ENGL 6XX MEDIA LITERACY INSTITUTE

McNairy 104; M-F; 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
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Media Specialists:
Film: Mr. Shaun Karli & Dr. Timothy Shea
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Digital Apps: Ms. Nicole DeGuzman
Video Games: Dr. A. Nicole Pfannenstiel

Class Texts:

Reading in the Dark by John Golden
Digital Media Literacy: Connecting Culture and Classroom by Renee Hobbs
Copyright Clarity (excerpts) by Renee Hobbs
Selected Readings from our presenters

Welcome to a course that will help you rethink the ways media texts shape our thinking, which should help to shape our teaching of adolescents! I am fascinated with the many ways we tell our stories and see merit in exploring a range of ways to examine our modes of storytelling in secondary classrooms.

Every day we hear cries of “fake news” and “media bias” but do our students know how to discern the difference? Our students are inundated with a wide array of images in a plethora of media but they often struggle to read and to analyze this ubiquitous media in digital spaces. This institute will help educators learn how to equip students with the skills to critically review and evaluate media texts as well as digital and social media. Drawing from expertise in television, film, advertising, video games, and social media, faculty will demonstrate strategies to teach students how to find, evaluate, and communicate information with media literacy tools, all of which are connected to national and state standards. Teachers will learn strategies to integrate these media texts in classes as they engage students in their learning that empowers adolescents to become stronger readers and writers of print text, too! This active institute will engage participants to lead their students to “read and interpret the word and the world” through relevant film and media texts.

I have long been alarmed at the sparse inclusion of film and media literacy in American schools, especially as our world becomes more visual and digital and the danger for misreading these texts becomes more alarming. This course will prod us all to ask hard questions about our current secondary curriculum and the ways we can reimagine it so that our adolescents are equipped to read and to interpret a range of visual texts and are thus better prepared to face the challenges of reading and creating in our digital world. I look forward to what we will discover together!

Course Objectives:
This course will teach you ways to “read” film and media and then it will help you show students ways they can use these skills to become stronger readers of film and then stronger readers of traditional print texts that dominate the classroom. You will alternate between being a “reader” of film/media, a stronger reader of print, and a teacher who effectively integrates film and media in their English classroom.

As a result of taking this course you should be able to:
1. argue for theoretical justifications of film, television, media study.
2. articulate the purposes of different film/video techniques and techniques for teaching these techniques to students.
3. develop instructional activities to involve students in actively responding to and critically analyzing media texts.
4. critically analyze the representations of gender, class and race in the media.
5. define similarities and differences between the experiences of different types of media and draw implications for instruction.
6. determine the social uses of media by adolescents and ways of building on those social uses in order to motivate students.
7. create a PSA podcast or video that exemplifies the ways media is constructed and which illustrates elements of effective persuasion.
8. Enter into conversations with your peers on a range of issues surrounding film and media literacy.

Course Outline

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), in conjunction with the International Reading Association (IRA), developed Standards for the English Language Arts which argued that literacy must include the production and critique of both print and non-print texts as noted in the sixth standard: “students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions, media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts” (1996, p. 3). It is to that end that this course has been developed.

The class is structured so that the first part of the course focuses in on understanding how to interpret and analyze film and television. This will be done through reading, discussion, and viewing a wide variety of film clips. We will especially focus on the ways nonfiction texts construct reality and discuss the kinds of questions all readers should ask when they encounter nonfiction texts. As always, we will apply this knowledge to the ways we write nonfiction, too. We will focus our attention on the connection between film analysis and reading and writing of texts.

We will examine the ways fiction and nonfiction film analysis can help adolescents read, write, and think critically about all sorts of texts. Part of the course will be dedicated to examining other media such as advertising, video games, and social media and the ways these forms affect students’ worldviews and the understanding of themselves. We will examine ways the media depicts specific groups of people and how it shapes our understanding of the rest of the world.
Participants in this course will meet the following standards for the Pennsylvania Literacy Framework: read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas (1.2A), use and understand a variety of media and evaluate the quality of material produced (1.2B), write informational pieces (1.4A), write persuasive pieces (1.4C), and use media for learning purposes (1.6F).

