COURSE NUMBER: CST 555

COURSE TITLE: Relational Communication and the Hollywood Feature Film

Fall 2010
Tuesday 5:30-9:20 pm
Ferguson 100

This semester, we will follow a thematic approach to our study of relational communication and film. Our semester theme: Mythic Journeys.

STRUCTURE: Course meets one evening/week for 4 hours for lecture, screening, and discussion; additional discussion threads will be conducted via the Blackboard system.

CREDITS: 3:2:3

PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES: Upper-division or graduate standing.

FOR WHOM PLANNED: This is an upper-division/graduate level communication course designed for students interested in the intensive study of relational communication via the complex and engaging medium of Hollywood film.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:
Professor: Dr. Christopher N. Poulos
Office: Ferguson Building #107
Office Hours: Tuesday 4:00-5:15 + Wednesday 11:00-12:15 + by appointment
Contact: cnpoulos@uncg.edu; 336.686.2514

DEPARTMENT INFORMATION:
Communication Studies Department Mission—We research, teach, and practice communication to cultivate the ethical voices of people that speak in critical, constructive, and transformative ways to identities, relationships, and communities.

Philosophy of Scholarship—We believe that communication is formative and foundational to human identities, relationships, and communities—and that ethical and strategically effective communication can be the means of critiquing, constructing, and transforming identities, relationships, and communities. We engage in communication scholarship in the form of research, teaching, and service that:
— Integrates dialogue and other approaches to communication as the foundation for scholarly inquiry and application to the world
— Cultivates diversity and respect for differences
— Promotes change that leads to more democratic, just, and peaceful relationships and communities
— Engages creative partnerships of faculty, students, and other stakeholders in addressing contemporary challenges and opportunities for improving communication
Scholarly Focus Areas—These beliefs and values are articulated in the following ongoing scholarly focus areas of the department:

1. **Public Voice**: How can communication scholarship help us to understand and improve the quality of public discourse in the world around us?

2. **Voices of Change, Diversity and Difference, and Conflict**: How can communication scholarship help people to engage with diversity, differences, and divisions in ways that promote understanding and collaborative/democratic change?

3. **Voices of Identity and Relationships**: How can communication scholarship help us understand how people create and sustain desired identities and healthy relationships?

4. **Voices of Discovery**: How can communication scholarship help us understand how people learn to co-construct, share, and critique knowledge?

*CATALOG DESCRIPTION*:
Course emphasizes analysis and application of the images, discourses, and practices concerning human communication and relationships as they are represented in the powerful cultural medium of film.

*COMPLETE COURSE DESCRIPTION*:
One of the most powerful influences on the conduct of our everyday social lives is popular culture; particularly prominent in this regard is the Hollywood feature film. Hollywood’s entrees serve a dual function of holding a mirror before us, reflecting our identities, and of shaping how we think about and therefore enact our various identities within the larger culture. These identity reflecting and shaping functions of film have a profound effect upon how we relate to one another. In this course, we will explore theory and research relevant to relational communication, as shaped and reflected in Hollywood feature films. Our primary purpose will be to mount a critical study of our shared cultural understandings of relational communication as they are developed, reflected, represented, and constructed in film. In our quest, we will discuss issues such as: the social construction of selfhood; power; communication and meaning; the development of friendship, love, and intimacy; storytelling and dialogue; relational dialectics; gender and communication; the ethical dimensions of relationships; types and levels of relationships; heroism, villainy, and violence; conflict; intercultural communication and diversity; building community; and the visions of Hollywood and Madison Avenue as they relate to self- and other identity, authenticity, orientation, and recognition.

*STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES*:
*After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:*

1) Employ, in conversation and in writing, an extensive vocabulary of terms related to the study of relational communication and film;

2) Identify, apply, and synthesize key theoretical frameworks used by scholars to assess relational communication and film;

3) Demonstrate a grasp of the importance of relational communication and of the impacts of film in everyday life;

4) Differentiate and explain the reflecting and shaping functions of Hollywood feature films, with a particular focus on questions related to identity and relational communication;

5) Appraise and discuss the dynamic/dialectical relationships between communication, film, and the social construction of culture/cultural identity;
6) Speak and write intelligently about relational communication and film, with a special focus on the connections between communication and:
   a) the coordinated management of meaning;
   b) the construction and development of the self (identity, etc.);
   c) the understanding of the Other;
   d) the development, depth, and quality of various kinds of relationships;
   e) the meaning and practices of family;
   f) the contours and dialectics of friendship;
   g) love & intimacy;
   h) conflict;
   i) the employment of violence;
   j) the social construction of power;
   k) dialogue and conversation;
   l) consciousness and reflexivity;
   m) memory and synchronicity;
   n) narrative structure, story, and storytelling;
   o) culture; and
   p) the social construction of gender.
7) Demonstrate research competence, using reputable/scholarly Internet and library resources.
8) Facilitate active, dynamic small and large group discussions, skillfully and effectively.

TEACHING METHODS AND ASSIGNMENTS FOR ACHIEVING LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Teaching Strategies: This course will be taught via a combination of methods, including lectures, film screenings, class discussions, small group exercises, student presentations, writing exercises, and partner dialogues.

Participation: Notice that 20% (200 points) of your grade total is for participation. Active participation in dialogue is a primary learning process in communication studies. I expect you to participate actively in class discussions. Speak up! Some suggested ways you can enhance class participation: Offer your insights, ideas, conjectures, critical evaluations, responses to questions, and so on, as we engage in discussion. Offer relevant examples from daily life, the media, the arts, etc., to illuminate discussion; bring in ideas and items (articles, newspaper clippings, video clips, exercises, etc.) to spur dialogue; think and respond actively and creatively. Listen carefully and responsively to contributions made by your class colleagues and me. By attending class regularly and actively participating, you will not only be better prepared for your writing assignments and for successful completion of this course, you will also help make this course a more valuable and enriching experience for us all!

Evaluation Methods and Guidelines for Assignments (General): Students will write five essays (of various types and lengths) and develop a final creative project. Evaluation will be based upon the quality of the essays, the final project, and in-class and Blackboard-based discussion participation. READ THE COURSE SUCCESS GUIDE SECTION AT THE END OF THIS SYLLABUS, WHICH GIVES COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS!
Below are some general guidelines regarding the way your progress and performance will be evaluated.

Study: Reserve plenty of time outside of class to conduct your independent work (writing, re-writing, reading, re-reading, developing questions, working on course projects, etc.). Learning is
a process, not an event. Work hard, and you will reap great rewards! *Everything worthwhile requires effort...*

**Reading:** Reading for this course will be central to the conduct of class discussions. We will discuss the readings in class, so reading assignments are to be completed **prior** to the day for which they are listed. For example, before coming to class on Day 2, read the selections from Berger, Wallace, and Corrigan. Bring the reading/text/book to class with you on the day we will discuss it...

**Writing/Research:**
- You will write **3 critical reflection essays** that offer you an opportunity to demonstrate critical judgment concerning the themes of our course and the films and readings related to those themes. **Note:** There are **FOUR** due dates listed on the syllabus for these essays. You will choose **THREE** of these opportunities, based upon your preferences and your schedule. See course success guide for instructions.
- **Once** during the semester, you will see a film outside of class, and write a **movie review** crafted in the style of a newspaper film critic.
- Graduate students will write a **brief reflection essay** at the end of the semester, focusing attention on pedagogical and research implications of involvement in this course, as a way to look to your academic future and integrate key learning into that enterprise.
- You will also develop a final **research/creative project.** This project will require you to develop a critical assessment and creative extension/interpretation of one of the problems or issues we will be facing in this course or of a related problem, issue, or theme, and to use films as primary text(s) under examination/exploration.
- **SEE COURSE SCHEDULE FOR DUE DATES, AND COURSE SUCCESS GUIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS.**

**Skillful discussion/dialogue:** This is a course that requires your active engagement in ongoing, lively conversation about film and relationships. We will actively employ small and large group discussion and dialogue processes, practices, and exercises on a weekly basis. For this teaching methodology to succeed, your active and skillful participation will be necessary. For each film, a viewing guide will be handed out in class and used to spark discussion. Additionally, each week, you will participate in a **critical/reflective discussion thread on the Blackboard system.** This discussion is designed to supplement our in-class discussion of the week’s film. I will raise a question for your consideration, and offer you the opportunity to respond. You will also have the opportunity in this forum to raise your own questions for discussion, offer an insight relevant to our current topic/theme/film, or develop your own interpretation or application of a theme, principle, practice, or theory we are examining in class.

