

Film as Literature: 1 Semester – Grades 11/12

Desired Student Outcomes and Performance Goals

By the end of the semester-long Film as Literature course, students will:

- Be able to understand characteristics common to diverse genres of film
- Identify specific technique used in film creation and determine each purpose
- Draw parallels between cinematic technique and literary elements
- Present opposing viewpoints to thematic messages conveyed in film
- Take a critical stance on film quality based on identified criteria

Course Content and Materials:

Students may elect this course in the semester it is offered.

Course Description: Film Literature is a study of cinema from a variety of different genres. Students will be required to familiarize themselves with the artistic and technical sides of filmmaking and to draw parallels between cinematic technique and literary elements. This expression shall come through a variety of assignments including, but not limited to, essays of various length, class participation, journal responses and special projects. This course shall further develop communication skills, both written and oral, and promote a more thoughtful understanding of cinema as an increasingly integral part of our culture.

Materials:**

Casa Blanca
Animal House
The Graduate
Crash
Sicko
Donnie Darko

*(***exact films to be determined)*

Part 1: Conventions of Film

Elements of Cinematography will be explored. These include: lighting, staging, dialogue, wide shots vs. close ups and other camera technique. Students will analyze what goes into the creation of a film before production begins, such as identifying an audience and classifying movies into a specific genre.

Part 2: Film as Entertainment

We will consider the advantages and disadvantages of watching vs. reading a story and the limitations of each. What effect can film have on the human experience? What does it do for us as a society? How is mass appeal a “sign of the times”? Students will analyze and determine whether film is a reflection of society or whether society is a reflection on film.

Part 3: Film as propaganda

How is bias conveyed in movies vs. the written word? We will analyze technique used to move an audience and the effects of widespread propaganda in past and present America.

Part 4: Film as documentary

We will look at history in the making and evaluate narrator story-telling; fact vs. fiction. How can a documentary capture an event or era. What purpose does film serve in holding on to history for future generations to learn from?

Part 5: Critical analysis of films

Students will learn to take a critical stance on a film’s quality based on higher level criteria. They will then demonstrate the ability to write comprehensive reviews on such topics as artist intent, and on delivery/effectiveness of production. In some instances reviews will be written persuasively to sway an identified audience for or against a specific film.