

California Lutheran University

Bachelor's Degree for Professionals

Politics in Cinema COMM 308

Winter 2017: November 21, 2016 – February 16, 2017

Wednesday, 6-9:30 PM

Woodland Hills Center

Classroom: Room 114

Instructor: Dr. Aaron Heresco (please call me Aaron)

Email: aheresco@callutheran.edu

Phone: 814-889-5161

Office: Woodland Hills #103C

Office Hours: Monday: 4-6 PM

Wednesday: 2-4 PM

If you cannot make these times, let me know and I will find another time that works

Drop Date: December 5 – Last day to add; last day to drop (without a “W”)

Last day to drop without financial penalty (100% tuition charge for classes dropped after this date)

January 17 - Last day to withdraw without academic penalty (Responsible for 100% of tuition)

Course Description: Explores the political nature of cinema and the ways in which political, culture, and economic issues and themes are expressed in and through cinema. Particular emphasis is placed on American political culture and practices.

Textbooks: Projecting Politics, 2nd Edition – By Haas, Christensen, and Haas

Course Outcomes: Students who successfully complete COMM 308 should:

- Gain field-specific knowledge and **information literacy**, specifically related to the distribution of political ideologies and the ways in which American film presents and represents the political realm.
- Practice **communication skills (written and oral)** by writing about, and discussing, films and their relation to culture
- Hone **creative and critical thinking** skills in the process of dissecting political films and how they constrict and construct images of the social world
- Develop **interpersonal and teamwork skills** through class discussion and engagement with others with whom the students may disagree.

Course Structure

This course will ask you to consider the relationship between cinema and the political sphere. Thinking about the ways political ideas are constructed, maintained, and repaired will require careful reading and engaged class discussion. Each week you will be responsible for reading the assigned material and coming to class prepared to discuss it in some detail. Because we will be talking at length about political issues, there will be times you disagree with both the instructor and fellow classmates. Civil discussion is a requirement of the course, and engaging with ideas that you are either unfamiliar with or disagree with is the hallmark of the political public sphere. Failure to discuss topics civilly will result in loss of participations points. Weekly reaction papers will also guide you through the readings. Lastly, the end of semester project will ask you to politically analyze a film of your choice – pre-approval of both the film and the topic is required.

Assignments/Requirements/Course Schedule

Individual Blackboard Journal and Responses

This class content is encountered in the following sequence: Read the material, write about the material, discuss (in class) the material. To facilitate both the writing and discussion it is vital that you come to class having read, and analyzed, the content for the day. Before the weeks' readings are due you will need to write a short essay responding to prompts about the readings. I will make some comments on your paper and ask you to consider further questions, then you will need to respond with a shorter rebuttal. A template form with the questions I will ask you to answer is available on Blackboard – you will need to provide responses for each of the weeks' readings on your course journal. Over the course of the semester, there will be 10 weeks of journal responses and each week's analysis will be worth a maximum of 4 points. The grade breakdown is as follows:

- 4 Points – it is clear to me that you read and thought critically about the readings.
- 2.5 Points – it is clear that you did the readings, but did not think critically about them
- 0 Points – It is obvious that you did not do the readings

A response to my feedback on each submission will be worth an additional 1 point. The response should be roughly 200 words and engage with my comments and questions on your journal entry.

Discussion Leading

Five times during the semester students will lead a longer class discussion on a chapter from the Dines and Humez book. The goal here is not necessarily to summarize the reading, but rather to find ways to relate the material to your classmates and “go beyond the reading” to think about its theoretical assumptions and broader implications. Your grade will be based on your preparation, depth of discussion, and familiarity with the material.

Research Project

Part of the Communication capstone experience is the development of an original research project. We will be working together throughout the semester on developing your research – specifically focusing on the literature review (the research project will be undertaken later in Comm 490). The practices of completing an original research project are informative in

themselves, but can also contribute to social knowledge and a general understanding of the world. Being able to conduct original research is not strictly an academic pursuit – it can be useful in professional settings and in understanding the process of knowledge development. This is meant to be collaborative – we will be working on these projects throughout the semester and talking about how the processes and projects come together.

