

FIRST YEAR SEMINAR COURSE PROPOSAL
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit **FSEM 100 topics** courses for review **or** any **other existing course** that you wish to have designated to meet the first year seminar requirement.

COURSE NUMBER:	HIST 202		
COURSE TITLE:	FIRST YEAR SEMINAR: AMERICAN HISTORY, – HOLLYWOOD FILMS AND HISTORY, THE PERSPECTIVE OF JOHN FORD		
SUBMITTED BY:	Porter Blakemore	DATE:	November 19, 2014
<i>This course proposal has the department's approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)</i>			√

COURSE DESCRIPTION. In the space below, provide a one to two sentence description of this class. The description will be entered in Banner, and will also be used in other publications about the first year seminar program (such as the “Eagle Essentials” booklet).

This seminar will focus on the history associated with ten films of one of Hollywood’s most acclaimed directors, John Ford, who commented on the social, political and cultural concerns of his and other eras and help shape the historical understanding and myths of American history.

RATIONALE. Include short statement addressing how this course meets the FSEM’s basic components and new student learning outcomes (see FSEM call above), and why this course should be approved to meet the FSEM General Education requirement.

This seminar course, which I have offered on a regular basis since 2006, has counted as a First Year Seminar and also, for those who decide to major in history, as an elective in the history major program. Its structure, which uses class discussions of readings and films and oral presentations, incorporates in many ways the FSEM components and affords the students an opportunity to read and see primary sources and read secondary texts as they explore the nature of the use of history in feature films. The course’s learning outcomes will also require students to write two papers that will be a critical evaluation of a director of their choice and his or her use of history. In addition they will be giving two oral presentations.

SYLLABUS. *Attach a course syllabus.*

SUBMIT this form and attached syllabus **electronically as one document** to John P. Broome (jbroom@umw.edu). All submissions **must** be in electronic form.

HIST-202 - PBlakemore - 201301

History 202
First-year Seminar: American History

Hollywood Films and History:
The Perspective of
John Ford

Spring 2013

Course Syllabus

*“Approaching today’s problems through a study of the past is
one way to ensure that we do not become trapped within the
limits of our own experience.”*

Stansfield Turner

Professor — Porter Blakemore

Office –227 Monroe Hall

Phone – x1588

Email – “pblakemo”

Office Hours: 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. MWF
8:30 – 9:30 a.m. TR
or by appointment

Required Texts – Listed in the order in which they will be read

Scott Eyman, *Print the Legend; the Life and Times of John Ford*

William Lindsay White, *They Were Expendable*

Harry Carey, Jr *Company of Heroes*

Robert B. Pippin, *Hollywood Westerns and American Myth*

Edward Buscombe, *The Searchers*

Mark C. Carnes (ed.), *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies* (We will read articles from this text as we go along and I will assigned each a few days before it is discussed).

Course Overview and Objectives

Beginning with the era of silent films and D.W. Griffith's epic *Birth of A Nation* to the release of Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center* seven years ago, Hollywood filmmakers have turned frequently to history for their subjects. This seminar will focus on the history associated with selected films of one of Hollywood's most acclaimed directors, John Ford.

The son of Irish immigrants, Ford followed his brother Francis to Hollywood in the mid 1910s and quickly became a prominent director during the silent film era. With the coming of "talkies" in the late 20s and early 1930s, Ford began a new career that took him to heights of acclaim that put him at the top of his profession. He won four Oscars for directing feature films and two more for World War II documentaries. He reintroduced the Western as a first-rank genre with the release of *Stagecoach* in 1939, and continued to direct important films well into the 1960s. He became, in the last years of his life, the first recipient of the American Film Institute's Life Achievement Award. Once, in the 1950s, when asked who were the great film directors, Orson Wells, himself one of the greats, said "John Ford, John Ford, John Ford." Therefore, we will be taking a special look at the career of a director recognized around the world for his craftsmanship behind the camera.

John Ford directed many films that were either based specifically on an historical event or the life of a prominent individual or were designed to reflect the social, political, and cultural issues of a particular period. This course, with its narrow focus and one exception, will explore how Ford, through the scripts from which he worked and the films he made, commented on the social, political and cultural concerns of his and other eras and helped shape the historical understanding and myths of both American and world history. The course satisfies the general education freshman seminar requirement, and if you decide to major in history, the course will also count in the major requirements.

The Course Objectives are:

- *Understanding of the discipline's methods and processes.*
- *Ability to synthesize research findings.*
- *Ability to write with clarity about the past.*
- *Ability to make discipline-specific oral presentations to groups.*
- *Ability to communicate in a group setting.*

Learning Outcomes:

- *Students will engage in several writing assignments and become better writers*
- *Students will engage in numerous discussions, speaking assignments, and become better public speakers*
- *Students will make use of primary sources of information and be able to draw conclusions from the materials*
- *Students will utilize research techniques and conduct research relevant to the subject*

Course Requirements

A student's final grade will be a composite of six factors. First, and of primary importance, each student will receive a grade for classroom participation that will be worth 25 % of their final average. Since the course is a seminar with few lectures, participation is very important and each student must take part continuously and on a daily basis in the discussions. Please pay close attention to the "Writing to Stimulate Class Discussion" handout that I have provided for you in Canvas. Though it is not graded, if you do not take seriously and complete on time the assignment for each text, I will penalize your class participation grade. If you fail to turn in the writing assignment for a book at the beginning of class the day we discuss the book, you will receive a zero for class participation that day, which will count as 20% of your participation grade.