This course also addresses the following outcomes of Advanced Professional Indicators for Millersville University’s Conceptual Framework:

• Candidates will apply current theory and research and their professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills to professional practices, and integrate appropriate technology to create meaningful learning (2).

• Candidates will use inquiry and current research in their subject areas and in education to inform and reflect on professional practices; will consider the school, family, and community contexts in which they work; and will facilitate collaboration in their professional practices (7).

Our Essential Questions:

1. What place should the study of film and media have in our secondary classes?
2. How should the study of film and media be integrated in a full humanities curriculum?
3. How can we allow our students to create meaning and to tell stories through media construction?
4. What role should alternative media have in our classes (i.e. television, video games, social media, etc.)?
5. How do we teach our students ways they can effectively “read” various forms of media?
6. How can a critical analysis of media lead to stronger reading and writing skills?

Course Texts:

1. Reading in the Dark by John Golden
2. Copyright Clarity by Renee Hobbs (excerpts)
3. Digital and Media Literacy by Renee Hobbs

Our Class Enterprises:

All assignments will be submitted on D2L in the Dropbox. When it is ready for public consumption, they will be submitted on our class wiki.

1. Film/Media Wiki Chapter

You will create a chapter for our class wiki where you will explore an idea or issue related to film and media literacy in a classroom context. You can create one collaborative chapter (7+ pages) or, you can each create your own chapter (5+ pages). As this is a media-related course, please include both audio and video clips to illustrate your work. Your chapter should be scholarly, use APA citation, and must include a bibliography. Remember to cite your visual sources, too.

Here are some options for your chapters:

• Teaching unit/webquest/resource guide related to teaching film/television/media: Your unit or webquest may be organized around
some basic activities related to film, television, or media instruction, either taught as separate entities or as integrated into your instruction. You don’t need to be teaching to create a unit. You should begin by discussing your purposes, the activities you will include, and the ways in which you will evaluate students. You need not organize this unit on a day-by-day basis, unless that would be convenient for you. (See sample units on the textbook Website).

• **Critical analysis of the representation of certain roles, worlds, or ideas:** genre characteristic; discourses; or ideological aspects, etc., inherent in one or more films, television programs, or media. You may want to develop a set of categories or strategies for conducting their analyses. You could analyze the representation of some class, gender race, education, the family, marriage, religion, consuming, “reality,” etc., citing examples (including web-clips) to illustrate their critique. You may also draw implications for teaching critical analysis to students.

• **Media ethnography study:**
  - You may want to conduct a study of viewers/game players/bloggers/readers and/or their own responses to film/television/media.
  - You may ask their viewers to respond to a text(s) in writing/tape and/or in discussions, and then analyze the nature of the viewers’ responses and reasons for those responses.
  - You may also observe their social interactions/participation, as for example, their participation in video game, as well as the social identities they assume through their participation.
  - You may also interview your viewers to determine how their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, purposes, gender, etc. influences their responses.
  - In your final report, you can describe their viewers, setting, tasks, and methods of analysis.
  - You could also analyze the “modes of address”—how viewers are positioned and their acceptance/resistance of that positioning reflecting a “space of difference,” and reasons for their acceptance/resistance.
  - You could simply report open-ended quotes that illustrate certain patterns of response/social participation.

• **Analysis of the economic, social, political, historical, or cultural forces shaping the film, television, or media industries:**
  - You may conduct an historical analysis of changes in film, television, or media over time, noting how these forms reflected and influenced particularly periods; they may study the economics of the industry and how that shapes programming, types of films, or media products; they may study these forms as political tools for expression of certain social or cultural ideas, for example, the uses of films such as *Do the Right Thing* and *Boys ‘N the Hood* to express an understanding of racial tensions in contemporary urban neighborhoods; you may examine the ways in which these forms reflect cultural beliefs and attitudes, for example how 2001, *Blade Runner*, or *The Matrix* express perceptions of the future.
2. Film/Media Rationales

Using the template provided as a model on D2L, create 1-3 film/media rationales for media texts (film, television, documentaries, video games, etc.) you could teach in a secondary classroom. As part of your rationale, you will need to include brief lesson ideas and/or specific ways to integrate this text in a traditional secondary classroom. Describe how this film addresses state or Common Core standards for reading and/or film/media literacy.

