Subject to Change)**

We’ll start with a discussion of some very basic terms in the “grammar” of film as well as key aspects of film (photography, mise-en-scène, movement, editing, sound, and writing), and then we will move into some discussion of film theory, of realism vs. expressionism, of formalism; then of genre and tropes - and how we know a documentary film when we see it. We’ll examine issues of Truth and representation and interpretation and objectivity and the real and fiction vs. nonfiction, and...

_Friday_
4:20 Syllabus & Introductions
4:45 Quiz on Required Readings
5:00 Film Theory - Introduction to Relevant Terms
Film Grammar - Monaco – Writing About Film - mise-en-scène
5:20 Realism, Expressionism, Formalism
5:40 Dinner Break

6:10 **City Symphonies:**
*Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (1927, Walter Ruttmann)
*Manhattan: A Film by Paul Strand & Charles Sheeler* (1921)
*Rain* (1929, Joris Ivens) – Music by Lou Lichtweld, 1932; Music by Hanns Eisler, 1941
*Man With a Movie Camera* (1929, Dziga Vertov)

7:00 Quick Break
7:05 Introduction to *Nanook of the North*
7:10 Screening of *Nanook of the North* (1922, Robert Flaherty)
8:25 Quick Break & Free Write
8:35 Group Discussion
8:50 Main Themes on Board
9:05 What Did We Learn Today?

**Saturday**
9:00 Re-Convene – Overnight Thoughts?
9:10 Truth, Objectivity, and Interpretation
Identifying elements of the genre
Scenes From: *Capturing Reality* (2008, Pepita Ferrari)
From cinema-verite; pioneers Albert Maysles and Joan Churchill to maverick movie makers like Errol Morris, Werner Herzog and Nick Broomfield, the world’s best documentarians reflect upon the unique power of their genre. Capturing Reality explores the complex creative process that goes into making non-fiction films. Deftly charting the documentarian’s journey, it poses the question: can film capture reality?

*Night Mail* (1936, Harry Watt & Basil Wright) – Grierson
*The Spanish Earth* (1937, Joris Ivens)
*The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936, Lorentz)
*The Civil War, The Cause* (1990, Ken Burns) - Television

10:10 Quick Break

10:15 **Cinema Verite & Performative Documentaries**
Scenes From: *Chronicle of a Summer* (1961, Edgar Morin & Jean Rouch)
*The Battle of Chile, Part 1* (1975, Patricio Guzman)
*Salesman* (1968, Albert Maysles, David Maysles, & Charlotte Zwerin)

*Titicut Follies* - Vladimir (1967, Frederick Wiseman)
*Warrendale* (1967, Allan King)

*Don’t Look Back* (1967, D.A. Pennebaker)
*This is Spinal Tap* (1984, Rob Reiner)
It Might Get Loud (2008, Davis Guggenheim)

Grey Gardens (1975, Ellen Hovde, Albert Maysles, David Maysles, & Muffie Meyer)

11:40  Break for Lunch
12:05  Reconvene & Discuss Your Own Viewings/Readings – Advocacy & Theater & Economics & Politics & Direct Sales (Fahrenheit 9/11 et al)

12:35  Objectivity & “Just” Documenting
       Screen Checkpoint (2003, Yoav Shamir) – 80 min.
1:00   Quick Break & Group Discussion
1:10   Main Themes on Board & Discussion
1:25   Short Break
1:35   Screen Five Broken Cameras (2011, Emad Burnat & Guy Davidi)
2:00   Concluding Discussion
2:10   The End!

Jan 26  Essay Due Before Midnight, via turnitin.com

Analytical Essay – The Documentary Film

Your task is to write an analytic essay (4 1/2 to 5 1/2 pages), typed, double-spaced, in MLA or APA format. A “passing” essay will be edited/proofread, will have a clear thesis, and will properly cite all sources – incorporate and cite at least two chapters/essays from the course reading list. Save your document as .doc or .docx and include your mailbox number on the cover/first page.

Major topics explored in class discussions (and in readings) had to do with:
• Form (mise-en-scène, sound, images, special effects, pacing)
• Expressionism vs. Formalism
• Cinema Verite, Images, Representing Truth & Objective Reality
• Performative Documentary & Story Telling & Interpreting
• Subjects vs. Actors vs. Co-Creators?

