

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Course Profile

Course Number : STS 312	Course Title: Science and Technology in Movies
Required / Elective : Elective	Pre / Co-requisites : None
Catalog Description: How to “read” films as part of culture and general approaches to science and technology in well-known movies from the USA and Europe. Thinking critically about the content and discussing the effect of movies on their audiences to shape the general public’s view of science and technology.	Textbook/Required Material: Various readings, assembled in a course pack. Most material for the course are movies on DVD.
Course Structure / Schedule : (3+0+0) 3 / 6 ECTS	
<p>Extended Description : More than any other medium film, arguably, shapes peoples’ perceptions and interpretations of “reality” and “fantasy”. In recent decades representations of science and technology in movies have become increasingly pervasive. Marshall McLuhan famously said: “the medium is the message”. Confirming his observation, much popular cinema today seems to be plagued by a kind of technological “fundamentalism” whereby special effects, adroit editing, and brilliant simulation are the essential “content” of many movies—their message, their “narrative”. This course examines these trends, how they shape viewers’ perceptions and interpretations, and how the business of film-making and promotion are being driven by technical imperatives. Emphasis is placed on viewing and analyzing some recent movies that represent this new genre, including science fiction and “action” films.</p>	
Design content : none	Computer usage: No particular computer usage required
<p>Course Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be able to discuss different theories about the role of movies in shaping viewers’ visions of fantasy and reality. (3, 5, 10) 2. Be able to describe how movies have been shaped by innovations in science and technology. (5, 8, 10) 3. Become familiar in detail with at least two major films of the genre, and offer interpretations of their themes and techniques in papers and presentations. (5, 7, 8, 14) <p>(3) Describe interrelationships between art, culture, and society.</p> <p>(5) Explain historical, political, and material conditions in which artistic and cultural expression emerge.</p> <p>(7) Apply discipline-relevant methods to HSS research projects.</p> <p>(8) Summarize and assess current developments in the subject area.</p> <p>(10) Synthesize complex ideas in clear, concise ways.</p> <p>(14) Demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively with written, oral and visual means.</p>	

Recommended reading : Mel Alexenberg, Educating Artists for the Future: Learning at the Intersection of Arts, Science, Technology, and Culture (2008)

Teaching methods: Lecture and class discussions; film viewing

Assessment methods : Two papers and oral presentations; final exam

Student workload:

Pre-reading	25 hrs
Lectures	45 hrs
Preparatory reading	45 hrs
Literature review for presentation.....	25 hrs
Team work for presentation	10 hrs
TOTAL	150 hrs

Prepared by : Dr. Mark A. Shields

Revision Date : 12.05.2010