Cluster: **POPULAR CULTURE**

Title of course: **Film & Social Justice**

Course Number: **ENG 305**

Proposing Faculty: **Will Bohmker**

Cluster Coordinator: **Grace Dillon**

____  Cluster Course to New Cluster

✓  New Course to Cluster

____  Removal

Other clusters this course is assigned to: __________________________

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University Studies
Cluster Course Addition
Adding a previously unapproved course to a cluster
(Revised September 9, 2002)

(When addressing questions, please attach a separate sheet)

PROPOSING FACULTY (Name, signature, and department)

1. THE COURSE

   Film and Social Justice

   A. COURSE TITLE, NUMBER, AND CATALOG DESCRIPTION

      English 305

      (See attached syllabus for description)

   B. DEVELOPMENT

      Is the course based upon an existing course, or is it a new course under development?

   C. AVAILABILITY

      With what regularity has the course been—or will the course be—offered? once a year, often in summer as well.

   D. PREREQUISITES

      List any course prerequisites beyond the cluster Sophomore Inquiry course.

      (none)

2. COURSE OUTLINE.

   (See attached syllabus)

   Provide a detailed outline of the proposed course, also including its preliminary reading list, and the name(s) of instructor(s) committed to teaching the course.

3. GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS.

   (See attached syllabus)

   A. COURSE CONTENT & SUITABILITY FOR CLUSTER

      Discuss the course content in relationship to the thematic focus of the cluster.

   B. UNST GOALS

      Indicate what materials and assignments will address those University Studies goals appropriate to the course content and cluster theme (the goals are Inquiry and Critical Thinking, Communication, Diversity of Human Experience, and Ethical Issues & Social Responsibility).

   C. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

      Discuss the teaching strategies employed in the course and how they articulate with the student-centered, active-learning strategies characteristic of University Studies courses.
PROPOSING FACULTY: William Bohmker

COURSE TITLE AND NUMBER: ENG 305(U) Rights & Social Justice

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OBTAIN CHAIR AND CLUSTER COORDINATOR SIGNATURES BEFORE SUBMITTING TO UNIVERSITY STUDIES OFFICE

DEPARTMENT CHAIR(S): [Signature] DATE: 10/21/2

CLUSTER COORDINATOR: [Signature] DATE:

All changes to Clusters must be approved by PSU's Senate Curriculum Committee.

THE ORIGINAL + 12 COPIES OF THE PROPOSAL MUST BE RECEIVED AT UNIVERSITY STUDIES (CH 163) BY OCTOBER 31, 2002

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COURSE APPROVED FOR CLUSTER INCLUSION

CHAIR, CLUSTER COORDINATORS: __________________________ DATE: _____________

CHAIR, UNST COMMITTEE: ______________________ DATE: _______________
University Studies

PROPOSED COURSE:

COURSE NUMBER: ENG 305
COURSE TITLE: Film and Social Justice
INSTRUCTOR: William Bohnaker

This is an existing course given at least once a year (often in summer session as well) without special prerequisites for students. The attached syllabus speaks to the other required, relevant issues.
PROPOSED COURSE FOR ADDITION TO UNIVERSITIES STUDIES ("U")

COURSE NUMBER: ENG 305
COURSE TITLE: Film and Social Justice
INSTRUCTOR: William Bohnaker
TERM: Winter

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Through selected feature films we will analyze some of the major issues and incidents of social struggle and political democracy. Part historical recovery of neglected events, part analysis of social structure and practices, part study of film as the medium of meaning, this course is also a consideration of the values of individual dignity and social justice.

COURSE APPROACH AND EXTENDED DESCRIPTION

American culture from the beginning has been shaped by social and political ideals that have resulted in a national history of remarkable successes and unmitigated calamities. Over the last century film has increasingly become sophisticated and pervasive in representing this mixed history. Indeed, narrative film (both fictional and documentary) is now the dominant medium for popular representations of American history and culture. In this course we will examine selected films for their portrayal of social struggles as expressed through such dimensions as class, race/ethnicity, and gender, and in such venues as politics, work, education, and entertainment. Our critical approach will be provided by analytical strategies from cultural studies and film studies, strategies learned during the course. This is a foundational course and is thus appropriate for all undergraduate levels. A certain proficiency in the English language is necessary for non-native speakers.

RESOURCES:

Texts:
Key Concepts in Cinema Studies (2nd edition), Susan Hayward,
Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds... (Zaniello)

Videos: Students will view selected videos in class and individually at home.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

• Explore how works of art embody and/or contest socio-cultural contexts and values.
• Interpret artifacts or events as products of cultural, economic, and social processes.
• Discuss how the interdisciplinary nature of Popular Cultural Studies affects discourses that exist within an original discipline
• Understand culture as a network of social institutions and relationships and be able to interpret texts, objects, and events as meaningful in the context of social processes and power relations
• Develop well-argued interpretations of texts based on close reading.
• Understand and illustrate change over time through an historical analysis of social, cultural, economic, and/or political trends and dynamics.

Generally, by the end of this course students will have a good understanding of the basic theories, concepts, history, and modes of cinematic representation of some major political and social issues in America. Students will be able to identify these elements as they express
themselves in film. Students will be able to relate modern/postmodern film to theoretical and historical aspects of political and social justice. More significantly, students will also be able to relate social and political film to its deeper causes and effects in society at large, including media, economics, culture, politics.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION AND UNIVERSITY STUDIES GOALS:

Inquiry and Critical Thinking:
Personal inventory (written) of analytical concepts from both cultural studies and film studies. This is a list (with definitions) of terms and other intellectual concepts the student will compile throughout the term that he/she finds useful in studying the films and society and politics (20% of grade evaluated on the basis of accuracy, clarity, completeness, extensiveness, creativity).