**Teaching/Facilitation:** As a graduate student in a mixed upper-division undergraduate/graduate course, you are expected to take a leadership role and to set a strong example for participation. Weekly, you will facilitate a small group post-screening discussion related to the film we’ve viewed. Working in teams of 2-3 graduate students, you will facilitate one large (full class) discussion session following one of our films. You will also develop and distribute a viewing guide for that evening’s film. We will meet briefly at the end of the first class session to set up a calendar for these teaching events. I will model these processes during the first couple of weeks of class.
NOTE: “Mixed” 500-level courses include both graduate and upper-level undergraduate students. Extra effort and depth of study are required of graduate students. As you can see, there are several assignments that create the distinction between graduate and undergraduate student engagement in this course. First, there are separate and distinct syllabi for the two groups. Second, graduate students are required to serve as facilitators of in-class discussion groups. Third, graduate students will write a reflection essay on the pedagogical and research implications of engagement in this course. Finally, the final research projects for graduate students will be more substantive, detailed, and extensive than those of undergraduates.

**EVALUATION AND GRADING**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points/SLOs addressed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reflection Essay 1</td>
<td>100 (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)</td>
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<td>Critical Reflection Essay 2</td>
<td>100 (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Reflection Essay 3</td>
<td>100 (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)</td>
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<td>Movie Review</td>
<td>50 (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)</td>
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<td>Final Creative/Research Project</td>
<td>150 (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Teaching/Facilitation</td>
<td>100 (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)</td>
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<td>Graduate Pedagogical/Research reflection</td>
<td>100 (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)</td>
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<td>Blackboard Participation</td>
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<td>In-class participation</td>
<td>200 (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4)</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>930-1000 = A</td>
<td>730-769 = C</td>
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<td>900-929 = A-</td>
<td>700-729 = C-</td>
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<td>870-899 = B+</td>
<td>670-699 = D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>830-869 = B</td>
<td>630-669 = D</td>
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<tr>
<td>800-829 = B-</td>
<td>600-629 = D-</td>
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<td>770-799 = C+</td>
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Important guidelines to remember:

1. **Show up, prepared!** Attendance and participation are central to learning in this class! Be prepared. The readings are designed to engage your attention and passion. We view our films together, as a community.

2. **Do NOT email me your papers.** If I printed every paper from every student in every class, I would spend over 3000 minutes per semester just printing them, not to mention paying for ink and paper, and all the glitches that can occur in cyberspace. Bring them when due in hard (paper) copy form!

**Required Texts**

- Various readings on e-reserves
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Concepts and In Class Activities</th>
<th>Due</th>
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| 1. 8/24/10 | CINEMA AND STORY                               | Moviemakers as storytellers; the contours of visual storytelling; the structure of cinematic texts/narratives. 
**Film**: *Visions of Light* + various clips 
Exercise: Group formation & Discussion 
After class: Brief meeting of graduate students for planning! | Buy book/ download E-RESERVE readings |
| 2. 8/31/10 | MYTHIC JOURNEYS: STORYTELLING, MEANING, FAMILY | The power of story and the nexus of meaning… 
**Film**: *Big Fish* 
Discussion | Read: Corrigan, Ch.1 & Glossary of Film Terms (pp. 173-177) + *(e-reserves)* 
Berger, A. Chapter 1: *The Nature of Narratives* (1) & Wallace, D. *Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions* (selections) |
| 3. 9/7/10 | GRADUAL JOURNEYS: REFLEXIVITY, AGENCY, AND KNOWLEDGE | Story and Reflexivity and Freedom, Oh My! 
**Film**: *Pleasantville* 
Discussion | Read: *(e-reserves)* 
Giddens, A. *Ontological Security and Existential Anxiety*; Giannetti, L. *Understanding Movies* (Ch. 1: Photography) |
| 4. 9/14/10 | JOURNEY TOWARD THE CENTER OF THE SELF (AWAKENINGS) | Self-Knowledge and Writing the Self 
**Film**: *Stranger Than Fiction* 
Discussion | Read: Corrigan, Ch. 2. + *(e-reserves)* 
Berger, A. Chapter 2: *Theorists of Narrativity* 