Second, each student will make a formal classroom presentation that will be worth 15%. The presentation will be on a film that has as its subject a historical event, period, or individual or on another director who has made films (or even one important film) on (a) historical topic(s). The film can be chosen from those discussed in the Carnes text but not, obviously, any of the five Ford films that Carnes includes. You may also choose a film not in the Carnes text that deals with an historical event, period, or individual, but not a film we watch for the course. I must approve the film or director you choose, though I will only be insuring that your choices are appropriate and do not duplicate the choices of another student in the class. For obvious reasons, we cannot have two presentations on the same film or director. Therefore, it will be first-come, first-served. If you come to me for approval of your topic and someone has already gotten approval for your choice, you will have to pick a different film or director. Your presentation will last approximately 10 minutes, will be followed by a question and answer period and will be critiqued not only by the professor but also by the other students.

Two of the other three factors contributing to the final grade will be writing assignments on the historical film or director of historical films you have chosen for your presentation. You will have to write a two-page research paper proposal (worth 5%) and then write an eight-page research paper on that topic. The paper proposal will be due at the beginning of class on Friday, February 8, 2013. The research paper itself (worth 20%) will be due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, April 24, 2013, the last day of this class. Your papers will be graded on style as well as content. If a paper is late, its grade will be reduced ten points for each twenty-four hour period, or portion thereof. In writing them, following the instructions on the writing handouts I will provide on Canvas or on the History Department's website and use the format in Turabian (more about this in class).

The final two grades you will receive will be for a mid-term exam (10%) and a final exam (25%). The time and date of those is listed on the course schedule.

The course will have the following ten point grading scale: 93 – 100 = A, 91 – 92 = A-, 88 – 90 = B+, 83 – 87 = B, 81 – 82 = B-, 78 – 80 = C+, 73 – 77 = C, 71 – 72 = C-, 68 – 70 = D+, 61 – 67 = D, 60 and below = F. Class attendance is not only expected but is required, due to the importance of class participation. Therefore, if you have earned C or above grades on every assignment at the middle of the semester, but have missed more than two classes, your performance will be judged *unsatisfactory* on mid-semester reports. Also I expect you to behave honorably in this course. Consequently, I will not tolerate any violations of the university's Honor Code, and will report any such violations to the Honor Council. Finally, do not come to class late. If you arrive late and the door to the classroom is closed, do not come in because you will interrupt the flow of the session and you will be asked to leave.

One final note: The University has designated the Office of Disability Services as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through that office and require accommodations for this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs. Bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in the strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you believe you need accommodations, (note taking assistance, extended time for tests, etc.) and have not visited the office, I would be happy to refer you. They will require appropriate documentation of a disability. Their phone number is 540-654-1266.

Film Schedule

All ten films and two documentaries that we will see this semester will be shown in Monroe Hall, room 233, beginning at around 8:00 a.m. I say around because most of the films are two hours or less in length and I will start the film so that it will be over by the end of our regular class session, which is 9:50. The starting times are noted on the Course Calendar.

Grades

Your final grade in this course will be a composite of the following assignment values:

- Class participation — 25%
- Oral Presentation — 15%
- Research Paper Proposal — 5%
- Research Paper — 20%
- Mid-Term Exam — 10%
- Final Examination — 25%

History 202
First-year Honors Seminar on American History

Hollywood Films and History: The Perspective of John Ford

Fall 2013

Calendar

Week 1

August 26: Introductions – Who was John Ford
August 28: Documentary film on John Ford
August 30: Documentary film on John Ford (cont.)

Week 2

September 2: Evening film: *Young Mr. Lincoln*
September 4: Discussion of film and section in Carnes text on Lincoln films
September 6: Writing Proposals and Research Papers

Week 3

September 9: Library Introduction with Jack Bales (Meet in Simpson Library 225)
September 11: Library
September 13: Library

September 13 – Deadline for approval of the topics for the
research papers and oral presentations.

Week 4

September 16: Evening film: *My Darling Clementine*
September 18: Discussion of film and section in Carnes text on OK Corral Films

September 20: Discussion of *Print the Legend, the Life and Times of John Ford*

Week 5

September 23: Continued discussion of *Print the Legend*
September 25: Evening film: *Drums Along the Mohawk*
September 27: Discussion of film and the section on it in the Carnes text

Week 6

September 30: Evening film: *Prisoner of Shark Island*
October 2: Discussion of film
October 4: Research Proposals Due – no class

Week 7

October 7: Evening film: *The Grapes of Wrath*
October 9: Discussion of film and section on it in Carnes text
October 11: Mid-term exam

Week 8

October 14: **Fall Break**
October 16: Documentary film on John Ford and John Wayne
October 18: Film (cont.)

Week 9

October 21: Discussion of *They Were Expendable* by William Lindsay White
October 23: Evening film: *They Were Expendable*
October 25: Discussion of film and White book

Week 10

October 28: Evening film: *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*
October 30: Discussion of film and section on *Fort Apache* in Carnes text
November 1: Student Presentations

Week 11

November 4: Student Presentations
November 6: Student Presentations
November 8: Student Presentations

Week 12

November 11: Student Presentations
November 13: Evening film: *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence*
November 15: Discussion of film and Robert B. Pippin, *Hollywood Westerns and American Myth*

Week 13

November 18: Evening film: *Red River*
November 20: Discussion of film and Pippin
November 22: Discussion of Glen Frankel's *The Searchers; the Making of an American Legend*

Week 14

November 25: Evening film: *The Searchers*
November 27: **Thanksgiving Break**
November 29: **Thanksgiving Break**

Week 15

December 2: Discussion of *The Searchers*, Frankel and Pippin
December 4: Last Day of Class – Discussion of Frankel, Pippin and Eyman
(Research Papers Due)
December 6: History Symposium

Final Examination –Wednesday, December 11, 8:30 – 11:00 am