WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY
PROPOSAL FOR UNIVERSITY STUDIES COURSES

Department ________________________________ English ________________________________ Date ____________ Sept. 1, 2010 ____________

Course No. Humanities 240 Course Name Film Genres Credits 3

This proposal is for a(n) x Undergraduate Course

Applies to: x Major Required x Minor Required

x Elective x Elective

University Studies (A course may be approved to satisfy only one set of outcomes.):

Course Requirements:

Basic Skills:
1. College Reading and Writing
2. Oral Communication
3. Mathematics
4. Physical Development & Wellness

Arts & Science Core:
1. Humanities
2. Natural Science
3. Social Science
4. Fine & Performing Arts

Unity and Diversity:
1. Critical Analysis
2. Science and Social Policy
3. a. Global Perspectives
   b. Multicultural Perspectives
4. a. Contemporary Citizenship
   b. Democratic Institutions

Flagged Courses:
1. Writing
2. Oral Communication
3. a. Mathematics/Statistics
   b. Critical Analysis

Prerequisites ____________________________ (none)

Provide the following information (attach materials to this proposal):

Please see “Directions for the Department” on previous page for material to be submitted.

Attach a University Studies Approval Form.

Department Contact Person for this Proposal:

J Paul Johnson ___________________________ 457-5453 ___________________________ pjohnson@winona.edu

Name (please print) Phone e-mail address

[Revised 9-05]
Routing form for University Studies Course approval.  
Course: HUM 240, Film Genres

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Department Chair  
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Dean of College  
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*In the case of a dean’s recommendation to disapprove a proposal, a written rationale for the recommendation to disapprove shall be provided to the University Studies Subcommittee.

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President  
Date

Please forward to Registrar.  
Registrar  
Date entered

Please notify department chair via e-mail that curricular change has been recorded.

[Revised 9-05]
WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY
REQUIRED CHECKLIST FOR ALL CURRICULAR PROPOSALS

This checklist enables A2C2 representatives to endorse that their departments have accurately followed the Process for Accomplishing Curricular Change. For each course or program proposal submitted to A2C2, this checklist must be completed, signed by the submitting department's A2C2 representative, and included with the proposal when forwarded for approval. Peer review of proposals is also strongly advised, e.g., departments should discuss and vote on the proposals as submitted to A2C2, rather than on just the ideas proposed or drafts of proposals.

If a proposal fails to follow or complete any aspect of the process, the Course and Program Proposal Subcommittee will postpone consideration of the proposal and return it to the department's A2C2 representative for completion and resubmission. Resubmitted proposals have the same status as newly submitted proposals.

Note: This form need not be completed for notifications.

1. The appropriate forms and the “Approval Form” have been completed in full for this proposal. All necessary or relevant descriptions, rationales, and notifications have been provided.
   ___ x ___ Completed

2a. The “Financial and Staffing Data Sheet” has been completed and is enclosed in this proposal, if applicable.
   _______ Completed ___ x ___ NA

2b. For departments that have claimed that “existing staff” would be teaching the course proposed, an explanation has been enclosed in this proposal as to how existing staff will do this, e.g., what enrollment limits can be accommodated by existing staff. If no such explanation is enclosed, the department's representative is prepared to address A2C2’s questions on this matter.
   _______ Completed ___ x ___ NA

3. Arrangements have been made so that a department representative knowledgeable of this proposal will be attending both the Course and Program Proposal Subcommittee meeting and the full A2C2 meeting at which this proposal is considered.
   ___ x ___ Completed
   Name and office phone number of proposal's representative:  J Paul Johnson, 457-5453

4. Reasonable attempts have been made to notify and reach agreements with all university units affected by this proposal. Units still opposing a proposal must submit their objections in writing before or during the Course and Program Proposal Subcommittee meeting at which this proposal is considered.
   ___ x ___ Completed _______ NA

5. The course name and number is listed for each prerequisite involved in this proposal.
   _______ Completed ___ x ___ NA