Critical Reflection Essay 
Due Date #1*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/21/10</td>
<td>FRIENDSHIP</td>
<td>The contours of adult</td>
<td>Corrigan, Ch. 3 + (e-reserves) Cooper, B. Chick Flicks as Feminist Texts + Rawlins, W. Adult</td>
<td>Thelma and Louise</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>JOURNEYS #1</td>
<td>friendship as adventure/&quot;outlaw&quot;</td>
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<td>(WOMEN ON THE</td>
<td>road trips</td>
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<td>9/28/10</td>
<td>FRIENDSHIP</td>
<td>Culture and cultural identity</td>
<td>Corrigan, Ch. 4 + (e-reserves) Burgoyne, R. Native America, Thunderheart, and the National</td>
<td>Thunderheart</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>JOURNEYS #2</td>
<td>Circles of connection/memory;</td>
<td>Imaginary; + McGlashan, Remembering and forgetting; Commentary on Wounded Knee:</td>
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<td>“VISIONS”)</td>
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<td>10/5/10</td>
<td>FRIENDSHIP</td>
<td>Friendship, community, and</td>
<td>Corrigan, Ch. 5 + (e-reserves) Nichols, J. The Milagro Beanfield War (selections) Critical</td>
<td>The Milagro Beanfield War</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>JOURNEYS #3</td>
<td>(COMMUNITY)</td>
<td>Reflection Essay Due Date #2*</td>
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<td>10/12/10</td>
<td>NO CLASS: FALL</td>
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<td>10/19/10</td>
<td>THE QUEST FOR</td>
<td>“True Love”</td>
<td>Corrigan, Ch. 6 + (e-reserves) Johnson, Robert A. We (selections); Hendrick &amp; Hendrick,</td>
<td>The Princess Bride</td>
<td>Movie Review Due</td>
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<td>LOVE</td>
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<td>Romantic Love (selections)</td>
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| 10.10/26/10| LOVE (REVISITED)                           | Quirks, Afflictions, and Acknowledgement  
Film: Benny and Joon  
Discussion                                                                                                                                                                      | Hyde, M.J. The Life-Giving Gift of Acknowledgement  
(selections)                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 11.11/2/10 | COMING TO CONSCIOUSNESS #1 (WALKING THE EDGE) | Consciousness and sanity/insanity  
Film: A Beautiful Mind  
Discussion                                                                                                                                                                                | Jung, C.G. On the psychogenesis of schizophrenia; Poulos, C. Narrative Conscience; Schrag, C. The self in community  
Critical Reflection Essay  
Due Date #3*                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 12.11/9/10 | COMING TO CONSCIOUSNESS #2 (THE HERO’S JOURNEY) | A (postmodern) Hero’s journey; the screen as a mirror of life; creation mythology...  
Film: The Truman Show  
Discussion                                                                                                                                                                               | Niccol & Weir, The Truman Show  
(the shooting script) + Campbell, J. The Hero With a Thousand Faces  
(selections)                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 13.11/16/10| NO CLASS: RESEARCH AND WRITING DAY!       |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 14.11/23/10| ANOTHER HERO’S JOURNEY                     | The search...for meaning…and relation  
Film: Smoke Signals  
Discussion                                                                                                                                                                                  | Alexie, S. The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven  
(selections); Couer d’alene Tribal website: http://www.cdatribe-nsn.gov/Default.aspx  
(click on “Ancestral” and “Environment” links and read); Osherson, S. Finding our Fathers  
(selections)  
Critical Reflection Essay  
Due Date #4*                                                                                                                                                                                     |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Reading/Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>15. 11/30/10</td>
<td>MYTHIC JOURNEYS (REVISITED)</td>
<td>Myth, memory, imagination&lt;br&gt;Film: <em>Oh Brother Where Art Thou</em>&lt;br&gt;Read: (e-reserves) May, R. <em>The Cry for Myth</em> (selections); Eliade, M. <em>The Structure of Myths</em> and <em>Mythologies of Memory and Forgetting</em> (selections); Homer, <em>The Odyssey</em>, Book XII (e-reserves or: <a href="http://classics.mit.edu/Home/odyssey.12.xii.html">http://classics.mit.edu/Home/odyssey.12.xii.html</a>)&lt;br&gt;Brief Reflection Essay: Film, Research, and Pedagogy</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. 12/6/10</td>
<td>PROJECT DUE DATE</td>
<td>******************************************************&lt;br&gt;Turn in your final project to me in my office (Ferguson 107), or to the Communication Studies Administrative Assistants (Ferguson 102-103) by 5 pm</td>
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<td>17. 12/14/10</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM PERIOD, 7:00-10:00 P.M.</td>
<td>STUDENT CHOICE FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION&lt;br&gt;XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
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* CHOOSE THREE OF THE FOUR DUE DATES FOR CRITICAL REFLECTION ESSAYS!