Choose one of the broad topics named above (or other topics that arise in the class which are unknown at the time of this writing). If you’d like to venture further afield and extend what you’ve learned beyond this particular class, feel free to do so – just be sure to reference this course, the themes, and your readings. To be perfectly clear – you are not required to go beyond the course – if you pick a broad topic above and use the readings/films from the weekend you are golden.

Turnitin.com – ID & Password to Come via Email
Introduction & Central Questions:
Film, generally, is a powerful means of communicating stories – it has incredible power to both shape and reflect global culture. To study film, movies, or cinema involves a study of culture, a study of storytelling, a study of artistic and technological vision, and a study of social change. The study of film is interdisciplinary in the sense that it involves culture, technique, vision, the arts, language, communication, psychology, politics, history, marketing, philosophy, computer science, and engineering. Science Fiction films, in particular, explicitly engage visions and fears of the future, interpretations of being human, and how we imagine our heroes, enemies, virtues, and ideals.

The goal of this course is that you learn to perceive, read, and evaluate films more critically and effectively, with greater assurance, and with pleasure. We discuss basic principles and techniques of filmmaking. How do movies work? What do filmmakers do to produce the desired effects in a viewer? To this end, you will be asked to look at things you’ve typically ignored or never seen. You may find, at first, that your attention to these new skills, terms, and techniques distract you from what makes a movie “fun” to watch. Stick with it. Hopefully, you’ll integrate new perceptual skills with the old, and your experience of movie watching will have expanded – along with your enjoyment!

Course Objectives:
The fundamental objective of this course is that you learn to perceive, understand, and evaluate films more effectively, with greater assurance, validity, and pleasure. To achieve this, we will introduce the basic principles and techniques of film art. Specifically:
- Students will learn basic terms for talking about film and cinema, or a grammar of film
- Students will develop a budding appreciation for the art of cinema
- Students will develop tools for identifying particular film genres
- Students will gain awareness of how film rhetorically influences audiences to see and perceive and look in particular ways (conditioned by genre, filmmaker perspectives and agendas, visual storytelling, and technology); this awareness will lead to more adept critical thinking and analytical skills.
- Through group discussion, students will practice listening and speaking with people holding different views and coming from different cultural contexts.

Assignments & Requirements for Full Credit:
- Preparatory Readings for Discussion / Essay
- Quiz on Readings (Given Friday Afternoon)
- Essay – Due January 26, 2015 before midnight via email & turnitin.com – prompt to follow
• Full Attendance both Friday & Saturday

"Are we more interested in what a film is (form) or in how it acts upon us (function)? — James Monaco

Required Texts:
It’s helpful if we share a common vocabulary to talk about film — James Monaco’s classic text, How To Read a Film, is highly recommended. There are two chapters that are required — and Professor Dunn has placed her rough outline of the chapters on Eureka if you find that useful. Below are all of the required readings for the course — please have your readings completed before the class meets. Note that the readings are grouped in terms of categories — the first readings are required of all students, and provide the film grammar and introductions to science fiction films. The other categories provide further reading on genres, closer philosophical readings on particular films, and short reflections on films in a collection put together for an exhibit at New York’s Museum of Modern Art called The Hidden God.

Required Readings:
  o Chapter Three – The Language of Film: Signs and Syntax
  o Chapter Five – Film Theory: Form and Function
  o Chapter 1 – 1895–1930: Origins of a Genre (pp. 53–71)

Choose One Reading on Genre:
  o Chapter – Genre, Theory and Science Fiction (pp. 7-26)

Choose At Least One Close Film Reading:

Choose One From The Hidden God:
Reasonable Accommodations & Wellness:
If you have special circumstances that we should be aware of, please inform one of us as soon as possible. Students who have been diagnosed with a disability (learning, physical/medical, or psychological) are strongly encouraged to contact the Disability Services office as early as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations are only granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by the Disability Services office. Usually, arrangements must be made well in advance, though its possible that you won’t be aware of an issue until it arises, and since this course happens over the course of one weekend, we may not have the benefit of consulting with our experts on campus. Then we must do our best to accommodate one another; all parties may have to be flexible.

