

**MT. DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
COURSE OF STUDY  
DRAFT**

**COURSE TITLE:** INTRODUCTION TO FILM STUDY  
**COURSE NUMBER:** 0840 - English/Language Arts  
0841 - Visual and Performing Arts  
**DEPARTMENT:** English/Language Arts & Visual and Performing Arts  
**LENGTH OF COURSE:** One Year  
**CREDITS PER SEMESTER:** 5  
**GRADE LEVEL(S)** 10-12  
**REQUIRED OR ELECTIVE:** Elective (E/LA fulfills 1 year of the fine arts graduation requirement and meets the UC “g” requirement; VAPA fulfills 1 year of the fine arts graduation requirement and meets the UC “f” requirement )  
**PREREQUISITES:** None

**BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTION:**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Film is one of the major collaborative and literary art forms of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. This course examines the many aspects of this art form, such as the history and aesthetics of film and other moving images. Students will learn the language of cinema and have continuing practice in addressing film in terms of the following: criticism, production elements, genre, collaboration, acting, modes of music, historical and cultural context, and career opportunities.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**1. MAJOR GOALS**

The fundamental components of instruction in this course are artistic perception, creative expression, historical and cultural context, aesthetic valuing, and connections, relations, and applications to other disciplines and career paths. The following goals relate to these components.

- 1.1 To develop sensitivity to the expressive qualities (visual and aural) of film
- 1.2 To develop critical awareness of the elements of film
- 1.3 To develop an understanding of the nature and structure of film

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- 1.4 To develop interpretative and critical thinking skills to understand the thematic, historical, and cultural context of film
- 1.5 To explore the universal and thematic content of film
- 1.6 To encourage one's self expression in film media
- 1.7 To explore the relationship between film and other media

**2. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**

Artistic Perception

- 2.1 Use film vocabulary appropriately
- 2.2 Interpret and analyze meanings, messages, and themes of film
- 2.3 Reflect upon and respond to visual and aural elements of film
- 2.4 Recognize and evaluate the literary elements that exist in film (e.g., mood, tone, characterization, theme, setting, plot, et al)

Creative Expression

- 2.5 Identify technical elements in film production
- 2.6 Identify and discuss the collaborative nature of film production
- 2.7 Create film-related projects

Historical and Cultural Context

- 2.8 Identify and compare genres and eras
- 2.9 Place films in cultural, historical, and social contexts
- 2.10 Recognize the political and cultural influence of film
- 2.11 Compare the impact of new technology in filmmaking to how films were made in the past

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Aesthetic Valuing

- 2.12 Critically evaluate production values and acting performances
- 2.13 Develop visual literacy to derive meaning from moving images
- 2.14 Identify and evaluate modes of persuasion in film and related media

Connections, Relations, Applications

- 2.15 Identify financial and marketing elements in film production and distribution
- 2.16 Recognize connections between film and other disciplines (e.g., works of art, scientific roots of photography)
- 2.17 Explore career opportunities in film
- 2.18 Develop a career portfolio

**3. CONTENT COMPONENTS**

3.1 Artistic Perception

The development of artistic perception in the study of film enables the student to understand and respond to the artistic elements of cinema.

- 3.1.1 Technical values of cinematography, art direction, editing, sound, and special effects
- 3.1.2 Literary values of dialogue and narrative

3.2 Creative Expression

The application of creative expression by students provides insights into the structure, language, and skills used in filmmaking.

- 3.2.1 Pre-production (e.g., storyboarding, script writing)
- 3.2.2 Production (e.g., cinematography, acting, directing, art direction)

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3.2.3 Post-production (e.g., editing, scoring, marketing)

3.3 Historical and Cultural Context

The study of the historical contributions and cultural dimensions of film in past and present cultures throughout the world.

3.3.1 Genres

3.3.2 Eras

3.3.3 Cultural contributions

3.3.4 Social and historical influences

3.3.5 Technical evolution of film

3.4 Aesthetic Valuing

The identification and critical analysis of cinematic elements in order to generalize, theorize, and justify opinions.

3.4.1 Oral/written critiques

3.4.2 Identification of themes/messages

3.4.3 Analysis/interpretation

3.4.4 Value judgment of artistic merits

3.4.5 Recognition of emotional manipulation

3.5 Connections, Relations, Applications

The realization of connections and applications of the course contents to other disciplines and career pathways.