Links of interest:
- The UNCG Communication Studies Department web site: [http://www.uncg.edu/cst](http://www.uncg.edu/cst)
- The UNCG Media Studies Department web site: [http://www.uncg.edu/mst/](http://www.uncg.edu/mst/)
- The Internet Movie Database: [http://www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)
- Rotten Tomatoes: [http://www.rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com)
- Women and Film: [http://www.bama.ua.edu/~mbarrett/filmwsslinks.html](http://www.bama.ua.edu/~mbarrett/filmwsslinks.html)
- Reel Movie Critic: [http://www.reelmoviewcritic.com/id358.htm](http://www.reelmoviewcritic.com/id358.htm)
- Go Triad (includes movie listings): [www.gotriad.com](http://www.gotriad.com)
- Movie Tickets: [MovieTickets.com](http://www.movieltickets.com)
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:
http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/#one

Note: “Academic integrity is founded upon and encompasses the following five values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Supporting and affirming these values is essential to promoting and maintaining a high level of academic integrity. Each member of the academic community must stand accountable for his or her actions. As a result, a community develops in which students learn the responsibilities of citizenship and how to contribute honorably to their professions.”

There is more! Read and acquaint yourself with the student code of conduct and the university’s academic integrity policy. It is your responsibility to know and abide by the academic integrity policy of this university. You may also be interested in reading this Buddhist Parable on Cheating: http://www.buddhanet.net/bt_51.htm

DISABILITY: If you have a disability or special need that requires accommodation, please see me privately during office hours, or make an appointment.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Since classroom learning is an integral component of this course, ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. We meet only 14 times this semester! You may miss no more than ONE class session before penalties accrue. Each missed class session beyond one will earn you a penalty of 50 points. If you do the math, you will realize that this penalty, when combined with missed participation points and other missed assignments and exercises, will result in a substantial "ding" to your grade. Do the math before you ditch. The only exceptions to this policy are University-sanctioned "excused absences" (death in the family, fire, flood, famine, pestilence, enrollment in the witness protection program, illness, etc.). You should contact me in advance — or as soon as you know — if you will miss class due to one of these reasons. Excused absences will not count against you in any way.

FINAL EXAMINATION: Our final examination period will be used as a regular class session, with a screening and discussion of a “student choice” film.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
TARDINESS: Class begins at the scheduled time, on the money. Please arrive on time.

IN-CLASS BEHAVIOR: This is a dialogue-intensive class. Focus is required; distractions disrupt the possibility of full engagement. Please, no cell phones, text messaging, laptop computers, or side conversations, newspapers, lunches or dinners in class. Water bottles with lids are acceptable. Please arrive on time, and do not leave the classroom except during our regular breaks. On the first day of class, we will have a discussion about further parameters of in-class conduct.
This guide is intended to assist you in navigating and developing the independent writing assignments for this course...

Writing Assignments
In this course, you will develop and produce six writing projects of varying lengths—three critical reflection essays, one movie review, a pedagogical/research reflection essay, and a final critical or creative project. Both types of assignments are described in detail below.

