PROPOSING A WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE

Information about the person submitting the proposal:

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Department: Africana Studies Program

College: Arts & Sciences

Information about the course:

Course Title: Introduction to African American Film

Course Number: AFST 235A

Course description (Bulletin copy is fine): This course will focus on the both the art of film and the social or political statements made by the films we watch together. Films provide profound insights into the cultures and societies which produce them. Therefore, viewing and understanding films require our active participation as viewers. We tend to think of watching film as a passive activity—we kick off our shoes, put up our feet and just let the images and sounds wash over us. Sometimes, after a hard day, that kind of "passive" viewing is necessary. But unless we are asleep, we always take part in what we watch—we catch clues and cues, anticipate events, react to characters, and notice themes and meanings. Much of the time, we aren’t aware of this participation. But when we do notice it, our active involvement in watching the film can reward us. And as we learn more about how to look and listen and what to look and listen for, we can find more rewards: more to think about, more to appreciate, and even more to enjoy.

Has this course been offered before?

☑ Yes, but not as a Writing Intensive course

☐ No

Is this course a Gen Ed course?
☐ Yes, carrying the _A_ designation
□ No

Has this course been approved by the relevant curriculum committees in your College/School?

☐ Yes
□ No

Curricular Information:

1.) How many students will typically enroll in this course? 20

If the ratio between the students enrolled in the course and the instructor(s) charged with providing feedback is greater than 20:1, please explain.

How does this course’s WI emphasis support the academic and programmatic goals of the University or College/School curriculum?

As an A course, AFST 235A: Introduction to African American Film helps students develop an aesthetic awareness and ability to interpret forms of cultural expression intelligently and critically. Writing is a primary form in which such analysis is conducted and demonstrated, and the primary form in which it is evaluated.

After consultation with the Department Chair or Program Director, please explain how this course enhances or complements the regular curricular offerings of the department or program and how the course will be scheduled to avoid conflicts with other course offerings and rotations.

This course is one of a series of courses designed to equip minors with a disciplinary understanding (it is part of a menu of courses required for the minor). It is part of the regular course rotation and is not a special course being
offered in addition to the regular curriculum. Therefore, avoiding conflicts with other course offerings and rotations will not be an issue.

Please answer each of the following.

1.) What are the writing-related learning goals for students in this course? What do students typically know about writing (or what can they typically do with writing) before they come to this class, and what do you expect them to learn over the course of the semester?

Students have typically completed ENGL 101 and come from a variety of disciplines. They are, for the most part, equipped with strong writing skills but need to learn how to use those skills in the analysis of film narratives. In this course, students will develop their abilities to understand, describe, and express ambiguity and nuance, to identify the source of various opinions expressed, and to select and organize relevant detail in relationship to film narratives with an Africana focus/perspective.

2.) How is information literacy incorporated in this course? (In other words, in what ways will students be finding, evaluating, and incorporating outside source material into their written texts.)

Short Film Analyses: Students will be required to write eight 2-3 page film analyses that properly incorporate scholarly articles on film criticism into the paper. These analyses will form the basis for the students’ long film analysis assignments.

Process Journal: Students will keep a process journal where they comment upon the readings, the films and their writing. For the readings and films, students will discuss how they feel about them, how they make the student think or look at things differently, how the students see various film elements being employed in movies. For the writing, students will discuss how it’s going, how they feel about it, ideas they may want to examine, what they’re excited about, proud of, looking forward to, what they’ve learned. In this way, the students will learn to reframe problems in their writing as creative challenges.

Long Film Analyses: Students will write two eight to ten (8-10) page papers that analyzes the use of mise-en-scene or cinematography in a film seen outside of class. They are also required to find and properly incorporate film criticism into their essays. Generally, these longer essays will derive from one or more of the short film analyses they have already completed.
3.) How much will students’ written assignments count toward the final grade? 75%

4.) How is revision incorporated into writing assignments? How will feedback be given, and which assignments will include required revisions?

This course will include in-class discussion of revision strategies; the use of frequent short writing assignments that may be revised and expanded for later assignments; work on drafts of substantial essays in class before submission of revised drafts for grades; and detailed feedback on all writing assignments.

**Approvals:**

- Writing Program Director
- Chair of the Department
- Curriculum Committee of (circle one) **A&S** Business
  Music

- University General Education Committee, as necessary

- UCCAP