The nature of the course means that we will view images and hear dialogue that are meant to be emotionally powerful, especially regarding some of the most basic (and base) parts of life, including birth, life, and death. If you find yourself feeling offended by images or language, note the nature of the offense (to you, to humanity, to women, etc.) and try to stay present, thinking about how the film is acting upon you and how you are reacting to the film. Sometimes your energy in being offended serves as a good entry into dialogue about the film. Why were these choices made? Were you meant to be offended as a viewer? Does the offense make the film more or less effective? If you cannot bear to engage in films that are made to provoke you, it’s probably best if you withdraw from the course. It’s not an option to choose which films to watch and still complete the course.

Course Policies:
- Come to class prepared -- read what is assigned and organize your thoughts and notes before class.
- Written assignments must be neatly typed and are due when specified — if the essay is not turned in within a week of the deadline you will not earn credit for the course.
- Please use your computer, tablet, or other electronic device responsibly and graciously. If your use of technology distracts others or interrupts the class, you will lose the privilege of using technology in class.
- Please remember to turn your phone ringer off while class is in session. In the very rare event that you must receive a phone call during class, please sit near an exit, and turn your ringer to vibrate.
- See the Westmont policy on attendance, in particular: "... when a student persistently neglects class assignments or has excessive absences, the faculty member may request the student withdraw from the class or may notify the student that he or she has been terminated with a grade of F in that particular class." Since this class only meets two days, your attendance both days is required.

Academic Integrity:
The relationship between students and faculty at Westmont is one of our best features and is informed by our common commitment to living ethically in community. This relationship assumes and requires an atmosphere of mutual trust and collaboration. Thus, how we learn (and teach) is every bit as important as what we learn (and teach). We believe that our mission, to serve “God’s kingdom by cultivating thoughtful scholars, grateful servants and faithful leaders for global engagement with the academy, church and world” is best accomplished in community, where

our social and intellectual growth needs freedom for exploration complemented by a commitment to good will and graciousness. Personal discipline is also required. For example, civility is basic to all types of community, while academic honesty and respect for education are fundamental to an instructional environment. Learning depends on truth-centered attitudes. It thrives in an atmosphere of discriminating openness to ideas, a condition that is characterized by a measure of modesty toward one’s own views, the desire to affirm the true, and the courage to examine the unfamiliar. As convictions are expressed, one enters into the ‘great conversation’ of collegiate life, a task best approached with a willingness to confront and be confronted with sound thinking. (Westmont Community Life Statement)
Accordingly, we are committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. You violate the principle of academic integrity when:

- You copy a classmate’s work or allow your classmate to copy your work.
- You fail to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an idea, or a turn of phrase, whether intentionally or unintentionally.
- You submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors.
- You seek or obtain help on any work that calls for independent work (including take home exams, homework, and problems to be solved).
- You purchase documents or papers and then present them as your own.

Should you violate the principle of academic integrity, you will fail the assignment and the course. See the student handbook for the full college policy.

**Proposed Order of Inquiry (Subject to Change)**

4:45 Quiz on Required Readings
5:00 Answers to Quiz Questions
5:10 Quick Break
5:15 Film Theory – Introduction to Relevant Terms
Mise-en-scène: Clip from Wall-E: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEKnrPeCFeY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEKnrPeCFeY)
Realism, Expressionism, Imaginative Realism, Extrapolation
Intro to German Expressionism
Clips: Nosferatu (1922, Germany) F.W. Murnau
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920, Germany) Robert Wiene
5:55 Dinner Break
6:25 Introduction to Metropolis
See also: [http://www.kinolorber.com/metropolis/restoration.html](http://www.kinolorber.com/metropolis/restoration.html)
6:30 Screening of Metropolis (1927, Germany) Fritz Lang
8:50 Quick Break
9:05 Free Write
9:00 Discussion (SG)
9:25 Main Themes On Board
9:30 Break for the Night
Saturday

