

New Course Proposal
School of Liberal Arts
Department of Performing Arts: Dance
Perfa 84
Dance and Film

Justification for the new experimental course.

Rationale for the new courses Perfa 84

Dance and Film has been offered by the Performing Arts Department in the past under the course number Perfa 60/160, Special Topics. However, courses listed under special topics cannot count for the core curriculum. Therefore, we are requesting for the course to become a permanent one with its own number. This request is for an experimental offering for fall 2015.

We have the need to fill a space with a course in the dance program and in order for the course to garner enrollment, it needs a core designation.

Please see the attached syllabus for all information about the course.

Relationship to present College and Department curriculum

The dance program does not offer any non-major courses. With the implementation of the core curriculum, we have noted that students are in need of more Artistic Understanding courses, particularly lower division. We want to add this course to the current fall semester because one of our upper division major courses has no enrollment even though it is open to the campus. This further enforced the need for non-major courses.

Extraordinary implementation costs

All dance professors are able to teach this course. There was no additional expenditure for the curriculum. The class meets at the same time the previous course was offered and therefore, does not impact the college scheduling.

Course credit and grading options

The course is lower division and a full credit.

Course College catalog wording

Perfa 84

Dance and film have evolved as two separate art forms. Historically, dance was the ultimate passion, as the early ballerinas enjoyed “super-model” status in Europe. The power of film has dominated western society for entertainment and the million-dollar movie industry indicates that it is one of our favorite consuming passions. What happens when the two art forms meet? Dance and film first became wedded when the earliest film directors recognized the immediacy and emotional power of dance. This class will explore the American Musical, films about dance and life of a dancer, and finally dances made for the camera.

Sample syllabus

Saint Mary's College
School of Liberal Arts
Department of Performing Arts
Fall 2015

Dance and Film

PROFESSOR:

OFFICE:

OFFICE HOURS:

PHONE:

CLASS HOURS: T/Th 11:30-1:05

Course Description: Dance and film have evolved as two separate art forms. Historically, dance was the ultimate passion, as the early ballerinas enjoyed “super-model” status in Europe. The power of film has dominated western society for entertainment and the million-dollar movie industry indicates that it is one of our favorite consuming passions. What happens when the two art forms meet? Dance and film first became wedded when the earliest film directors recognized the immediacy and emotional power of dance. Early filmmakers were entranced by the sheer wonder of motion captured on film. Initially, the first “all-talking, all-singing, all-dancing” film musicals were virtual copies of the stage versions. However, overtime, the Musical for the screen was born and has had a life of its own ever since. You may recall the Fred Astaire-Ginger Rodgers musicals and the kaleidoscope groupings of dancers made famous by Busby Berkeley. Later, movies made about the passionate and all-consuming power of being a dancer became the rage and we saw *The Red Shoes*, *The Turning Point*, *Flashdance*, and *Billie Elliot*. Since our western world is continually being affected by the advances of technology, the stage choreographer became enraptured with film and began creating dances made specifically for the camera. Imagine the potential of movement when you can defy gravity? Dance choreographers found a new passion in this media and the genre of dance film/video continues to evolve.

Learning Outcomes: This class will explore dance and film in three categories:

- I. The American Musicals on film
- II. Films about the life of the dancer
- III. Dances made for the camera

The student will be able to:

- Analyze and interpret dance films by developing a critical language to understand the meaning of the works;
- differentiate between the various categories of study from the American Musical, to the dance subject-matter films, and finally dances made for camera
- apply appropriate vocabulary and terminology for use in discussing each genre

- understand the correlation between these various forms
- recognize dancers, choreographers, directors of each category
- recognize famous works from each category
- recognize stereotypes, personas, and characters portrayed
- develop research techniques and library literacy

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Mandatory dates: see syllabus

- Keep a notebook/journal of only your work in this class. Include the syllabus, all handouts, concert and video notes, lectures, etc.
- Read your syllabus everyday for reading assignments, quizzes, papers, etc.
- Read your syllabus before class to be familiar with daily goals.
- The syllabus will note a reading assignment for a particular day; read it before you come to class.
- Tests and quizzes will include all class notes and reading assignments. Some material will overlap both. Be aware that some information covered in the text may not be covered in class.

ATTENDANCE / PARTICIPATION: You will be graded on faithful attendance and the depth of your involvement in class discussions. You have one free absence before your grade is lowered. Class is 5 points per day, -1 for each tardy. See participation grading handout for more details.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- one paper approximately 6 pages
- group project approximately 30 minutes plus outline and bibliography

TESTS:

- 2 Quizzes
- Midterm
- Final Exam

Basis for final grade:

Assignments: 40%

Tests: 50%

Attendance/Participation: 10%

COURSE OUTLINE:

Section 1:

Goal: to provide a comprehensive overview of the course, review course materials, dates, expenses, guidelines on papers, the group project, to provide an historical understanding of dance.

Reading in class: *Dance Magazine*, “Timeline of American Ballet in the 20th Century” and *Dance Spirit*, Dec. 99, “Timeline of Modern Dance in the 20th Century” handouts. From Mitoma text, read timeline and introduction.