3.5.1 Film marketing and finance

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3.5.2 Career pathways (e.g., job shadowing, internships)

3.5.2.1 Development of a career portfolio

3.5.3 Interdisciplinary collaboration and connections (e.g., film to literature, history, science, art, and world languages, et al)

Key Assignments:

Assignment Title	Focus	Process
Mise en scene:	Visual interpretation of single frames as they relate to implied meaning (artistic and creative expression, aesthetic valuing)	Students learn various visual conventions in film such as lighting/character distances/color use and look at them in terms of understanding the inherent visual meaning in photographs. After spending some time illustrating terminology, the final project includes a freeze frame of a film where students identify ten to fifteen elements in the film and comment on their significance. This assignment bolsters visual literacy in that it demands analysis of single frames.
Film Critique	Analyzing and critiquing student-watched films (connections, relations, applications, aesthetic valuing, historical and cultural contexts, artistic perception)	Students choose a movie (either free choice or from American Film Institute list of 100 best movies), and analyze it using a Film Critique form. Categories of analysis include plot, characters, setting point of view, film techniques (lighting, sound, camera angles, editing), themes, and personal response. Critiques are evaluated using rubric.
Focus Questions	Critical thinking and response (artistic perception, historical and cultural context)	Students are given 5-6 higher-level thinking questions about a movie we watched as a class. Questions often involve narrative technique, themes, historical and cultural context. Students write answers at home in preparation for participation in a fishbowl discussion.
Compare & Contrast Essays	Comparing and contrasting originals and	Students view an older movie that has been remade and compare and contrast it to the more contemporary version, focusing on several

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	<p>remakes made in different eras</p> <p>Comparing and contrasting different films with same theme</p> <p>Comparing and contrasting different films in same genre</p> <p>(aesthetic valuing, connections, relations, application, artistic perception)</p>	<p>categories, including plot, characters, film techniques, mise-en-scene.</p> <p>Students study (3) films with the same theme and compose a compare and contrast essay discussing how the theme is illustrated in each film, highlighting differences and similarities as they are influenced by historical era, filmic genre, and cultural setting.</p> <p>Students write a comparative essay on several films in a genre, focusing primarily on three elements that the films share (e.g., humor, theme, and narrative style).</p>
Script Writing	Produce an appropriate screenplay (artistic perception, creative expression, artistic valuing, connections, relations, applications)	Students learn about scriptwriting through taking notes, reading how-to essays, reading examples, and comparing produced products to the original text. They then write a 5 page original short film script, putting into place proper format, structure, and storytelling elements.
Script Structure Analysis	See how standard structure works with a typical film (artistic perception, historical and cultural context)	Analyze a film according to the Syd Field script structure model. Note the following: Act 1: Set up – time, place, characters, basic conflict, Plot Point #1 (event or scene which sends story in a new direction); Act II: Complications, Plot Point #2 (event or scene which sends the story in a new direction); Act III: Climax (event after which conflicts must resolve), Denouement.

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Filmmaking Collaboration with TV/Video Production	Follow the process of creating a film from start to finish (artistic perception, creative expression, aesthetic valuing)	Students work through the three stages of production which include pre-production (storyboarding, script writing), production (cinematography, acting, directing, art direction), and post-production (editing, scoring, marketing).
Writing Backstory	Analyzing a character in terms of his/her back story (artistic perception, creative expression, historical and cultural context, connections, relations, applications)	Pick a key character in a film and analyze him or her in terms of the role s/he plays in the story, relationship to other characters, personality traits, and motivations. Write a fictional back story for the character based on this analysis. Address details relating to his/her childhood circumstances, current relationships, and some significant event(s) that affected him/her.

**4. TIME ESTIMATES**

The five components are interwoven into the total instructional program throughout the course. The percentage of time spent on each component is an estimate and may vary from day to day and over the course of the year.

- 4.1 Artistic Perception – 30%
- 4.2 Creative Expression – 20%
- 4.3 Cultural/Historical Context – 15%
- 4.4 Aesthetic Valuing – 20%
- 4.5 Connections, Relations, Applications – 15%

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**5. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

**Recommended for teachers:**

*American Cinema*, John Belton, Glencoe-McGraw Hill, ISBN: 0-07-004466-X  
*Best 1,000 Movies Ever Made*, Edited by Peter Nichols, Three Rivers Press, ISBN: 0-8129-3001-0  
*Screenplay*, Syd Field, Del Publishing, ISBN: 0440576474  
*The Art of Watching Films*, Joseph Boggs and Dennis Petrie, Glencoe-McGraw Hill, ISBN: 0-07-255626-9

5.1 Media technology

5.1.1 VCRs

5.1.2 TVs

5.1.3 DVDs

5.1.4 Cameras

5.1.5 Other viewing and editing technology

**Recommended for students:**

5.2 District-adopted textbooks

5.2 Supplementary materials

5.3 Reference materials, magazines, newspapers, screenplays

5.4 Internet

5.5 Library of films

5.6 Artifacts and realia

**6. EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS:**

Performance-based and Ongoing



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Evaluation will be based primarily on class discussion and written assignments. Students will demonstrate comprehension and competence primarily through the following:

- 6.1 Classroom participation
- 6.2 Writing assignments (e.g., journals, notes, critiques, essays, et al)
- 6.3 Quizzes and tests
- 6.4 Projects

**Committee Members:**

Grant Bergland	Teacher	CVHS
Joan Lopate	Teacher	CPHS
Dan Reynolds	Teacher	MDHS
Carolyn Bryant	Teacher	NHS
Corissa Stobing	Teacher	YVHS
Evie Groch	Curriculum Specialist	Dent Center