6. In this proposal for a new or revised program (major, minor, concentration, etc.), the list of prerequisites provided includes all the prerequisites of any proposed prerequisites. All such prerequisites of prerequisites are included in the total credit hour calculations.
   _______ Completed ___ x ___ NA

7. In this proposal for a new or revised program, the following information for each required or elective course is provided:
   a. The course name and number.
   b. A brief course description.
   c. A brief statement explaining why the program should include the course.
   _______ Completed ___ x ___ NA

8. This course or program revision proposal:
   a. Clearly identifies each proposed change.
   b. Displays the current requirements next to the proposed new requirements, for clear, easy comparison.
   _______ Completed ___ x ___ NA

9. This course proposal provides publication dates for all works listed as course textbooks or references using a standard form of citation. Accessibility of the cited publications for use in this proposed course has been confirmed.
   _______ Completed ___ x ___ NA

__________________________________________________  _________________________
Department’s A2C2 Representative or Alternate             Date

[Revised 9-05]
**Catalog Description:** Studies in a specific film genre, such as the Western, musical, screwball comedy, horror, war, melodrama or noir film, with the individual topic announced in the course schedule. May be repeated as topics change. Grade only.

While the phrase “war film” suggests intrepid soldiers, whizzing bullets, or aerial dogfights, these familiar images and sounds constitute only a part of the multiplicity of films that take up war as their subject. In fact, a “war film” may be said to be any that takes place in time of war, whether on the battle lines or the homefront, or examines the conflicts of war, whether with documentary footage or fictional narrative. In the United States, the filmmaking industry has had an especially complex relationship with the military, offering it both support and critique, a dynamic we shall explore in detail. In addition, while some of the selected films will present—as the genre film aims to do—a focus on action and combat, some of the films will instead focus on the psychological aftereffects of war, the homefront during war, and/or the relationship between Hollywood and the war effort. Students can expect, then, to study films that will range from fictional to documentary, classic to contemporary, serious to satirical, and patriotic to propagandistic to revisionist and rebellious.

**University Studies**

Humanities 240: Film Genres is proposed as an elective course for Humanities credit in the Arts and Sciences Core of the University Studies Program. The USP outcomes for the course are discussed on page two. (A fuller rationale for its inclusion begins on page five.)

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**Films**

*note: this list is subject to change*

All Quiet on the Western Front (1930)
Sergeant York (1941)
excerpt from Triumph of the Will (1935) and Why We Fight (1942)
Bataan (1943)
The Best Years of Our Lives (1946)
The Red Badge of Courage (1951)
Night and Fog (1955)
The Caine Mutiny (1954)
Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964)
Hearts and Minds (1974)
Apocalypse Now! (1979)
Platoon (1986)
Glory (1989)
Dogfight (1991)
Saving Private Ryan (1998)
Generation Kill (2008)
The Hurt Locker (2008)

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**Texts & Supplies**

all course readings will be made available on D2L, including excerpts from ...
Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front
Crane, The Red Badge of Courage
Ross, Picture
Wright, Generation Kill
Herr, Dispatches
Goscin and Barsam, Writing about Movies
▶ and glossaries of military and cinematic terms

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**Grading**

Course grades will be determined by the average of...
1. weekly quizzes, participation, and activities (20%)
2. a formal oral presentation (20%)
3. midterm exam (20%)
4. a course paper (20%)
5. final exam (20%)

$\geq 90\% = A, \geq 80\% = B, \geq 80\% = C, <60\% = D \text{ or F}$

grades not meeting these totals to be awarded solely at the instructor’s discretion; no extra credit is available
University Studies Program Outcomes

Humanities 240, Film Genres, is proposed as an elective course for Humanities credit in the Arts and Sciences Core of the University Studies Program. Humanities courses explore the search for meaning and value in human life by examining its expression in cultural forms and texts, literature and the arts. This course includes requirements and learning activities that promote students’ abilities to ...

(a) identify and understand specific elements and assumptions of a particular Humanities discipline—through study of the formal elements and complexities of a genre of narrative film, as required in viewing films, classroom assignments, weekly quizzes, discussions and lectures, a formal paper and presentation assignment, and examinations.