9:00 Re-Convene – Overnight Thoughts?
9:10 Special Effects
   From Papier Mache to Models to Movement Through Models to CGI
   Clips: *Hugo* (2011, USA) Martin Scorsese
10:15 Quick Break
10:20 Science Fiction Genre & Tropes
   What is Genre? Why Does Genre Matter? How do genres impact films, and films impact genres?
   Discuss Genre Benders/Subverters/ Hybrids, etc. (Derrida – Purity)
   Clips: *Soylent Green* (1973, USA) Richard Fleischer
       *Men in Black* (1997, USA) Barry Sonnenfeld
11:55 Break for Lunch
12:25 Re-Convene
12:30 Being Human (Or Monstrous, or Alien, or Other, or Machine)
   Clips: *Her* (2013, USA) Spike Jonze
       *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968, USA) Stanley Kubrick
1:40 Quick Break
1:45 Introduce Next Film Screening
1:55 Screening of: *Blade Runner* (1982, USA) Ridley Scott
3:55 Quick Break
4:00 Discuss Film
4:20 Concluding Discussion
4:30 Dismissal

*Essay Due January 26, 2015 before midnight via turnitin.com.*
Analytical Essay – Science Fiction

Your task is to write an analytic essay (4 1/2 to 5 1/2 pages), typed, double-spaced, in MLA or APA format. A “passing” essay will be edited/proofread, will have a clear thesis, and will properly cite all sources – incorporate at least two chapters/essays from the course reading list. Save your document as .doc or .docx and include your mailbox number on the cover/first page.

Major topics explored in class discussions (and in readings) had to do with:

- Visions/hopes/fears for the future and technology;
- Form (mise-en-scène, montage, special effects) & Function (what do films DO to us?);
- German Expressionism
- Special Effects
- Genre & Sci Fi Tropes
- What Does It Mean to Be Human (or alien or monstrous or machine)?

Choose one of the broad topics named above, and write about this related to the films we just saw/discussed in class. If you’d like to venture further afield and extend what you’ve learned to other science fiction films, feel free to do so – just be sure to at least reference this course, the themes, and your readings. To be perfectly clear – you are not required to go beyond the course – if you pick a broad topic above and use the readings/films from the weekend you are fine.

Turnitin.com

Class ID: 9876740
Password: Metropolis

Again – be sure to clearly state your thesis – and provide evidence from readings and (especially) the films themselves.
FOCUS ON FILM FALL 2014:
WAR & CINEMA

"War movies deal in strong stuff – destruction on a vast scale, heroic adventure, the most grotesque horror, noble sacrifice, cowardice, loud pyrotechnics, men and women in perilous straits where death can arrive on a butterfly’s wing or a whistling artillery shell. When made properly, these films have a legitimate reason to present human conflict in its most extreme dramatic conditions, and so when you watch the best ones, you really want to know what’s going to happen next...War films give viewers a tiny vicarious fraction of that experience, and the adrenaline hit that comes with it accounts for much of their popularity. But in the good ones, something more serious is at work... Viewers should not look to war movies for objective historical truth. Actually, any adult who expects to find historical accuracy in a Hollywood movie deserves to be lied to. Viewers can demand reasonably accurate emotional truth. That’s what movies are good at.” Mike Mayo

Professor: Deborah Dunn, Ph.D., Professor of Communication Studies  
dunn @ westmont.edu  
Deane Hall 107B  
(x6780)

Office Hours:  
Mon: 11:30 – 1:30 p.m.  
Wed: 1:15 – 4:15 p.m.  
*And By Appointment

If you have questions that we did not get to in class, or if you want to explore an idea, come by. If you need help, please ask for it.

Course:  
F14 Com195-1 (1 unit)  
Graded Credit/No Credit

Meets:  
November 7  
November 8

4:15 – 9:30 p.m.  
9:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Introduction & Central Questions:  
Film, generally, is a powerful means of communicating stories – it has incredible power to both shape and reflect global culture. To study film, movies, or cinema involves a study of culture, a study of storytelling, a study of artistic and technological vision, and a study of social change. The study of film is interdisciplinary in the sense that it involves culture, technique, vision, the arts, language, communication, psychology, politics, history, marketing, philosophy, computer science, and engineering. War films, in particular, explicitly engage cultural and national ideas of self – how we imagine our heroes, enemies, virtues, and ideals worthy of sacrifice.