Critical Reflection Essays
These essays will constitute your opportunity to demonstrate your understanding and your interpretive or critical response to the films and themes we are exploring in the course. To assist you in the learning process, and to help minimize your stress, I have developed a series of choices/options for you to consider in developing these essays.

• **Choice #1**: As you read the syllabus, you will notice that there are four due dates listed; of these, you choose which three you will write. The essay is due on the date stated on the course syllabus.

• **Choice #2**: You can choose to write an essay on a **single film** from the unit (focus), or you can write a comparative essay, developing comparisons and contrasts between **two films** in the thematic unit (movement). This choice should be driven by your interest/passion.

• **Assignment**: The assignment in each case is simple. You will write an insightful critical essay, 5-7 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, normal margins) that demonstrates connections between the theoretical/thematic basis on which we are examining the film(s) in question and the film text itself. Here you will draw on close observation and analysis of the film(s) or scenes from the film(s), and on your knowledge gained from the course readings, lectures, and class discussions, to offer your critical evaluation and interpretation of the film(s), including your general assessment of the film's effectiveness as a reflector and/or shaper of the audience's identity, ideology, thoughts, etc. See Timothy Corrigan's *A Short Guide to Writing About Film* for a sense of the way a "critical essay" differs from a "movie review" or "theoretical essay." In essence, I'm looking for a detailed, interesting discussion of what the film means to you (and to the audience in general), and how the film *communicated* that meaning to/with you. Further, as an advanced student of communication, you should also consider communicative processes, practices, and relationships as enacted by the characters within the film or films as appropriate fodder for discussion. Notice that the most compelling, insightful, engaging critical essays about film offer careful and close examination of specific scenes, characters, actions, dialogue, etc. Remember the power of example!

Movie Review
Once during the semester, you will view a film outside of class. Your task is to see a first-run film in a public theater, and pretend you are a **film critic for a major newspaper**, magazine, or web site, and write a movie review for the readership of that publication. You should develop your own rating system (some existing critics use numbers or stars or some other symbol), and write a review in which you persuade an audience whether or not to see the film. Follow the lead of
major film critics like Roger Ebert, James Berardinelli, and Leonard Maltin in deciding the kinds of material to include in your review, but do not copy them or their style. Write in your own voice, from your own point of view, with your own critique. Pay careful attention here to issues of Academic Integrity! I want to read your opinion of the film’s quality, along with your commentary on its high and low points, its successes and failures, etc. Again, refer to the Corrigan text for help on constructing a movie review. Each review should be 2-3 pages in length, and should contain enough details for the reader to determine whether or not seeing the film is a good idea.

Final Research/Creative Project
Again, you have some choices...Choose one of these, in consultation with me. You must meet with me, preferably prior to spring break, to gain approval before you proceed!

Choice 1: A scholarly essay...
Write an 18-25 page paper, suitable for presentation at a conference or for publication in a scholarly journal, offering a close examination and interpretation of one or more films that evoke, shape, or reflect your thinking about a particular topic or theme in relational communication. See Brenda Cooper’s Chick Flicks as Feminist Texts, in which the author takes up a critical discussion of Thelma and Louise, for an example of this kind of essay.

Choice 2: A creative project (“You are the teacher”)
With this project, you are invited to become a guest instructor of a course like Relational Communication and the Hollywood Feature Film. Essentially, you will craft a plan to teach a unit of a course you may someday teach. For the final version of this project, you will:

1. Create a 2-week course unit focusing on a particular theme relevant to the course, including an outline/lesson plan (Course Unit/Lesson Plan);
2. Pair two intriguing/interesting, similar, or contrasting films that evoke and ground your topic (chosen from a preliminary list of five films) and develop a solid rationale for including them (Rationale);
3. Develop a viewing guide for each film (Viewing Guide);
4. Analyze the films, both thematically and technically (Analysis);
5. Select appropriate background readings for students in the course to read (Readings); and
6. Provide a bibliography of sources you consulted, including the chosen readings for the course unit you've developed (Bibliography).