(b) understand how historical context, cultural values, and gender influence perceptions and interpretations—through discussion and evaluation of the roles history, culture, and gender play in the analysis and interpretation of films, both in response to discussion questions and on the assigned papers, presentations, and exam essays.

(c) understand the role of critical analysis in interpreting and evaluating expressions of human experience—through the study and practice of interpreting and evaluating narrative film genres, with special emphasis on response to discussion questions, on class assignments, and on papers, presentations, and exam essays.

An expanded discussion of the proposal of Humanities 240 for inclusion in the Humanities category in the Arts and Science Core of the University Studies Program is provided on page five of this syllabus.

Desire2Learn

Assignments, activities, grades, and resources will be posted on our D2L coursesite at https://winona.ims.mnscu.edu/. If you are new to D2L, your login is the same as it is for registration.

Ground Rules

We will be studying some experimental, provocative, and challenging films. Many are of course quite violent, profane, and disturbing. Purposeful, tactful, prepared discussion will be necessary to understanding them; hence the following ground rules.

- Please close your laptops and put away your phones. (You may be asked, on some occasions, to use your laptops for a research or viewing exercise.)
- Some works will affirm your beliefs; others will challenge them. Some will affront your sensibilities; others will appease them. Some will tax your intellectual abilities; others will merely prod them. Given the special topic of the course, almost all of the works are quite violent, most are profane, and all are intended for mature audiences. Approach them all with the goal of learning about life and art, and you’ll find your open mind rewarded.
- Anyone addressing an entire group or the entire class will be given the courtesy of undivided, uninterrupted attention—and that courtesy will be returned.
- Please do not monopolize the conversation, diminish others’ interpretations, or shut down the dialogue. Seek always to understand others’ points of view, to ask questions prompting a more developed response, to use body language to indicate your interest.
- Show up for class both on time and well-prepared: assignments read, questions and interpretations articulated. The reading load is not burdensome, so read carefully, critically, and well.

Screening Sessions

Each Wednesday at 5 pm in Minné 363, we’ll screen a feature film that will serve as the focus of ensuing discussion sessions the following class days. I’ve scheduled these screening sessions to provide an experience where you can see each film uninterrupted and in its entirety on a large projection screen, in its original aspect ratio. So that all can focus undivided attention on the film, make sure to extend your colleagues a few basic courtesies: close your laptops, turn off cell phones, refrain from talking and eating, and remain seated for the duration of the show. If you need to view the film with closed captions enabled, please contact me to make separate arrangements to do so. If you are unable to attend a screening, a DVD copy of each will be available at the Krueger Library Reserve desk. The content of each film screening is required for ensuing quizzes, discussions, and exams beginning with the following class period.

Attendance

If you must miss a single class session, simply do the work required of you, and return well-prepared for the next session. If you miss consecutive class sessions due to a serious emergency, I may be able to work out an alternate schedule, but I’m not obligated to do so if notified only “after the fact.” If injury, illness, or emergency will require you to miss an exam, you must make alternative arrangements before the absence, or you will forfeit your opportunity to take the exam. Finally, regular attendance is vital not only to your participation grade, but also to your ability to learn the material of the course.
Exams
The exams (100 points each) will test your knowledge of the assigned films, terms, readings, and lectures. They will consist of (1) matching and/or multiple choice questions that apply cinematic concepts to the films we’ve studied, and (2) short-answer and/or essay questions that test your powers of analysis. They are also certain to include questions on the required reading and media.
Midterm: week 8; Final: week 16.

Course Paper
A course paper of approximately 1000-1500 words in length and using at least five scholarly sources is required, preceded by a short prospectus and working bibliography. Topics will develop from course readings and films and are subject to approval. MLA format preferred; Chicago style acceptable. Due week 14.

Oral Presentation
In a short (15-minute) oral presentation, students (in pairs) will present and report on a “war film” not listed on the course syllabus. Expect to provide some historical context, production notes, cast and crew details, a plot “teaser,” a scene for study, and a list of relevant themes, techniques, or concerns. These presentations will be scheduled throughout the semester. Presentations begin in week 5.