Course Objectives:  
• Students will gain at least a basic terminology for talking about film and cinema, or a grammar of film  
• Students will develop a budding appreciation for the art of cinema  
• Students will develop tools for identifying particular film genres  
• Students will gain awareness of how film rhetorically influences audiences to see and perceive and look in particular ways – conditioned by genre, filmmaker perspectives and agendas, visual storytelling, and technology; this awareness will lead to stronger critical thinking and analytical skills.
• Through group discussion, students will practice listening and speaking with people holding differing views and coming from different cultural contexts.

“You can’t show war as it really is on the screen, with all the blood and gore. Perhaps it would be better if you could fire real shots over the audience’s head every night, you know, and have actual casualties in the theater...But when I do a war film, I want the story to be about real war, not just action. Many of the incidents in my stories have to do with the emotions of men in war.

This is every bit as important as the actual fighting.” Sam Fuller, Film Book 2 (1962)

Assignments & Requirements for Full Credit:  
• Brief Presentation of Assigned Shot/Sound Issue in Film Grammar (2 mins)  
• Preparatory Readings for Discussion and Use in Essay  
• Essay – Due November 15 before midnight via email & turnitin.com – prompt to follow  
• Full Attendance both Friday & Saturday
“Are we more interested in what a film is (form) or in how it acts upon us (function)? – James Monaco

Required Texts:
  o Chapter Three – The Language of Film: Signs and Syntax
  o Chapter Five - Film Theory: Form and Function

Reasonable Accommodations & Wellness:
If you have special circumstances (such as a learning disability) that I should be aware of, please inform me as soon as possible. I will do what I can to be sure that you are granted all reasonable accommodations. Usually, arrangements to reasonably accommodate your need must be made well in advance, though its possible that you won’t be aware of an issue until it arises, and since this course happens over the course of one weekend, we may not have the benefit of consulting with our experts on campus. Then we must do our best to accommodate one another in ways that seem most helpful and least disruptive to others. We may have to be flexible here.

The nature of the course means that we will view images of war, conflict, death, and mutilation. Furthermore, in an effort to be “realistic” most war films depict strong emotion, strong language, and often racist and sexist action and language. If you suffer from any sort of PTSD you may find this course to be problematic. Even if you don’t have any personal experience or trauma relating to war or violence of any kind, you may still find these films objectionable or painful. If you can, try to stay present and think about how the film is acting upon you and use that for your entry into this course. If you cannot bear to watch, it’s probably best if you withdraw from the course. It’s not an option to choose which films to watch and still complete the course.

Course Policies:
- Come to class prepared — read what is assigned and organize your thoughts and notes before class.
- Written assignments must be neatly typed and are due when specified – if the essay is not turned in within a week of the deadline you will not earn credit for the course.
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**Academic Integrity:**
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> our social and intellectual growth needs freedom for exploration complemented by a commitment to good will and graciousness. Personal discipline is also required. For example, civility is basic to all types of community, while academic honesty and respect for education are fundamental to an instructional environment. Learning depends on truth-centered attitudes. It thrives in an atmosphere of discriminating openness to ideas, a condition that is characterized by a measure of modesty toward one’s own views, the desire to affirm the true, and the courage to examine the unfamiliar. As convictions are expressed, one enters into the ‘great conversation’ of collegiate life, a task best approached with a willingness to confront and be confronted with sound thinking. (Westmont Community Life Statement)

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- You submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors
- You seek or obtain help on any work that calls for independent work (including take home exams, homework, and problems to be solved)
- You purchase documents or papers and then present them as your own

Should you violate the principle of academic integrity, you will fail the assignment and the course. See the student handbook for the full college policy.

**Reading Assignments:**

**Film Grammar:**
It’s helpful if we share a common vocabulary to talk about film -- James Monaco’s classic text, *How To Read a Film*, is highly recommended. There are two chapters that are required – and I’ve also placed my outline of the chapters on Eureka if you find that useful. Also visit this website (pdf of the website is also on Eureka):

[http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/short/gramtv.html](http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/short/gramtv.html)

**War and Cinema Readings (on Eureka)**
- Slocum’s Introduction to Hollywood and War: The Film Reader.
- Virilio – the preface to a longer work that talks about how technology and war have developed together, from the searchlight to the camera.
- Choose four additional essays to read and know well from the Eureka folder – take notes & be prepared to discuss in class.

