

THE TEACHER IN FILM SUMMER SYLLABUS

05:300:317

Professor Helane S. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

GSE Office: Room 209

helane.rosenberg@gmail.com

cell phone: 732-221-3899

ABOUT THE COURSE

The world portrayed by film is clearly different from our real world, but the film world is related to it in many ways. Films often reflect and sometimes dictate the values of our society. The way in which films portray people engaged in a particular occupation contribute to our collective myths and individual beliefs concerning that job. Since 1939, with *Good-Bye Mr. Chips*, a consistently appearing genre has been the “teacher” film, one in which the teacher or professor is the central character. As an extensive body of work—one which is increasingly available--as older not so commonly viewed movies are reissued in DVD format--these films are a valuable archive showing us how film-makers and society views teachers.

If you watch these teacher films back to back (as I have), you begin to notice that these films seem very similar to each other—in fact, the teacher in one film may even seem interchangeable with the teacher in another film—we could slip Teacher A into Film B and vice versa and the casual viewer might not even notice. If switching teachers seems absurd, at the very least the viewer can spot fairly consistent scenes, conflicts, characters (including malcontent teacher and bad kid), teacher training (or lack of it), and final outcome. Instead of our class discussing each movie one by one, we will be viewing the clip collections one by one (most of them a focus of class discussion and group presentation). Summer 2012 is the second summer run of this course done as a Hybrid, so you and I will continue to fine-tune the course as we go along.

A few words about movie choice: I selected movies that could be seen as similar to each other, although I looked for movies across many decades (from the 1950's to almost now), located in many different locales (urban, isolated rural, New England, or New England), with single sex schools as well as boy/girl ones, with both male and female teachers, with younger children as well as with more typically older high school kids, featuring teachers trained to be one (not many) to teachers who have worked in other fields and now want to be teachers. Some of my favorites are not on our list, primarily because they were outliers in some way. I am sure some of your favorites are not on the list.

The movies from which the clips have been taken are: *Blackboard Jungle* (1955, 101 m), *To Sir with Love* (1966, 105 m), *Stand and Deliver* (1988, 103 m), *Dead Poets Society* (1989, 128 m), *Dangerous Minds* (1995, 99 m), *School of Rock* (2003, 108 m), and *Freedom Writers* (2007, 123 m). If you have not seen any of these movies in their entirety recently or ever, please rent them and view them, either through Blockbuster or Netflix. Some are available for instant streaming and some only on DVD.

You will be responsible for renting and viewing all seven films before the start of class. In order to ensure that you watch these films, I will ask that you take a movie quiz after the first week. Nothing destroys a film class like having students who have not viewed each film in its entirety. Please know that on SAKAI, I have presented collections organized film by film, as well by topic. Viewing a collection of clips from a film, however, in no way counts as your having watched the whole film.

The topical clip collections are organized categorically—each group of clips demonstrates a conflict, theme, character or essential element that appears in all or most of the films. The topics of the clip collections (called clumps) are: first day of school, teacher versus administration, the malcontent teacher, various types of lessons, relationships, and deciding to stay or leave. Not all topics appear in all films. And, of course, there are many other possible clip collections. On average, there are fifteen clips chosen for each film. (Note: clips from other Teacher Films are included in each Clip Clump.) You may decide to watch the selections from these films (one of my favorite that has been cut is **Conrack** because it is not available to rent on DVD or instantly download at this time) or skip over the films we are not covering this semester. I recommend, watching them, of course. You are not required, however, to include clips in your Clip Clump Project from Teacher Films we are not watching this semester.

HOW THE COURSE WORKS

The course meets face to face every Tuesday from 9 a. m. to 1 p.m. for each of the four weeks. For the first week of the course, the course will also meet face to face on Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in order for me to make sure that the course is moving forward smoothly. During the fourth week of the semester, the course will also meet face to face on the final Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in order to view the final projects together as a class. During the second and third week of the course, the course will meet face to face only on Tuesdays. During the days that we don't meet face to face, there will be asynchronous work for you to view and to complete. You will be viewing lectures, completing group work, taking quizzes, reading from the textbook, interviewing subjects, writing a paper, making a mini-movie, and watching films.