Participation and Attendance

We each bring a different set of experiences to the classroom. Finding a way to use these experiences to either build new knowledge, or change preconceptions, is a large part of the learning process. This can only happen, however, if people contribute meaningfully to the classroom dialogue. Share your thoughts, show your knowledge, and help apply the concepts we will be discussing to everyday life. Beyond contributing to class, part of the participation process is contributing to the overall class experience and discussion. You cannot participate if you do not show up for class or regularly turn in assignments late. You are allotted 1 “free” absence. After that, each additional absence will result in losing 7% points off your final grade. However, I do understand that school, home, and work responsibilities often overlap, so if you let me know in advance you cannot make it to class, we can work together to devise a make-up plan.

Late Assignments: Because of the sequential element of the material and the, late assignments and discussion board participation will be penalized 1 point for each day late they are submitted.

Course Grades: There will be 100 possible points in this class. The breakdown is as follows:

Blackboard Journal Assignments	40 Points
Blackboard Journal Feedback Responses	10 Points
Research Project	30 Points
Discussion Leading	20 Points

Grade Scale

93 – 100	A
90 - 92.9	A-
87 – 89.9	B+
83 - 86.9	B
80 – 82.9	B-
77 – 79.9	C+
70 – 76.9	C
60 – 69.9	D
0 – 59.9	F

Course Evaluations Statement:

All course evaluations are conducted online. Your feedback is important to us. You will receive an email message reminding you when the website is open for your feedback. The link is:

<http://courseval.callutheran.edu>

Disability Statement:

California Lutheran University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations in compliance with ADA of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to students with documented disabilities. If you are a student requesting accommodations for this course, please contact your professor at the beginning of the semester and register with the Disability Support Services Coordinator, Wendy Jimenez, for the facilitation and verification of need. The Disability Support Services Coordinator is located in the Center for Student Success Office located at 3259 Pioneer Street, and can be contacted by calling 805.493.3260 or emailing wjimene@callutheran.edu

Statement on Academic Honesty:

The educational programs of California Lutheran University are designed and dedicated to achieve academic excellence, honesty and integrity at every level of student life. Part of CLU's dedication to academic excellence is our commitment to academic honesty. Students, faculty, staff and administration share the responsibility for maintaining high levels of scholarship on campus. Any behavior or act which might be defined as "deceitful" or "dishonest" will meet with appropriate disciplinary sanctions, including dismissal from the University, suspension, grade F in a course or various forms of academic probation. Policies and procedures regarding academic honesty are contained in the faculty and student handbooks.

Plagiarism, cheating, unethical computer use and facilitation of academic dishonest are examples of behavior which will result in disciplinary sanctions. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- word for word copying without using quotation marks or presenting the work as yours
- using the ideas or work of others without acknowledgement
- not citing quoted material. Students must cite sources for any information that is not either the result of original research or common knowledge.

Standards of Student Conduct Statements:

- [Student Life Handbook](#)
- [Academic Honesty Statement](#)

University Harassment Policy

Be civil to each other, both on- and offline. For information on the University's **student harassment policy and rights, please go to the following link:**
[Student Life Handbook](#)

Pearson Library

Pearson Library provides access to scholarly books, journals, ebooks, and databases of full text articles from scholarly journals. To begin using these materials, visit the library web page <http://www.callutheran.edu/library>

There are many ways to contact Pearson Library for research assistance, no matter where you are!

- Email Yvonne Wilber (Professionals liaison) at ywilber@callutheran.edu
- General Library email: CLUlibrary@callutheran.edu
- Library main phone: 805.493.3250
- Text us your question: 805.493.3867
- Get more help at: <http://www.callutheran.edu/library/help/>

CLU Writing Center

The Writing Center provides 1:1 writing consultations, in-person and online, with trained undergraduate and graduate writing consultants. We welcome all writing-related projects at any stage of the writing process across the diverse disciplines of study at CLU. The Writing Center also hosts writing workshops, provides in-class visits, facilitates writing groups, and offers a writer's studio option for longer, sustained projects. Services suit writers of all levels, including traditional undergraduates, graduate students from all fields, all English language learners, and accomplished scholars alike. All members of the CLU community with an @callutheran.edu email address are welcome to make use of our services. For more information, please visit at http://earth.callutheran.edu/writing_center/ or call 805-493-3257. Please schedule appointments online through MyCLU Blackboard with the yellow "The Writing Center" icon in "Tools," or stop by The Writing Center itself, located in the Darling Collaboration Suite of Pearson Library.