Instructions on how to proceed for each of these four parts follow:
1. Course Unit/lesson Plan: Describe the topic you have selected for your unit of the course. Explain why your topic is appropriate for study at an institution of higher education, and why it is of interest within the context of a course on Relational Communication and the Hollywood Feature Film or some other communication course in which you, as the teacher, will employ films as primary texts for consideration. Outline how you will approach teaching about your topic/unit. Remember: This course is about the complex, dynamic relationships between film and culture, wherein film is read both as a reflector and a shaper of culture. Possible topics include but are not limited to the connections between relational communication and:
   • Poverty
   • Crime/violence
   • Symbolic Interaction
   • Dialogue/conversation
   • The dark side of relating
2. **Films to be examined/rationale:** Choose two films that you think will work very well, pedagogically, as exemplars of your chosen theme. Before you make your choices, you should consider five or so films as options, carefully screening and making your choices. Once you have determined your choices, don't forget to include a list of five or so films you initially considered, from which your final two choices were drawn. Provide a brief rationale as to why you think the films you chose are especially appropriate. Foreign films are acceptable, provided that you know enough about the culture in which the films were made to discuss them in that context.

3. **Viewing Guide:** Because you are preparing this project as if it were a new unit of the course, you will frame a set of essay questions that ask the viewer to compare and contrast the form, content, and ideology of the two films you have selected with respect to the topic you have chosen and the readings you have assigned (see course viewing guides for ideas/examples).

4. **Analysis of your films:** To help you illuminate your theme more fully, you need to WRITE about it...This section of your final project will be a comparative essay (8-10 pages) that responds to one (or more) of your own viewing guide questions. This part of the project asks you to bring together the research and analysis work that you have done. Use your observations of what is both similar and different about these two films and their treatment or exploration of your theme, draw upon your readings (and of course the films’ content and form) for clarification and support, and build a strong, clear central argument, just as you have done for the other essays in this course. REMEMBER THE POWER OF EXAMPLE,
5. **Bibliography:** Prepare a full Bibliography (Reference List), including the chosen readings for your unit of the course.

6. **Background readings:** You will also need to research and assemble, as an appendix for your package, a packet of 2-4 background readings that further your analysis, understanding, and appreciation of your topic and the films you’ve selected. Choose readings appropriate for an audience of advanced undergraduate students. These readings should **not** primarily be popular reviews (i.e., Roger Ebert-style reviews) of the films. You may include ONE reference from the World Wide Web (maximum), although no Web references are required. Other readings might include historical documents, cultural analyses, theoretical essays or book chapters, critical essays, technical discussions, biographical information, etc. Your references should be from reputable sources. Let the knowledge you have gained from your other courses and from your reading in the course guide your research and your collection of readings. Create a bibliography listing the 2-4 readings you have chosen, each with a full reference as to its source (including www sites, if appropriate). Use a standard style format (MLA, APA, Chicago) in constructing your bibliography.

PHOTOCOPY YOUR FULL PACKET OF READINGS, AND TURN IT IN AS AN APPENDIX FOR YOUR PROJECT.

**STANDARDS**

The total length of the final creative project should be @17-25 pages, not including the photocopied readings, as follows:

- Course Unit/lesson Plan: 3 or more pages
- Films to be examined/rationale: 2-3 pages
- Viewing Guide: at least 2 pages (i.e., one per film)
- Analysis Essay: 8-10 pages
- Bibliography: 1-2 pages
- Appendix: Unit reading photocopies

**Choice #3:** You may also choose to develop your own creative project, in consultation with me. See me before proceeding. Bring your ideas!

**Graduate Pedagogical/Research Reflection Essay**

At the end of the semester, you will craft a brief (3-5 page) essay reflecting upon the connections between the learning in this course and your future career as a scholar/researcher. This assignment is relatively open-ended—i.e., you can approach it however you wish, generally, as long as you make some substantive connections between our study of film and your sense of how you might continue to carry forward the scholarly study/interpretation of film in your teaching, your research, or your life.

**General Writing Guidelines**

Your papers for this course should adhere to the highest standards of professional development and presentation. Follow APA or MLA style scrupulously, and be sure to proof your work to eliminate errors before turning it in. I will evaluate your written work based upon the following
Writing Evaluation

Name______________________________

Scoring:

10 — Excellent: Surpasses criteria in terms of complexity and depth, e.g., several examples, thorough consideration, ingenuity. Demonstrates the writer’s ability to produce and synthesize complex ideas.