All in all, the course will meet face to face for 6 sessions (Week 1 on Tuesday and Wednesday; Week 2 on Tuesday; Week 3 on Tuesday; and Week 4 on Tuesday and Thursday.) There will be 6 asynchronous sessions. Please pay careful attention to SAKAI which details meetings and non-meetings in excruciating detail.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Following is an overview of the requirements of the course:

RESPONDING TO THE ASSIGNED CLIP CLUMP AND LEADING THE REST OF THE CLASS IN SOME ORIGINALLY CREATED ACTIVITY/IES

Each class member will be assigned to one of five or six groups that focus on one or two of the clip collections. It will be the task of each group to lead the class discussion for that particular group. You will show the collection, present your ideas in a panel discussion or through another format, pose any set of questions, require students participate in any sort of any original activity designed by the group--all for the purpose of the student understanding of the nature of the clip collection. More specific details are included on SAKAI in a video segment and also in written form in guidelines.

INTERVIEW PROJECT

Each member of the class will conduct an interview project. Each student will

show one of the films that we view this semester to three individuals. These individuals can be anyone you can collect who speaks and understands English, who currently lives in the United States, and can watch the entire film in a single viewing and then directly after the film answer questions that appear in the Interview Guide on SAKAI. You can show the film to all three people at the same time or separately, whatever works for your schedule and their schedule.

Once you have completed your paper, you are to post it in Drop-Box or through Assignments. There are written guidelines of the Interview Guide and for interviewing in general. There are also video segments that describe the project. Also included on SAKAI are sample Interview papers from students who took the course in previous semesters.

ORIGINAL MINI-MOVIE TEACHER VIDEO

I will divide the whole class into four to six groups (depending on the ultimate number of class members). The group will develop, write, cast, direct, film, and edit an original mini-movie teacher video. The movie should look and sound as professional as possible—wonderful performances, great costumes and makeup, compelling music, and knockout credits. Guidelines about preparing these movies are on SAKAI, as well as a video lecture describing the movie-to-be. Also included on SAKAI are samples of movies previously created by students for this same assignment.

ONLINE QUIZZES

Each student will be required to complete six quizzes—one for five of the chapters in *The Film Experience* and one on all the movies as a group. Your questions will be randomly selected from a test bank, so none of you will have the exact same test. Also, each quiz will need to be taken in a limited time so you will need to start the test and complete the test in the amount of time stated at the beginning of the test. You will receive a score of 0, 1, 2, or 3 for each of the five Chapter Quizzes and the one Movies Quiz for a total of 18 points (almost 1/5 of your course grade.) Please read the chapters and pay attention to the quiz closing times.

JOURNAL ENTRIES

At the end of Chapters 3 (Mise-en-Scene), Chapter 7 (Narrative Films), Chapter 8 (Documentary Films), and Chapter 10 (Film Genres) —once you have read the material and viewed the online taped lectures, you will be asked to respond to a

probe that is based in part on what you read and heard in online lectures as well as what we have been doing during class sessions. You can receive a score of 0, 1, 2, or 3 for each entry--a total score of 12 points for all four Journal Entries. The Journal Entry probes will open for you to view roughly once weekly and you will have a week to complete each probe. The Journal Entry probes encourage you to take some time to reflect on the material as well as your take on it. It's easy to forget about completing these entries, but as a totality they make up over 10% of your grade. You can find the Guidelines for Journal Entries in the Guidelines section of SAKAI.

ONLINE EVALUATION OF MINI TEACHER MOVIES

You will also participate in online discussions of the final mini-movies of three of the groups in which you are not a participant. You will receive 0, 1, or 2 points for each of the three discussions for a total of 6 points. These discussions will be due after the last meeting day of class during which we view the movies. The purpose of your evaluations is not to critique the films as if they were professionally produced films, but rather to point out aspects of the mini-movie that illustrate various key concepts covered during the course. You can find the Guidelines for Evaluating the Teacher Mini-Movies in the Guidelines section of SAKAI.

HOW GRADES WILL BE ASSIGNED

Interview Paper	20 points
Clip Clump Presentation	20 points
Teacher Mini-Movie	20 points
Quizzes	18 points
Journal Entries	12 points
Line Disc. of all group's Mini-Movies	6 points
Attendance (1 point for each week)	4 points

TOTAL

100 points