

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“The medium is the message.” Marshall MacLuhan

The purpose of this class is to make you talk and think and write about art – in this case, one particular art form that we call film – and how it reflects the society in which we live. I never want you to stop enjoying watching movies; however, I hope that after this year you will watch them more critically and with a better understanding of how form and content are interrelated.

FALL CURRICULUM

- I. The Technique of Film: How do directors use the camera, lights, sound, actors and scenery to create meaning? We’ll use lots of clips and full films to examine how these aspects of film work.
- II. The History of Film: Rather than go through every major historical movement, we’re going to look at a few select events that made an impact on the films we watch: the two different silent film pioneers of France, the creation of the Production Code, the way historical events shaped certain styles, such as *film noir*.
- III. The Stories Films Tell: We’ll examine different styles of film, genres, and the sources of film stories. You will have a chance to focus on one particular genre by making a short film in that style.
- IV. The Directors: We will look at the tremendous power and storytelling influence exerted by the director, who acts as master storyteller. Your final presentation will be about one particular filmmaker.

GRADING/RULES

Grading will be based on the following:

- 1) Class attendance and participation in discussions and projects. A film scholar is an active interpreter of information: (s)he questions and argues and comments and wonders about the films (s)he sees.
- 2) Prompt completion of all assignments. Please actively follow your grade on Schoolloop and communicate with me as issues arise (i.e. needing more time).
- 3) Respect and etiquette. During films, we will listen; no talking, no eating, no sleeping. During presentations, we will listen with respect to the presenters. During discussions, we will treat each other’s opinion, no matter how much it differs with ours, with respect.
- 4) Finally, a word about **technology**: phones must be turned off and stored (not on your person) whenever you are in the PAC. I will let you know when the use of technology is allowed for a project.