Sexual Misconduct

California Lutheran University does not tolerate any degree of sexual misconduct on or off-campus. We encourage you to report if you know of, or have been the victim of, sexual harassment, misconduct, and/or assault. If you report this to a faculty member, she or he must notify Cal Lutheran's Title IX Coordinator about the basic facts of the incident. More information about your options for reporting can be found at: <http://www.callutheran.edu/title-ix/>

Veterans Resources

If you are a veteran, military member, or a family member of a veteran or military member, please refer to Cal Lutheran's Veterans Resources webpage for important information: <http://www.callutheran.edu/veterans/> Also, if you are a veteran receiving benefits and you are struggling in a class, you most likely qualify for free tutoring. Please contact the Veterans Coordinator, Jenn Zimmerman, veterans@callutheran.edu or 805.493.3648, for more information.

Help Desk

Students may contact the Help Desk about telephone, network, wireless network, software questions password problems, hardware problems, and general consultation (i.e. you cannot log into your MyCLU portal, or you are having problems with Blackboard). Please click on the following link for more information http://www.callutheran.edu/iss/technology_services/helpdesk.php or call: 805.493.3698

Syllabus content is subject to change

Student Workload/Carnegie Hours:

The expectation for this course is that you will spend the equivalent of 4 hours per week in class (an hour is defined as 50 minutes), and you will spend approximately 9 hours per week studying and completing assignments for this course.

Activity	Instructor-Led Hours		Homework Hours		Remarks
	Weekly	Course	Weekly	Course	
Readings of required text			5	55	Over 11 weeks, uneven distribution

Weekly Classes	3 hr. 20 min.	40			Includes final exam
Journal Responses		10			
Discussion Leading				10	Average, varies by student
Weekly Journals			2	20	Average, varies by student
Research Project				15	Average, varies by student
Total		50		100	

** In this chart the Carnegie Instructional Hours have already been converted to traditional clock hours; these are based on a 60-minute clock hour.

Final Note

This syllabus is subject to change. Every effort will be made to alert students to changes that occur in a timely manner.

Preliminary Course Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction – Haas pgs. 1 - 35

Week 2 – Political Environment – Haas pgs. 35 – 88 (Good Night and Good Luck?)

Week 3 – Chapters 4 and 5: From Silent Movies through the Great Depression
Film: Metropolis (1927) Modern Times (1936)

Week 4 – Chapter 6 and 7: World War II and its Aftermath
Film: The Great Dictator (1940)

Week 5 – Chapter 8 and 9: Rethinking “Normal”
Film: Dr. Strangelove (1964), Network (1976)

Week 6 – Chapter 10 and 11: The Global and the Spectacle
Film: Deer Hunter (1978) Wall Street, Rambo, Do the Right Thing

Week 7 – Chapter 12: 21st Century Politics
Film: American History X, Idiocracy, Fight Club, Spike Lee (Chiraq), Natural Born Killers

Week 8 – Chapter 13: Political Documentaries
Food Inc, The House I Live In, Inside Job, The Act of Killing, **Harvest of Empire**

Week 9 – Chapter 14: Cinema and Race

Crash, Spike Lee, Fruitvale Station,

Week 10 – Chapter 15: Cinema and Gender

Film: Thelma and Louise, Ex Machina, Miss Representation, The Mask you Live In

Week 11 – Chapter 16: Apocalypse Now and Then (Disaster-Porn)

Avatar, San Andreas,

Do the Right Thing (1989)

Persepolis (2007)

They Live

The Big Short

Crash

DRAFT