**FILM STUDIES**

Course Syllabus

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**Mr. Brian Powers**

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**Extra Help/Academy Period: Room 103**

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**Class Website: http://powerspmhs.weebly.com**

**Course Description**:

*Welcome to Film Studies!* As a student of this course, you will expand your understanding and appreciation of the art of cinema through a study of the historical, technical, literary, and sociological aspects of filmmaking. We will study the history of movies, cinematography, composition, editing, sound, special effects, film genre, screenwriting, acting, and directing. All concepts will be illustrated through both clips of scenes feature length films. Throughout this process, we will view, analyze, and discuss a number of complete films, representing the highest achievement of the art form.

**Objectives:**

* To understand how films are made
* To understand the choices the director, cinematographer, editor, and others have in creating a film
* To understand what makes a film bad or good, and what makes a film great
* To understand the effect technological advances have had on the development of movies
* To develop an appreciation for the collaborative nature of moviemaking
* To analyze films from a technical, literary, and aesthetic perspective
* To understand film’s place as a unique narrative art form
* To understand the history of the movies, and major film movements of the twentieth century
* To understand the concept of film genre
* To write critically and analytically about film
* To develop public speaking and presentational skills

**Text:**

There is no required text for the course. Any readings will be made available electronically.

**Films:**

The following films, based on time, may be viewed in their entirety:

* *Modern Times*, dir. Charlie Chaplin (1936)
* *Psycho*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock (1960)
* *Raging Bull*, dir. Martin Scorsese (1980)
* *Platoon*, dir. Oliver Stone (1986)
* *Stand By Me,* dir. Rob Reiner (1986)
* *The Shawshank Redemption*, dir. Frank Darabont (1994)
* *Memento,* dir. Christopher Nolan(2000)
* *Slumdog Millionaire,* dir. Danny Boyle (2008)
* *No Country for Old Men,* dir. Joel & Ethan Cohen (2008)

**Film Ratings:** While the films from which illustrative clips are derived range in their MPAA rating from G to R, rest assured that scenes portraying nudity or extreme violence will not be shown in class.

**Quizzes:** A short quiz may follow each major concept introduced in class.

**Homework**: Due to the fact that students are typically carrying a difficult course load in addition to this elective class, most work will be completed during the class period each day. When there are homework assignments, they will be announced in class and posted on my website.

**Projects:** Students will be expected to complete a final presentation in which they analyze the work of a noted director. Students will also be expected to write film reviews over the course of the semester. These projects will be a significant part of each student’s grade and, as a result, any plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.

**Late Work**: Assignments will lose five percent for each class day they are late.

**Attendance**: You are expected to arrive to class on time each day, prepared with the necessary materials for that day’s activities. In the event you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed. Classwork and homework will be posted on the course website nightly for your convenience. It is your responsibility to obtain any notes, assignments, and handouts that you need, as well as to complete make-up work in a timely manner. Except in extraordinary circumstances, all work should be made up by the second day back, after which point you will be penalized 10% for each successive day (see “Late Work” above). If a student misses a test or quiz on the day of an absence, she or he must immediately schedule an appointment for a make-up. Failure to make-up a quiz or test will result in a zero for that assignment

**Academic Honesty**: With regard to written work, all words and ideas drawn from outside sources (except from class discussions) must be properly cited. Students may not share work or answers for assignments with one another. Violations of this policy will result in loss of credit for the exercise, as well as any additional sanctions the school administration may impose. If you plagiarize, you will most likely be caught, and the resulting grade of zero will have a serious impact upon your grade.

**Respect**: An atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation must be maintained in the classroom at all times. Calling out, interrupting a speaker, or making a negative comment about a student or teacher is unacceptable.

**Communication/Extra Help**: My website will list all of your readings, assignments, and class presentations; please check it regularly. The website can also easily be viewed via a smartphone or tablet. I will check and answer email on a daily basis and expect you to do so as well. If you do not typically check your Pelham email account (which you should), be sure that all messages are forwarded to the email account you use regularly. I am also more than happy to meet with you individually to provide additional help. My Academy location is room 103.

**Evaluation**: Your grade will be determined as follows:

*Writing Assignments and Projects: 40%*

*Class Participation: 20%*

*Homework/Daily Worksheets 40%*

*Total: 100%*

I hope you find this course to be informative, enjoyable, and useful. I also welcome any feedback you would like to share as to how it may be improved. Have a fantastic semester!