Hi Peter,

I would like to request CAS cross-registration of the course COM CI 595 E FILM/TV GENRES with CAS CI 595 E. The syllabus is attached. Please let me know if you or members of HUCC have any questions.

Thanks so much for your assistance,

Roy

Roy Grundmann
Associate Professor of Film Studies
Director and Co-Founder, Cinema and Media Studies Major
CAS CI 595 E/COM CI 595 E
Contemporary Film and Television Genres in Comparison

SHORT TITLE: FILM/TV GENRES

Link/Bulletin Description:
An introduction to genre studies through contemporary examples from film and television. Topics include the history of genres, the function of genres as popular myths, and the relationship between genres and the industry and between genres and audiences.

Prerequisite: enrollment in the Los Angeles Cinema and Media Studies Internship Program

Course Description:
This course provides students with an introduction to genre studies facilitated through an overview of a sampling of highly contemporary film and television genres. As the course uses genre studies to introduce students to the synergized yet stratified film and television industries, each genre is represented through one film example and one example from television, creating a closely comparative study of genres across different yet related industrial spheres. The course engages several key questions: (1) Where do genres come from and how do they evolve? (2) What is the relation between genres and the industry (i.e., did the industry invent genres?) (3) What is the relationship between genres and popular audiences? (4) How have genre studies evolved over time and how are they keeping up with contemporary genres? (5) Do contemporary genres fulfill similar functions as their ancestors during the classical era, such as furnishing viewers with popular myths? The current popularity of the genres selected for this course ensures that this sampling reflects American popular culture in representative manner. Later iterations of this course may substitute certain weeks, should other genres emerge as more popular. The course readings have been selected with an eye to striking a balance between overarching critical takes on genre in general and specific case studies of individual genres.

Summary of Course Objectives:
- Students will be introduced to a range of contemporary genres popular in film and television.
- Students will study popular genres to gain insight into the stratified yet synergistic relation between the motion picture and television industries.
- Students will study contemporary genres to understand the basic principles of how genres work economically and culturally, that is, as industrial branding tools and as building blocks for modern-day mythologies
- By mastering the particularities of the sampling of genres selected for this class, students will be able to apply the principles of genre study to the most recent ebbs and flows in film and television production.
**Course Scope and Distribution of credit hours:**
This class meets over 10 sessions, each consisting of an in-class lecture/discussion portion that requires preparatory media viewing, which, however, is individually arranged by students. As this course constitutes the academic component of the LA Study Abroad program, the course structure is shaped to accommodate the particular time demands of the program’s practical component, the internship. During the first 4 weeks, the course will meet twice a week for 2 ½ hours each session. Over the remaining 6 weeks, the course will adopt a once-a-week meeting schedule, each session 2 hrs long. In addition, the syllabus includes a total of 8 hours of activities closely related to the curriculum, including a required class visit to the Getty Museum and the attendance of a panel of experts discussing the relation between the film and television industries.

**Course Requirements:**
*Regular attendance of lecture and discussion sections is mandatory.* Grades will be distributed according to grade breakdown listed below.

*The midterm paper* is a concise (1,800 words) take-home exam that tests students’ knowledge of course materials and in-class discussions.

*Students will file weekly journal entries with the instructor and also keep a blog on the designated course website.* Journal entries should include the synthesis (not just summary) of the assigned readings and the application of those readings to contemporary film and television artifacts. Blog posts will track the student’s central interest in genre, how that interest evolves as the course proceeds, and how that interest ultimately manifests itself in the final paper.

[Note: To respond efficiently to the competing, but potentially fluctuating, demands of the program’s academic and internship portions, future instructors may elect to reduce the parameters of the midterm paper and, in turn, expand the weekly journal entries and blogging assignments. Grade Breakdown will be adjusted accordingly.]

*The final paper* is an individualized argument/research project, for which students will submit a proposal to the instructor on a designated date.

**Grade Breakdown:**
- Journal: 20%
- Midterm paper: 20%
- Final paper: 40%
- Blog and overall quality of class contributions: 20%

**Plagiarism Statement:**
"Plagiarism is the act of representing someone else's creative and/or academic work as your own, in full or in part. It can be an act of commission, in which one intentionally appropriates the words, pictures or ideas of another, or it can be an act of omission, in which one fails to acknowledge/document/give credit to the source, creator and/or the copyright owner of those words, pictures or ideas. Any fabrication of materials, quotes or
sources, other than those created in a work of fiction, is also plagiarism. Plagiarism is the most serious academic offense that you can commit and can result in probation, suspension, or expulsion."

**Use of laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices prohibited in class:**
While some of you may consider laptops instrumental for note taking, I consider the introjection of an interface between you and me in the classroom alienating and counterproductive. If laptops are used in class, I am unable to tell whether students pay attention to lectures and class discussion or to the multiple functions of their laptops. The use of laptops in my classes thus violates my notion of a productive oral communication scenario that involves the attention and commitment of all students for the duration of the class. The prohibition of cell phones and i-phones should be self-explanatory.