Communication/Critical Thinking:
Students will do a research and/or analytical work which will analyze at least two films relevant to and approved for the course (40% of grade evaluated on the basis of insight, accuracy, extensiveness, creativity, subtlety; cogency, and clarity of writing. This includes presentation of the work to the class.)

Ethical Issues and Social Responsibility:
Class-participation (and attendance), including some in-class writing) assessed at 40% on the basis of contributions to the discussion of the relationship between film and social justice on the one hand, and studies and historical and current events on the other.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY:
A combination of lecture, discussion, reading, audio-visual material, informal student presentation. We'll explore political and social justice in film with a view to understanding the larger relationship between this kind of artistic representation and contemporary society. Crucial to our approach is connecting our individual opinions and experience of social and political struggle to the class' practical and theoretical investigations.

The pedagogic philosophy of the instructor stresses an informal class atmosphere, creative approaches, and personal interaction among its members, yet a high intellectual rigor regarding the course material. The instructor is much more interested in the student mastering the course concepts than in their memorizing all of the course material. Students need not be a CHS major to excel in and enjoy this class. Bring curiosity, an open mind, and a willingness to explore imaginative visions of life and art. Because so much of the success of the course will depend on our in-class discussions, regular attendance is essential.

PREREQUISITE:
Need not be an English major. Students should find pleasure in film, have some interest in the events and condition of modern society, and be curious about how thoughtful and entertaining film makers/writers/artists portray the human dilemma through representations of social justice and political practice.

CLASS ROUTINE:
In part, the films will be chosen to fit current interests, so the schedule will unfold accordingly. Each week students will view a video in and/or outside class. Students will also complete assigned readings in order to be able to apply theory and analysis to the individual films. Some in-class writing.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR:
William Bohnaker has an undergraduate degree in English Education with Honors, a graduate MA degree with Distinction (at the time the only recipient of this award in the English
Department, University of Iowa), and a graduate level Certificate in TESL and Culture. He is an author (The Hollow Doll, Bantam, 1990), and has won fiction writing contests and awards. He has taught at universities in Germany, Japan, Northern Ireland, and holds a regular appointment at Portland State University.

WRITING STANDARDS:
Writing is one of the central activities through which students learn, communicate, and demonstrate learning. Academic writing differs from other forms of writing in that it usually:

- is appropriately narrow in focus,
- presents an argument based on sound critical thinking,
- draws upon and properly acknowledges the work of others, and
- presents new understanding in an organized fashion.

All writing will be evaluated on the basis of Standard American English, quality, creativity, effectiveness of argumentation and reasoning, and accuracy of information. In addition, academic writing will be evaluated on the selection and use of appropriate supporting material. Any information not original to the student must be cited in a recognized format—for example, APA, MLA, or Chicago—appropriate to the academic discipline. Use of information or material from outside sources without proper citation is plagiarism and grounds for disciplinary action.

TOPICAL COURSE OUTLINE/SCHEDULE:
(This schedule is approximate and will depend on interests and progress of class.)

Week 1: Introduction to course, aims, expectations, methods. View The Good Fight and discuss (class, gender, race/ethnicity). Assign readings in Hayward (mise en scene, editing, montage, hegemony, class, Theory).
Assign Grapes of Wrath film to be viewed outside of class.

Week 2: Discuss assigned readings. Analyze film viewed outside of class. View short documentary, Salt of the Earth in class and discuss. Assign readings in Hayward (ideology, agency, discourse).
Assign Matewan film to be viewed outside of class.

Week 3: Discuss assigned readings. Analyze film viewed outside of class. View part of documentary, Harlan County USA in class. Assign readings in Hayward (psychoanalysis, Oedipal trajectory).
Assign Bulworth film to be viewed outside of class.
Discuss list of terms.

Week 4: Discuss assigned readings. Analyze film viewed outside of class. View short documentary on politics. Assign readings in Hayward (naturalism, suture, neoliberalism, ISAs, interpellation, subject/subjectivity).
Assign Roger and Me film to be viewed outside of class.
Discuss term projects.

Week 5: Discuss assigned readings. Analyze film viewed outside of class. View short documentary on neoliberalism. Assign readings in Hayward (the "gaze," feminist film, scopophilia).
Assign The Piano film to be viewed outside of class.
Week 6: Discuss assigned readings. Analyze film viewed outside of class. View Orlando in class. Assign readings in Hayward (structuralism/post-structuralism, semiology).

Week 7: Discuss assigned readings. Discuss theory used to date in class. View short documentary Classified X in class. Assign readings in Hayward (Queer cinema, absence/presence).

Week 8: Discuss assigned readings. Analyze and compare/contrast films viewed so far. View short documentary The Celluloid Closet in class. Assign readings in Hayward (seamlessness, deep focus, auteur).

Assign Boys Don't Cry film to be viewed outside of class.

Week 9: Discuss assigned readings. Analyze film viewed outside of class. View short film in class. Assign readings in Hayward (postmodernism, preferred reading).

Assign Wag the Dog film to be viewed outside of class.

Week 10: Discuss film viewed outside of class. Course summary. Informal presentation of student projects/papers.

List and Paper/Project due