**Shots/Sounds Assignment: Due Friday, November 7 @ 4:30 p.m.**
Find your name on the list below – you are responsible for being able to concisely explain (in about 30 seconds) your assigned concept/innovation & show us one or two good examples. Feel free to collaborate with the others
in your grouping; note, however, that collaboration is NOT required, since you may not know each other yet. Whether you choose to collaborate or not, face to face or not, you will still be on deck Friday.

Feel free to use clips/shots/examples from ANY kind of movie/film (but not video games or tv unless you are making a quick comparison for the sake of our education) — you don’t have to stick to a war genre. And, feel free to use the same shots/clips highlighted by Monaco in the chapters on How To Read a Film. You don’t need to impress us with how obscure your knowledge of film is — just give us a very good, representative example. Make sure your entire explanation with clip is under two minutes. If you have questions, feel free to send me an email.

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**Proposed Order of Inquiry (Subject to Change)**

We’ll start with explanations (yours) and discussion of some very basic terms in the “grammar” of film, and then we’ll move into some examples of how war films begin. Then we’ll move into discussions of realism vs. expressionism, of art vs. propaganda; then of genre and tropes - and how we know a war film when we see it. Finally, we’ll talk about how filmmakers play with a genre or tweak a tradition, and how filmmakers both “sample” and pay homage to earlier films.

**Friday**

4:15 Syllabus & Introductions
4:30 Central Questions for Course
4:50 Film Grammar / Terms – Students Show Examples
5:30 Quick Break
5:35 Montage & Eisenstein
5:45 Screen Portion of Film:
   *The Battleship Potemkin*, Part 4 – Odessa Steps (Sergei Eisenstein, USSR, 1925)
   Based on the “glorious revolution” of 1905 – five act story of the mutiny of the crew and reaction of citizens of Odessa when Navy fires on the battleship; famous scene on the steps when the Cossacks arrive
   Discussion & Observations
5:45 War Film Genre – What Do We Expect to See?
6:25 Break (30 minutes)
6:55 Introduction to WWI & Film
7:05 Screen Film: *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Lewis Milestone, U.S.A. 1930)
Based on novel by Erich Maria Remarque. A landmark film for technical innovation, powerful set pieces, imaginative direction. Banned in Nazi Germany.

9:00 Thinking About What We’ve Seen (FW, SG)
9:30 Dismissal

Saturday

9:00 Discuss Realism (Formalism) vs. Expressionism
perhaps also art vs. propaganda or dialogue vs. documentary?
9:30 WWII – Propaganda Films & Techniques – Discussion & Screen Portions of:
- Triumph of the Will (Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, 1935) Triumph des Willens
- Private SNAFU: Spies (Chuck Jones, USA, 1943) – Produced by Warner Bros. for Army Screen Magazine, never intended for the general public.
- der Fuehrer’s Face (Jack Kinney, USA, 1943) – Produced by Walt Disney Productions/Release RKO Radio Pictures
- Education for Death (Clyde Geronimi, USA, 1943) Produced by Walt Disney Productions/Release RKO Radio Pictures; principal animation by Ward Kimball.

10:25 Quick Break
10:30 War Genre & Cultural Codes – Masculinity, Nationalism, Heroes, etc. – see articles assigned + Basinger’s analysis of WWII War Movie Genre

11:10 Screen Clips:
Patton (Franklin Schaffner, USA, 1970)

Longest Day (Ken Annakin/Andrew Marton/Bernhard Wicki, USA, 1962)
Paratroopers Landing: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NV7og2FD8B8
Point du Hoc: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=og7D2_wLQ3Y&index=3&list=PL4E313DDD873DC26
Sword beach: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5rOrWiCZRo&index=5&list=PL4E313DDD873DC26

Rome Open City (Roberto Rossellini, Italy, 1945)
Death of Pina: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_L8ZqqtYvwM