**Syllabus of Screenings and Readings:**

**Session 1:**  
**Introduction to Genre in Film and Television: Where Do Genres Come From? How Do They Evolve?**

**Topics:**
- Transforming common understandings of Genre
- Film Genres vs. Genre Films
- Culture and Genre
- Genres as Industrial Categories
- Genre and Hollywood

**Viewing:**
- Selected Excerpts from American television and films

**Readings:**
- Rick Altman, Film/Genre (British Film Institute, 1999), Chapter 2: What is Generally Understood by the Notion of Film Genre?,” pp.13-99.

**Due:**
- Journal entry submitted to professor and Blog Post entry on Blackboard

**Session 2:**  
**The Dominance of Movie Horror and the Scarcity of TV Horror**

**Topics:**
- The long life of horror in movies/Horror as a recent development on TV
- Industrial and moral constraints in early television
- Horror and HBO’s industrial strategies
Viewing:  
*True Blood* (HBO) (selected episodes)  
*Bram Stoker’s Dracula* (1992, Francis Ford Coppola)  
*The Twilight Saga* (2009-2012) (selected excerpts)

Reading:  


Due:  
Journal entry submitted to professor and Blog Post entry on Blackboard

Session 3:  
**TV Musicals**

Topics:  
Musical failures and successes on commercial TV  
Industrial complications in the making of a musical: original compositions vs. covers  
Target audiences and popular music  
Can genres programs be ahead of their time?  
Genres and procedurals vs. Genres and serials

Viewing:  
*Cop Rock* (ABC) (selected episodes)  
*Glee* (ABC) (selected episodes)

Reading:  


Due:  
Journal entry submitted to professor and Blog Post entry on Blackboard

Session 4:  
**Movie Musicals**

Topics:  
Failures and rebirths: from industry staple to niche product  
Do genre studies make sense? The musical’s questioning of genre theory  
Subcycles of musicals: backstage dramas, dance films, jukebox musicals  
Professionals vs. amateurs

Viewing:  
*Chicago* (2002; Rob Marshall dir.)  
*All That Jazz* (1979; Bob Fosse dir.) (excerpt)  
*Saturday Night Fever* (1977; John Badham dir.) (excerpt)  
*Step Up* (2006; Anne Fletcher dir.) (excerpt)

Due: Journal entry submitted to professor and Blog Post entry on Blackboard

Session 5: TV Gangsters

Topics: Moral panic and TV gangsters
Violence and quality television
Crime family melodrama—the meeting of film and television genre
Traditions
Male antiheroes/Difficult men

Viewing: The Sopranos (HBO) (selected episodes)


Due: Journal entry submitted to professor and Blog Post entry on Blackboard

Session 6: Movie Gangsters

Topics: Two classic sociological models of the gangster
Gangster films and movie censorship: a historical outline
Gangster films as expressions of the cinematic auteur
The evolving role of the city: from mythical backdrop to authentic locale

Viewing: Goodfellas (1990; Martin Scorsese dir.)


Due: Journal entry submitted to professor and Blog Post entry on Blackboard
Session 7: Women’s TV

Topics:
- Niche programming
- Gendered audiences/gendered programming
- The history of women’s television
- Reality shows and representations of heterosexual couplings
- Women at work
- Female antiheroes

Viewing: UnREAL (Lifetime) (selected episodes)

Reading:

Due: Journal entry submitted to professor and Blog Post entry on Blackboard

Session 8: Women’s Films

Topics:
- The woman’s film as hybrid genre
- The significance of melodrama and comedy
- Stardom as genre

Viewing: The Devil Wears Prada (2006; David Frankel dir.)

Reading:

Due: Journal entry submitted to professor and Blog Post entry on Blackboard

Session 9: TV Superheroes

Topics:
- Superheroes and American culture
- Irony and comedy in television adaptations of superheroes
- Comic books and TV
- The superhero franchise
- Independent production companies and major studios
- Media conglomeration
Viewing:  
*Batman* (ABC) (selected episodes)  
*Marvel's Agents of SHIELD* (ABC) (selected episodes)

Reading:  
Matt Yockey, Introduction and Ch. 1 from *Batman* (Wayne State University Press, 2014)  

Due:  
Journal entry submitted to professor and Blog Post entry on Blackboard

**Session 10: Movie Superheroes**

Topics:  
Superheroes in American Culture  
The superhero and the movie franchise  
The significance of fandom and the role of fan communities

Viewing:  
*The Avengers* (2012; Joss Whedon dir.)

Reading:  

Due:  
Journal entry submitted to professor and Blog Post entry on Blackboard

**Bibliography:**


Mittell, Jason. 2004. *Genre and Television: From Cop Shows to Cartoons in American*