3. Text Conversations

As you read our class texts, you will take notes (digital or paper) and will note ideas that make you wonder and question your use of media literacy in your teaching. This is the place to highlight key quotes, ask questions, and make connections between your curriculum and media literacy concepts.

You will then take your thoughts and extend them to our daily face-to-face conversations and will then extend these ideas to a selected online space: Twitter, Tumblr, Discussion Board, or Back Channel throughout the week.

GRADING:

We will employ a contract system for our course and your grade will be determined by the volume and quality of your work. Each of your major projects you will be given one of three labels: Revision Needed, Acceptable, and Distinction. In order to pass this course, all of your work needs to achieve at least an “Acceptable” level.

Revision Needed:
This may be given to an assignment where certain things are missing, even though the overall quality is good. I will let you know the areas of this work that need to be improved upon. They may include but are not limited to the following possibilities:

• not thorough
• incomplete
• riddled with grammatical errors
• unprofessional
• not addressing assignment accurately

Acceptable:
Your work has met the requirements of the assignment, albeit in a mostly cursory manner. Work shows a satisfactory understanding of this assignment and which needs only surface revisions.
**Distinction:**
Work that is in this category goes above and beyond the requirements of the assignment. Depth of thought and questioning is evident. Student has shown evidence of risk taking and creativity. This would be an exemplary piece of work.

**C:**
- Miss no more than **one class**.
- Create a thoughtful abstract on a media literacy text.
- Contribute regularly to our media literacy conversations (online & face-to-face).
- Read and completely notate our class texts.
- Create a complete book review of Golden’s *Reading in the Dark*.
- Create a complete chapter for our class wiki that earns an “Accept”.
- Create **one film rationale** for our collection that earns an “Accept”.

**B:**
- Miss no more than a **half day** of classes.
- Create a thoughtful abstract on a media literacy text.
- Contribute regularly to our media literacy conversations (online & face-to-face).
- Regularly read, notate, and discuss our class **readings**.
- Create a complete book review of Golden’s *Reading in the Dark*.
- Create **one fiction film and one documentary rationale** for our wiki that earns an “Accept.”
- Either your wiki chapter or two of your rationales needs to have earned a “Distinction”.

**A:**
- Miss **no class time**.
- Create a thoughtful abstract on a media literacy text.
- Contribute regularly to our media literacy conversations (online & face-to-face).
- Regularly read, notate, and discuss our class **readings with insight and depth**.
- Create a complete book review of Golden’s *Reading in the Dark*.
- Create a complete and relevant **chapter for our class wiki**.
- Create **three rationales** for our wiki collection, at least one for a **film**, and at least one rationale for either a **TV show, music video, advertisement, or video game**.
- Your wiki chapter, and two of your rationales need to have reached a “Distinction” level.

**Tentative Schedule:**
I. Preliminary Coursework
Students will read *Reading in the Dark* by John Golden and will create a pdf document with the following information:
   * Abstract (1-2 paragraphs)
   * 5 Important Terms Defined
   * 2 Significant Quotes
   * One Teaching Idea gleaned from the book.
DUE: **Tuesday morning, June 27.**

II. During Course
1. Each day in class we will discuss a section of our text, *Digital and Media Literacy: Connecting Culture and Classroom*
2. Each evening we will continue our class/text conversations to a digital online space.
3. One of your film rationales will be due on **Thursday, June 29.**

III. After the Course: **2 weeks after the course is completed,** students will need to submit their digital media wiki chapter and remaining film rationales.

**Monday Topics:** Why Media Literacy? Fiction & Nonfiction Film
**Tuesday Topics:** Television & Apps for the Classroom
**Wednesday Topics:** Advertising and the News
**Thursday Topics:** Gaming and the Classroom
**Friday Topics:** Social Media and Administrators’ Perspective

REFERENCES:
Cho, K.S. (2006). Read the book, see the movie, acquire more English. Reading Improvement. 143-147.