A Note on Plagiarism
Unacknowledged or unauthorized use of the words or ideas of others constitutes plagiarism, which is punishable at least by automatic failure of the assignment (i.e. a score of zero) and possible failure of the course, depending on the degree and circumstances of the infraction. Plagiarism on an exam essay, formal presentation, or paper will result a score of zero on the assignment. Subsequent or more serious infractions will result in additional sanctions.

Additional Resources
- Student Support Services and the Inclusion and Diversity Office: Both offices are dedicated to helping students of all races, ethnicities, economic backgrounds, nationalities, and sexual orientations. They can facilitate tutoring and point you to a wide range of resources. Student Support Services (www.winona.edu/studentsupportservices/) is in Howell Hall 133, and they can be reached at 457-5465. The Inclusion and Diversity Office is in Kryzsko Commons Room 122, and they can be reached at 457-5595.
- WSU Disability Resource Center: If you have a documented disability that requires accommodation, please contact your professor as soon as possible. If you suspect you may have a disability, you are encouraged to visit the DRC as soon as possible. The DRC staff can document it for your professors and facilitate accommodation. Their office is in Maxwell Hall, 3rd floor, and they can be reached at 457-2391.
- The Counseling Center: WSU’s Counseling Center provides assistance with a wide range of difficulties, ranging from sexual assault, depression, and grief after the loss of a loved one to stress management, anxiety, general adjustment to college, and many others. Their office is located in Wabasha Hall 220, and they can be reached at 457-5330.
- WSU’s Writing Center: The English Department’s Writing Center, located in Minné 348 and staffed primarily by graduate assistants in English, offers WSU students free, individualized instruction in all aspects of writing. You may visit the center on your own or on the recommendation of a teacher; you may drop in or sign up for a scheduled appointment. Call x5505 or check the schedule and sign-up sheet posted on the Writing Center door. Note: students may solicit Writing Center assistance with take-home essays for exams in this class.
- WSU Library: Using WSU’s Library website, you can browse and search Library databases and make interlibrary loan requests. WSU’s Library homepage is http://www.winona.edu/library.

In War, Truth is the First Casualty.
—Aeschylus
### COURSE CALENDAR

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<td>13</td>
<td>4/12-4/16</td>
<td>Monday, April 12: Paper Prospectus and Bibliography Due. In class: Race, Class, and Gender in the War Film. Wednesday 5 pm screening: Glory (1989). Scenes for study: Soldier’s Song.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>5/3</td>
<td>Monday, May 3, 1 pm-3 pm: Final Exam.</td>
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This calendar is subject to change as events warrant. The specifics of daily assignments and projects will be distributed and discussed in class.
Humanities 240, Film Genres (3 s.h.)
University Studies Arts & Science Core: Humanities
Proposal and Rationale

Catalog Description

Studies in a specific film genre, such as the Western, screwball comedy, horror, war, or noir film, with the individual topic(s) announced in the course schedule.

General Course Information

Humanities 240, Film Genres, is an elective course designed for Humanities credit in the Arts and Sciences Core of the WSU University Studies Program. The program is designed to provide a broad base of skills and knowledge to equip students for informed, responsible citizenship in a changing world. The purpose of the Humanities requirement in the University Studies program is to provide a framework for understanding the nature and scope of human experience. Humanities courses explore the search for meaning and value in human life by examining its expression in cultural forms and texts, literature and the arts. As a course fulfilling the objectives for the Humanities requirement in the Arts and Science core, Humanities 240 includes requirements and learning activities that promote students' abilities to...

a) identify and understand specific elements and assumptions of a particular Humanities discipline;
b) understand how historical context, cultural values, and gender influence perceptions and interpretations; and
c) understand the role of critical analysis (e.g. aesthetic, historical, literary, philosophical, rhetorical) in interpreting and evaluating expressions of human experience.

Rationale

This rationale is designed to apply both to potential permanent offerings under the Film Genres designation as well to the current specific offering (The War Film).

