

Film Appreciation Syllabus  
Fall, 2009 – Martin Blake  
209-533-8644 ext. 221

1. Understanding the Purpose of a Film: to entertain, educate, persuade, or inspire. View Francis Ford Coppolla's World Out of Order.  
*Homework: Choose two films you have seen this summer and answer all the questions in the hand-out about these films.*  
(week of Sept. 14)
2. Writing the Film Review: Elements of a film a viewer must consider when writing a film review: plot, acting, setting, special effects, editing, humor, sound, music, direction, and "making an audience care."  
*Homework: Write a film review of your favorite movie, utilizing the principles discussed.*  
(week of Sept. 21)
3. Role of the Director: Understanding the role of the director in the creation of a film. View Forest Gump.  
*Homework: Write a film review of Forest Gump.*  
(week of Sept. 28).
4. Understanding the Principles of Cinematography. Class will discuss why the best camera moves are "invisible" to the audience, what is the difference between shooting with a telephoto or wide angle lens; and what is the difference between shooting "hand-held," on a tripod, a dolly, or a "steadicam?" Filmic terms hand-out.  
*Homework: Take home quiz on the principles of cinematography. Study "filmic terms" glossary.*  
(week of Oct. 5)

5. The Scope of Documentary Films: The class will study the different types of documentary films: nature films, propaganda films, social issues, etc. We will view Ken Burns' "The War" and "Frontier House."  
*Homework: write a film review of "The War"; and a film review of "Frontier House" in the form of a diary from one of the teen-agers on the trip.*  
(week of Oct. 12)
  
6. The Silent Film Comedies: A Look at the artistry of silent film comedians Charlie Chaplain and Buster Keaton. View samples of their films in class.  
*Homework: In a short essay, discuss the differences in styles between these two comedians*  
(week of Oct. 19)
  
7. The Western: A Look at the Evolving Tradition of the Western—from High Noon to Lonesome Dove.  

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*Homework: Write a two-page essay on how Lonesome Dove reflects a change in attitude about western codes of behavior.*  
(week of Oct. 26).
  
8. Mid-Terms Exam: terminology, filmic critiques, questions and reviews. Watch end of Whale Rider. *Homework: answer hand-out on Whale Rider.* (week of Nov. 2)
  
9. A Class on "New Media": internet, youtube, social-networking. "blogs"  
*Homework: write a "blog" for internet/GRCS newsletter.*  
(week of Nov. 9)

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10. The Concert Film: How music and music videos mix View Woodstock, Strawberry Music Festival, Beatle's films, etc. See best music videos. LET'S MAKE ONE IN CLASS!! *Homework: Design and produce a poster for your favorite film.* (Nov. 16)
  
11. Public Access TV: What is it? Who does it? What do they produce? Can we produce a news show for public access, based upon events at GRCS and with education in general? *Homework: research and write the script for a portion of a GRCS news show to air on public access tv.* (Nov. 23)
  
12. Filming the News Show: Students act as directors, camera-people, and on-air talent for various segments of a news show. *Homework: Do research for one-page research paper on any subject related to film: a favorite director, actor or actress, how a favorite film was made, etc. Subjects must be approved by teacher.* (Nov. 30)
  
13. "Analyze-as-You-Go" Exercise: Learning how to analyze a film --in real time—as you are seeing it, by deciding if a camera shot is wide-angle or telephoto; if the shot is zooming in or pulling back; hand-held or tripod; fast or slow editing; use of voice-over, background music, or silence. Discuss: Importance of the Actor: View and discuss Jack Black in School of Rock. *Homework: Write one-page research paper. Write film review of School of Rock.*(Dec. 7)
  
14. Final Exam. The exam will include: terminology, "analyze-as-you-go" exercise, film review, essay on news show experience. (Dec. 14)