

**RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE**

FILM 122 – SURVEY OF AMERICAN FILM

I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: FILM 122 Survey of American Film

B. New or Modified Course: Modified

C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Fall Year: 2017

D. Effective Term: Fall 2018

E. Sponsoring Department: Communication & Languages

F. Semester Credit Hours: 3

G. Weekly Contact Hours: 3

Lecture: 3

Laboratory: 0

Out of class student work per week: 6

H. Prerequisites/Corequisites: None

I. Laboratory Fees: None

J. Name and Telephone Number or E-Mail Address of Department Chair and Divisional Dean at time of approval: Chair Sara Banfield, sara.banfield@raritanval.edu and Dean Patrice Marks, patrice.marks@raritanval.edu

II. Catalog Description

Survey of American Film explores mainstream American cinema within a cultural and historical context. It focuses on the characteristics of Hollywood storytelling and visual style in film genres (such as romantic comedies, Westerns, and film noir), which not only entertain audiences but also mirror American attitudes and values. The screening list includes classic and contemporary American films and film excerpts. Students record their reactions to these screenings in weekly journal entries or short response papers. Students who complete this course will have a deeper understanding of how American movies both shape and reflect American culture.

III. Statement of Course Need

Survey of American Film is a general elective available to full-time and part-time students in any academic program. For students in the Liberal Arts Communication Option it is also an elective within a communication specialization (Film Studies) which they may choose to fulfill their program requirements.

- A. This course generally transfers as a Digital Media/Film Studies program requirement.

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- A. Free elective
- B. This course serves as a General Education course in the Humanities/Appreciation of the Arts
- C. This course meets a program elective for the Communication Studies (AA) and Digital Media/Film Studies (AS).
- D. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, www.njtransfer.org; b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

V. Outline of Course Content

This course explores the following topics:

Each instructor for Survey of American Film organizes the course content differently according to the films and film excerpts he/she selects each semester. However, the following content is typically integral to this course.

- A. Fundamentals of Film Language.
 - 1. Mise en scene
 - 2. Camera and Lighting
 - 3. Editing
 - 4. Sound B
- B. Background on Hollywood Movie Industry
 - 1. Hollywood “studio system”
 - 2. Hollywood narrative style
 - 3. Hollywood visual style
- C. Hollywood Film Genres (some examples listed)
 - 1. Romantic Comedy
 - 2. The Western
 - 3. Science Fiction/Horror
 - 4. Film Noir
- D. Cultural, Historical, or Cinematic Themes in American Films (some recent examples listed)

1. The Coming-of-Age Experience in Hollywood Films
2. Quest and Conquest: The American Story
3. The Outsider: The Search for American Identity
4. Cultural Diversity in Contemporary American Films
5. The Family Experience in American Film
6. America's New Wave of the 70's
7. Ideology, Feminism, and Auteur theories
8. Myths and Archetypes: Hero's Journey

VI. General Education and Course Learning Outcomes

A. General Education Learning Outcomes

Students will:

1. Produce writing that reflects critical and creative thought about films and film criticism (G.E. 1, 6)
2. Collaborate with others to analyze the communicative power of film images (G.E. 1, 6)
3. Use relevant resource materials to evaluate information about films and film criticism (G.E. 1, 4)
4. Explore commonalities and differences in values, perspectives, and behaviors in films representing different time periods, cultures and cinematic traditions (G.E. 1, 6)

B. Student Learning Outcomes

Students will:

1. Recognize and explain essential elements of film language, such as mise en scene, basic camera, lighting, and editing techniques, and cinematic uses of sound. This knowledge will provide a solid foundation for any future film appreciation or film/video production courses, or for entry-level jobs at television studios and video production houses.
2. Recognize typical narrative and visual styles of Hollywood movies from specific time periods, especially since the 1950's.
3. Recognize and analyze characteristics of familiar Hollywood film genres, such as romantic comedy, the Western, science fiction, and film noir.
4. Recognize the interrelationship between the popularity of Hollywood genres and events in American society during specific time periods.
5. Perform in-depth examination on the layers of meaning in films screened for this course, particularly as they relate to cultural, historical, or cinematic themes the instructor chooses to emphasizes.
6. Write clearly, coherently and convincingly about films screened for this course.

7. Develop well-constructed questions and compose logical oral arguments/analysis.

C. Assessment Instruments

1. Assigned quizzes on readings and screenings
2. Assigned exercises
3. Analytical essays
4. Mid-term and final examinations
5. Discussions
6. Response questions

VII. Grade Determinants

1. Assigned exercises
2. Class participation
3. Quizzes
4. Analytical essays
5. Mid-term and final exams
6. Response papers
7. Film notes
8. Journal entry

Given the goals and outcomes described above, the primary formats, modes, and methods for teaching and learning that may be used in the course include:

1. Lecture/discussion
2. Explication and analysis of literary and cinematic texts
3. Small group discussion and collaboration
4. Journal and note writing
5. Research
6. Screenings and scene deconstructions
7. Guest speakers

VIII. Texts and Materials

Suggested textbook: *The Art of Watching Films* (latest ed.) Boggs and Petrie.
McGraw Hill

Suggested textbook: *The Writers Journey*. Christopher Vogler. Michael Weise Productions

Suggested textbook: *Engaging Cinema*, Bill Nichols. W.W. Norton C& Company, Inc.

Web materials and handouts

Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.

IX. Resources

1. DVD/Video Projection
2. CATT Classroom
3. Internet Resources