USP Course Objective (a). Students will identify and understand specific elements and assumptions of a particular Humanities discipline.

Like humanities courses in literature, art, music, and other interpretive fields, Humanities 240: Film Genres both provides a working vocabulary for the art form and scrutinizes the assumptions underlying its study. Students in this course examine the specific elements of cinema studies. The series of course films—a variety of them, from different directors, historical eras, and narrative sources—are chosen as examples that help to define a specific genre or genres. Additionally, the films employ provocative cinematic techniques as well as challenging thematic meanings.

Students are not only identify the elements of cinema in classroom discourse, quizzes, essays, exams, and other short assignments; they are further required to use the lexicon of film studies in their writing and other projects for the course. These elements of the discipline include, first, the components of narrative; second, the functions of cinematic expression (including mise en scene, design, editing, sound, acting); and third, approaches to interpretation (including auteur, psychoanalytical, ideological, formalist/structural, and historical/biographical approaches). (A fourth key element may, depending upon the genre, include the various sources of cinematic narrative.) The attached set of cinematic terms for study provides a list of the kinds of "specific elements" that the course presents.

In this version of the course:

Introductory lectures contextualize course films in a cinematic history, so that students understand key technological and historical developments in their study of individual films (e.g. All Quiet on the Western Front as an early sound film, employing a respected literary source as antecedent and using visceral diegetic sound design). Classroom discussions of scenes for study examine cinematic technique: camera movement, perspective, sound design, editing, etc., concepts foregrounded on the midterm and final exams and other requirements. Finally, the course paper assignment further develops students’ lexicon of cinematic terms: a student comparing the depictions of trench warfare in All Quiet on the Western Front and Saving Private Ryan would be expected to use terminology such as narrative time, protagonist(s), panning, tracking, synchronous sound, handheld camera, diegetic sound, dead track, average shot length, offscreen space, offscreen sound, discontinuity editing, etc.

USP Course Objective (b). Students will understand how historical context, cultural values, and gender influence perceptions and interpretations.

A course in film genres necessarily attends closely to the historical development of the specific genre from its earliest incarnations to its more mature iterations to later revisions. Every genre of film narrative both ascribes to and endorses specific sets of cultural values, and genre films tend to be especially embedded in complex ideologies of gender. These considerations—history, culture, gender—are at the center of students’ classroom analysis and interpretation as they study not only specific films but the contexts in which they were produced.

In this version of the course:

To understand how historical context affects both the production and the reception of film, students view works from across the 20th century and into the 21st. The earliest war films presented in introductory lectures will include excerpts of J. Stuart Blackton’s Remember the Maine, the first fictional war propaganda film; D. W. Griffith’s The Hessian Renegades (and his later Birth of a Nation); Winsor McKay’s and Charlie Chaplin’s shorts supporting the Allied efforts as World War I began; and important battle films such as What Price Glory? (dir. Raoul Walsh, 1926) and Wings (dir. William Wellman, 1927). Later, the first great war film, All Quiet on the Western Front (1930), was released shortly after the transition to “talkies.” Within a decade, the generic conventions of the war film were well established: military advisement and iconography, protagonists assuming leadership under dire circumstance, socioeconomic and ethnic diversity, intra-group conflict, sacrifice and ritual, and of course, climactic battle scenes. Class discussion will aim to enumerate and scrutinize these common elements of the cinematic genre.

Later war films both reinscribed and challenged these generic features with an increasing emphasis on the psychological impacts of war (The Best Years of Our Lives and The Caine Mutiny), complicating the interactions of the military and Hollywood in the years following World War II. Stanley Kubrick’s black comedy Dr. Strangelove, Or How I Quit Worrying and Started to Love the Bomb (1964) anticipates the many ways in which the Korean, Vietnam, and Iraq war films of the late 20th and early 21st century would take on an increasingly absurdist, ironic, and frequently antiwar stance.