Goal: to understand basic elements of choreography and design using a historical perspective

Discussion: review the reading and review of dance vocabulary, ballet vocabulary, and stage terminology.

Video: various styles from ballet, to modern, to post-modern dance

Reading: Mitoma, chapters 2, 8, 9, 10 and corresponding DVD clips

Mandatory Viewing: *Ballet Russes*

Goal: to generate an understanding of the American Musical

Discussion: review the reading

Videos: various Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers

Reading: Mitoma, chapters 11, 12

Mandatory Viewing: Busby Berkeley film

Goal: to continue the discussion of the American Musical

Discussion: review the reading

Video: *Singing in the Rain*

Reading: Reynolds and McCormick, Chapters 16, 17

Mandatory Weekend Viewing:

Top Hat

West Side Story

Seven Brides for Seven Brothers

Oklahoma

American in Paris

Showboat

Quiz #1: the American Musical

Reading: review reading assignments for the quiz

Learning Outcomes, Section I: student will be able to

- understand the overview of the course
- identify dance vocabulary and elements of choreography and film
- have a basic understanding of dance history

- recognize dancers, choreographers, directors of the American Musical
- recognize famous works from the American Musical
- analyze and interpret the form

Section 2:

Goal: to begin to view films with a critical eye, an historical context, and a feminist perspective.

Discussion: dance the consuming passion, films about the dancers' life

Video: *The Red Shoes*

Mandatory Viewing: *The Turning Point*

Goal: to analyze character and plot

Discussion: dance the consuming passion, films about the dancers' life

Video: *Flashdance*

Reading: handout on how to analyze character and plot

Mandatory viewing: *Center Stage*

Goal: to complete the focus of dancer films and start the exploration of the dance documentary

Discussion: What do these films say about the life of a dancer? Writing with a critical eye, an historical context, and a feminist perspective.

Video: *Billy Elliot*

Mandatory viewing: *Dancemaker*

Goal: to explore the dance documentary

Discussion: the dance documentary and *Ballet Russes*

Video: *Merce Cunningham: a life in dance*

Reading: Mitoma, Chapters 5, 35, 36, 46, 50 and corresponding DVD

Learning Outcomes, Section II: student will

- develop viewing and writing with a critical eye, an historical context, and a feminist perspective
- develop the tools to analyze character and plot
- recognize dancers, choreographers, directors of this category
- recognize famous works from this category
- recognize stereotypes, personas, and characters portrayed
- continue to identify and utilize dance vocabulary and elements of choreography and film

Quiz #2: Films about dance

Reading: review reading assignments for the quiz

Midterm to understand the correlation between the forms

Section 3:

Goal: to understand the distinction between dances made for film and dances archiving film

Topic: dances made for film vs. dances archiving film

Discussion: Why create for the camera?

Video: *Falling Down Stairs*, Mark Morris

Reading: Mitoma, chapters 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and corresponding DVD clips

Goal: to understand the distinction between dances made for film and dances archiving film

Discussion: Do classics make good remakes?

Video: *Swan Lake*, Matthew Bourne

Reading: Mitoma, chapters 12, 15, 16, 17, 18

Mandatory viewing: Mat Ek's *Carmen* and *Chicago*

Topic: Seeding the Field

Mitoma, chapters 27, 28, 29, 30, 32 and corresponding DVD clips

Assignment: create a timeline as reference for work viewed throughout the semester, bring to class today.

Videos: Dance for the Camera Film Festival 2006

Mandatory Viewing: *Been Rich All My Life*

Learning Outcomes, Section III: student will be able to

- understand the distinction between dances made for film and dances archiving film and write about this topic
- recognize dancers, choreographers, directors of this category
- recognize famous works from this category
- recognize stereotypes, personas, and characters portrayed

Reflection paper to be written after performance or film showing that coincides with semester options. For example, in the spring of 2015, students attended a film at the Cerrito Theatre called "John" by DV8.

Final Exam: comprehensive

Group Project Dance and Film

Objective: to explore, analyze, and critic the work of a film(s) and/or video(s) from those covered in class.

Projects will be presented in chronological order toward the end of the semester.

The group project involves an oral presentation and group paper. The project will be an analysis of the issues, ideas, and theories developed in the readings and class discussions generated by what we viewed as a class. Each group will choose a different work and show excerpts of it on videotape. The oral presentation is approximately 20 minutes followed by a discussion. Total time for the project is 30 minutes. Information from each presentation will appear on the final exam. The group will need to choose at least two films/videos for the presentation. Then they will develop a thesis around a selected topic. Here are a few examples:

- the role of the ballerina in film
- women's roles in dance and film
- the heroine in dance and film
- the male gaze
- dances made for the camera

Grading:

This is a group project and will receive one grade.

Oral presentation: 75%

A thorough presentation will include a multi-media approach to the work. We want to see, hear, and feel, the context of the work. Think of creative ways to approach this component. You can create activities for the class, dance, create a scene, etc. Make it like a performance if you wish.

Written component: 25%

The group must have an outline and annotated bibliography submitted before the presentation. The group paper should discuss what others have written about the work. Analyze and interpret the issues, ideas, and theories from the readings and class discussions.