SMC Core Curriculum Course Proposal Form Fall 2013

Electronically submit this course form and attachments to the Chair of the CCC by October 1. Please submit a separate proposal for each desired learning goal.

1. Name of Proposer: Dan Leopard
2. Email address: drl1@stmarys-ca.edu
3. Department/Program of Proposer: Communication

4. Name of Department/Program housing the course: Communication
5. Name(s) of Program Director/Department Chair: Ed Tywoniak
6. Course Acronym, Number and Title: Comm 158, Film
7. Proposal is for All Sections of the course: XX
   Proposal is for instructor’s section(s) (Pathways to Knowledge only): _____
8. Course Prerequisites (if any): None
9. Unit Value of Course: 1 credit

10. Mark with an X the Learning Goal for which the course is being proposed. (Please submit a separate proposal for each desired goal.)

Pathways to Knowledge (at most one)
   Artistic Understanding – Artistic Analysis only: ____
   Artistic Understanding – Creative Practice only: ____
   **Artistic Understanding – Artistic Analysis and Creative Practice: XX**
   Mathematical Understanding: ____
   Scientific Understanding: ____
   Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding: ____
   Christian Foundations: ____
   Theological Explorations: ____

Engaging the World (as appropriate, generally zero to two)
   American Diversity: ____
   Common Good: ____
   Community Engagement: ____
   Global Perspectives: ____

11. Attachments:
   a) Sample Syllabus
   b) Teaching and Learning Narrative
Comm 158 Artistic Understanding Designation Proposal

Teaching: how the course will guide students to achieve the learning outcomes.

Communication 158, Film, provides students with a comprehensive overview of the theories and practices that represent the current foundational body of knowledge that comprises film and media studies (one can no longer talk of film as a specific medium without considering it in relation to, at least, television and digital media). Within this context, Comm 158 uses works of film art as exemplary cultural objects with which to examine key concepts in the history and production of Hollywood, independent, and non-Western media (in the case of the sample syllabus, the course focuses on documentary film and media as the “creative treatment of reality”). Consequently, students view excerpts from works of film art each week (see sample syllabus for examples) (outcome 1a) and discuss these works within the framework of film and media studies (1b) and in so doing are asked to deploy the appropriate vocabulary and contexts (1c and d). All of these activities are explicit and progressive as students are called upon to explore further learning outcomes 1a-d in the form of a short critical essay/midterm exam (which involves practices of looking and practices of critical evaluation within a film studies context). As for outcomes 2a and b, students are required to create a final film art project that incorporates themes and ideas from throughout the semester. This final film art project calls upon design and creative production skills that are introduced each week throughout the semester (and reflect professional creative practice within the industry) and results in the production of an artifact appropriate to film and media studies – a conceptually-based film project presented through screen-based media or a new media project which draws upon the global history of film. While the sample syllabus focuses on documentary as one mode appropriate to film studies – one of the four major modes of production: narrative, documentary, avant-garde, and animation – the structure of the course as it addresses the core learning outcomes is applicable to any of the works of film art that are central to the history and practice of film. Different films (or different modes of production or genres) could be substituted for any of those indicated on the sample syllabus and the course would still fulfill the requirements of the core learning outcomes.
Learning: how coursework will be used to measure student learning of the outcomes.

Learning outcomes are assessed in relation to the following: blog postings by students that offer questions used by the instructor to shape the structure of each class session discussion, a short critical essay that serves as a midterm evaluation of the course content learned thus far, and a short critical write-up that serves to place each student’s creative work in the historical, critical, and theoretical context of the course (1a-d). The mid-term and the critical write-up assesses students’ ability to carefully view works of art and media (1a), analyze these works for form and meaning (1b), apply appropriate vocabulary (1c), and to explore each work’s significance (1d – including the influences that have served to shape their own creative work in the course). The final film project has several steps to completion (lectures and discussion on the art and technique of film and video production and work-in-progress presentations and critique sessions) which foreground process as it relates to artistic production (2a) and results in an appropriate artifact from media and cultural studies (2b – which is evaluated in relation to a rubric focused on formal, technical, and aesthetic criteria) and a short write-up which links the creative art project with the conceptual aspects of theory as presented by the course in its entirety (1a-d and 2a-b).

Note to the Committee:

Most art critics and historians consider film to be the key art form of modernity. While there may have been debate on this point in the 1930s, the inclusion of film within the larger designations of art are now a matter of broad consensus. Having said that, I would like to also emphasize that documentary film (and media) is secure in its place as one of the dominant art forms of film art (aesthetically and practically). Documentary is a socially-engaged art practice and to use John Grierson’s formulation mentioned above, “a creative treatment of reality” – in the manner of artists who have used the real world as the source and subject of their artwork, from Leonardo to Goya to Edward Weston. I only mention this to avoid any confusion on the part of the committee as to the nature of documentary art and its place within the ongoing narrative of film history (as cinema transforms into the digital leaving filmstock, but not film practice, behind).