Individual films shown in Wednesday screenings are presented as carefully contextualized “case studies” in cinema, with lecture and resource material designed to provide a thoughtfully historicized introduction to each work in its social context. In many cases, this contextualization will be detailed with discussion of assigned readings: in some instances, that of an antecedent literary source (All Quiet on the Western Front, The Red Badge of Courage, and The Caine Mutiny are all adaptations of successful novels); in others, that of nonfictional source material, such as Michael Birdwell’s biography of Sgt. Alvin Cullum York or Evan Wright’s “embedded” Iraq war reportage for Rolling Stone, the source for Generation Kill.

The cultural values of the country at war are among the foremost topics of many of these films: for instance, there is in Huston’s adaptation of The Red Badge of Courage a desperate postwar attempt to call upon the prestige literature of an earlier era for cultural clarity and conservative values. Kubrick’s Dr. Strangelove, meanwhile, expresses the cultural anxieties of the heightened tension of the Cold War with satire and sexual innuendo. Apocalypse Now and Platoon critique the myth of liberation inherent in the Vietnam conflict, an ideological position they inherited from the earlier documentary, Hearts and Minds.

Finally, students also study the genderedness of the cinema, considering such topics as the feminist approach to interpreting film, popular constructions of the male and female in the cinema, pioneering female auteurs, among whom one might include Nancy Savoca (Dogfight) and Kathryn Bigelow (The Hurt Locker), and the politics of sex and gender—especially masculinity—in selected films (especially The Best Years of Our Lives, The Red Badge of Courage, Platoon, and Dogfight). The results of their study of history, culture, and gender are articulated in classroom discussions, midterm and final exam items and essays, collaborative presentations on “non-syllabus” films, and the final course paper.


USP Course Objective (c). Students will understand the role of critical analysis (e.g. aesthetic, historical, literary, philosophical, rhetorical) in interpreting and evaluating expressions of human experience.

The general goal of courses in film studies is to help students become skilled and sophisticated interpreters of film art—ones who can both enjoy the aesthetic, visceral appeals of narrative film and interpret its themes. In particular, students examine films as representatives of (and revisions of) specific genres of cinematic narrative; as dependent upon (and contributing to) technological innovations; as artifacts of (and arguments about) specific social and historical contexts; and as interpretations (and rewritings) of communal or mythical stories. Undergirding the assumptions of all of the work of film studies is this: that over the course of the 20th century and beyond, the narrative film has become one of the most prominent art forms, one which has seen contributions from the world’s most innovative, experimental, and gifted storytellers, and one which engages millions of viewers in its expression.

In every version of this course in film genres, students examine closely these expressions of human experience. From this work, students learn to understand, interpret, and articulate the meanings of images they see on screens. And they learn the value of critical analysis in interpreting such expression: carefully informed aesthetic, ideological, historical, and rhetorical analysis not only rewards practitioners with a deeper, more profound understanding of the work and the medium themselves; it also constitutes one of the most human of abilities—to articulate meaning.
In this version of the course:

Interpreting and evaluating expressions of human experience demands knowledge of narrative, of history, of media, and of examples of the art form itself. This knowledge is developed first through the routine of weekly classroom activities: by the instructor’s modeling of critical analysis in introductory lectures, by the students’ responses to film screenings and their participation in class discussions. More acutely, the ability to conduct various forms of critical analysis is further promoted with additional assignments that require students to articulate and defend positions: the midterm and final exams require students to apply cinematic concepts to historical events and specific works, while the collaborative presentations ask that students locate individual films within specific historical contexts and generic conventions.

Especially and finally, the final course paper requires that students conduct a more detailed comparative analysis of two related war films, or of a specific film’s depiction of actual historical events. For a final course paper, for instance, students might be asked to make us of a particular type of critical analysis to articulate and support a statement of thematic meaning about one or more of the films on the course syllabus. More precisely, productive paper topics might compare and contrast the depictions of war’s psychological impact in, say, The Best Years of Our Lives and Apocalypse Now, the implications of race and ethnicity in Bataan and Glory, the characterizations of the enemy in Generation Kill and The Hurt Locker, or the cultural values of The Red Badge of Courage and Dr. Strangelove.