9 — Very Good: Surpasses criteria in one or more areas in regard to complexity and depth. Demonstrates the writer’s ability to produce and synthesize complex ideas, draw on evidence from texts, films, lectures, and discussions. Evidence of minor weaknesses.

8 — Good: Meets the listed criteria, offering minimal examples and sufficient evidence of analysis. Demonstrates evidence of the writer’s ability to support key ideas, but does not show the highest level of synthesis and complexity.

7 — Poor/lowest passing grade: Does not sufficiently meet listed criteria. Shows several errors in reasoning, little development of ideas, few examples or details, and little evidence.

6 — Unacceptable/failure: Fails to meet listed criteria. Shows serious errors in reasoning, little or no development of ideas, and/or few or no details and evidence.

Criteria:

Completeness: Offers direct, specific, detailed, and complete response to the question or assignment. Thoroughly explores the theory/concept/theme being examined.

Clarity/Coherence: Offers a clear, readable, and compelling presentation of ideas/insights in response to the question or assignment. The various parts of the paper “stick together” — i.e., the paper is marked by an orderly or logical relation of parts that affords comprehension or recognition.

Support: The author supports his/her story/argument with clear examples and evidence from texts under study, and from everyday communicative life, practical knowledge, class discussions, etc.

Theoretical Sophistication: The author shows a sophisticated grasp of theoretical knowledge/background appropriate to the assignment.

Professional Presentation: The author writes a polished, finished paper with no grammatical, spelling, or typographical errors. Citations are made in appropriate style format (APA, MLA), and a reference list/bibliography is provided.

TOTAL POINTS ÷ 5 (CATEGORIES) = ___ (AVG)= ___/___ POINTS = ___ GRADE
Teaching/facilitation assignments
As a graduate student in this 500-level course, you are expected to set an example and play a leadership role for the undergraduates in the course. You are also expected to perform at a level beyond that of the undergraduates in the course, taking on additional responsibilities and assignments. To that end, you will be involved in assisting my teaching of the course:

In-class discussion groups
First, you will be assigned an in-class discussion group, for which you will serve as the moderator/facilitator each week as we engage in lively discussion of our theme and our film. Your task will be to ensure that discussion following the film is engaging, searching, detailed, and on track. During the first night of class, you will meet with your discussion group to learn about each other, to develop a group identity, and to develop standards and practices for group discussion, including a procedure for rotating role responsibilities (facilitation, recording, reporting, task leadership, social-emotional leadership, etc.). At the end of each small group discussion, each small group will be asked to report back to the larger group and to engage in a large-group class discussion.

Large group discussion facilitation
Second, during the first night of class, you will be asked to become part of a team of 2-3 graduate students who will take on responsibility for leading a class session on one of our films this semester. Your team will be responsible for developing a viewing guide and a strategy for discussing the film following the screening. You will need to send me the viewing guide (via email) for my approval and photocopying no later than the day before your scheduled class session. I will model these processes during the first couple of weeks of the semester.

Blackboard Participation
Each week, after we view and discuss our film, I will post a follow-up question (forum) to the blackboard “discussion board.” Your task will be to engage in our online conversation in some way, offering your comments and insights on the film, the related readings, and our class dialogues. Each posting should be a substantial paragraph or two, and should include details and examples drawn from the film. Your deadline for each week’s forum post will be noon on the Monday following class.

In-class Participation
Notice that 20% (200 points) of your grade total is for participation. Active participation in dialogue is a primary learning process in the department of communication studies. I expect you to participate actively in class discussions. Speak up! Offer your insights, ideas, conjectures, critical evaluations, responses to questions, and so on, as we engage in discussion. Offer relevant examples from daily life, the media, the arts, etc., to illuminate discussion; bring in items (articles, newspaper clippings, video clips, exercises, etc.) to spur discussion; think and respond actively and creatively. By attending class regularly and actively participating, you will not only be better prepared for your writing assignments and for successful completion of this course, you will also help make this course a more valuable and enriching experience for us all!