Apocalypse Now (Francis Ford Coppola, USA, 1979)
Ride of the Valkyries: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKaYOW9zMoY

Platoon (Oliver Stone, USA, 1986)
Hell is Absence of Reason:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3WiH7Q0DYs&index=33&list=PLnNPf2oWPS47mxWItisdYJeErp-Wm485P
We’re Gonna Lose This War http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VK4d1sdQFQ&list=PLnNPf2oWPS47mxWItisdYJeErp-Wm485P&index=36
Evacuation & Death of Sgt. Elias: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKpQB3bEPbl
Roger Ebert on Platoon: “It was Francois Truffaut who said that it's not possible to make an anti-war movie, because all war movies, with their energy and sense of adventure, end up making combat look like fun. If Truffaut had lived to see Platoon, the best film of 1986, he might have wanted to modify his opinion. Here is a movie that regards combat from ground level, from the infantryman's point of view, and it does not make war look like fun.” 12/30/1986

11:30 Lunch Break
12:00 Screen Film:
Dr. Strangelove: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (Stanley Kubrick, Great Britain, 1963)
1:45 Processing Observations & Discussion (SG)
2:00 Quick Break
2:05 Screen Some of Film: Saving Private Ryan (Steven Spielberg, USA, 1998)
4:00 Concluding Discussion
4:30 Dismissal

* Essay Due One Week Later – See Prompt
Analytical Essay – War & Cinema (prompt followed course by about 36 hours)

Your task is to write an analytic essay (4 ½ to 5 ½ pages), typed, double spaced, in MLA or APA format. A “passing” essay will be edited/proofread, will have a clear thesis, and will properly cite films, articles, discussions, etc. Please cite at least two chapters/essays from the course reading list. Please also include your mailbox number.

Major topics explored in class discussions (and in readings) had to do with:

- an artist’s vision/intent;
- form (mise-en-scène & montage, especially) & function (what do films DO to us?);
- expressionism vs. realism;
- and truth (historical accuracy vs. emotional truth vs. truthful dialogue between artist/audience)

Though we did not explicitly discuss the differences between film for art’s sake vs. film in the service of a nation-state, we flirted with these notions when we discussed the “job” of a war film and war films that also persuade, some in ways we’d label propaganda. And of course, we didn’t even discuss the difference between films made for mass consumption/profit vs. those made for the sake of a cause or vision. Still, we did spend a lot of time talking around the topics of truth and art and persuasion in various forms.

So – pick one of the four broad topics named above, and write about this related to the films we just saw/discussed in class. If you’d like to venture further afield and extend what you’ve learned to other sub-genres and issues in war films, feel free to use this list to stimulate your thinking (or get creative). Just be sure you are incorporating some of what you learned or discussed or discovered in this course (again, see four broad topics, above, and readings). To be perfectly clear – you are not required to go beyond the course – if you pick a broad topic above and use the readings/films from the weekend you are fine. This list is only for those who WANT to go further afield, bringing in other genres or topics to complement what we did this weekend.

- Current Wars/Conflicts (Hurt Locker, Jarhead)
- Foreign War Films of SE Asia (Kurosawa’s Ran)
- “Top” War Movies Set in WWII (Tora Tora Tora, Bridge on River Kwai, Dirty Dozen, etc.)
- “Top” War Movies Set in Vietnam (Platoon, Full Metal Jacket, Apocalypse Now)
- Ironic or Comedic Take on War Movies
- Race & Racism at War (many films about Vietnam, propaganda films depicting Axis Powers in WWII, Civil War dramas, esp. Glory)
- Technology & War – the “Video Game” War (War Games) or War Via Technology (citing Virilio)
- Sex & Sexism at War
- War on the Homefront
- Coming Home Films

Again - be sure to clearly state your thesis – and provide evidence from readings and (especially) the films themselves.

Paper is due by Sunday, the 16th (yes, extended this a day) by midnight (or 11:59 p.m. to be precise). Turn in one copy to turnitin.com – {class ID is 9036620 / password is Montage1925} – if you want comments from me, turn in another copy (paper copy) to me – mailbox is in Deane Hall, first floor, Ms. Frances Iba’s office.