San José State University
College of Social Sciences, Department of Geography
49315, Topics in Physical Geography – Physical Geography in Film, Section 80, Fall, 2018

Course and Contact Information
Instructor: Kerry Rohrmeier, PhD
Office Location: Online via FaceTime and Google Hangout and in person by appointment
Telephone: (408) 924-5475, but direct email yields faster response
Email: Kerry.rohrmeier@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Online Mon & Wed 11am-12pm and by appointment
Class Days/Time: Online

Course Format
Online Course
This course is taught entirely online. Students need Internet connection to participate in course activities. Course materials such as the syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on Canvas Learning Management System course login website at http://sjsu.instructure.com. You are responsible for regularly checking with the course management system through MySJSU at http://my.sjsu.edu to learn of any announcements.

Course Description
Catalog: Interactions between humans and environment from a geographical perspective. (3-units)

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)
Upon successful completion of this GE course, students will be able to:

CLO1. Demonstrate understanding of, and ability to analyze and critique human and environment interactions.
   • This is a key component of this course. All four writing assignments call upon students to analyze and critique human-environment interaction as it pertains to a film.

CLO2. Demonstrate ability to read and understand research literature and engage in productive research activities.
   • Readings from several peer-reviewed academic journal articles have been assigned. Students will be answering critical thought questions about their content during weekly in-class discussions.

CLO3. Demonstrate professional communication skills.
   • Students will improve their video technology and presentation skills by recording and uploading a 3-minute movie review.
Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

In an effort to keep student costs low no textbook is required

Other Readings

Supporting readings and web content listed on the course schedule are posted to the Canvas ‘Files’ for your convenience and/or linked to in this syllabus.

Students have a choice to read one of the two popular novels selected this term (both are available at low cost in print and e-book formats):

  
  OR


Other technology requirements / equipment / material

Each week a movie will be assigned. These movies can be found on several web streaming services. Some may require a small rental fee.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities.

1) Active Participation in online discussions about assigned readings is mandatory and imperative for success in this course (CLO2).

2) *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *The Revenant* are 2015 films about “wo/man versus man” conflict in settings where extreme physicality, in both character and location, is fundamental to the storyline. In the Human Conflict Essay discuss the concept of place identity as it applies to the film (CLO1). The human conflict essay must be a concise well written 2-typed pages (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1” margins on all sides using Chicago style citations) and include a total word count noted at the end of 500 words (± 10 words ok), but no more or less.

3) Two contemporary biopics shown during class portray “man versus nature” conflict but are filmed at different scales and result in antipode outcomes: *127 Hours* and *Into the Wild*. In the Biopic Essay examine how shot scale can foster intimacy with a character or swallow a character up in his/her environment (CLO1). The biopic essay must be a concise, well written 2-typed pages (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1” margins on all sides using Chicago style citation format) and include a total word count noted at the end of 500 words (± 10 words ok), but no more or less.

4) *Chinatown* and *Apocalypse Now* consistently rank high on American Film Institute’s Greatest Films of All Times list. They share water resources for a story setting, but in very different ways. Compare and contrast these films by demonstrating how you have thought critically about their narratives, acting, and filmmaking from a human-environment geography context (CLO1). Do they reflect culture, politics, economics, or social issues at the time of release? Keep in mind the historical contexts and cultural paradigms that were in place and discuss whether the film holds up today? The Greatest Films Critique must be a concise well written 3-typed pages (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1” margins on all sides using Chicago style citation format) and include a total word count noted at the end of 750 words (± 10 words ok), but no more or less.

5) Each student will select movies from the instructor-approved list. After viewing a movie outside of class...
then create a 3-minute Movie Review Video in the spirit of Roeper at the Movies (www.richardroeper.com) or The New York Times Critics’ Picks (http://www.nytimes.com/video/movies-critics-picks) to be shared with your classmates (CLO3).

Final Examination

The Final Exam Essay examines the power of film to translate literature into visual form (CLO1). Based on the suspense novel selected earlier in the term, either Jaws or The Shining, clearly argue whether, “the book was better,” or, “the film was better.” Then discuss how audience fears shifted environmental perception and to a degree, popular culture, at the time of its release [citing specific examples to support your argument].

Grading Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation (15-film online discussions)</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Movie Review Video</td>
<td>600 (40-each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Conflict Essay</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biopic Essay</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatest Films Critique</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam Essay</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SCALE:

A+ = ≥98%            A = 94-97%  A- = 90-93%
B+ = 87-89%          B = 84-86%  B- = 80-83%
C+ = 77-79%          C = 74-76%  C- = 70-73%
D+ = 67-69%          D = 60-66%  D- = 51-59%

F = ≤50%

All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades. In keeping with this policy, and to making grading responsive. All assignments are due as stated on the Course Schedule and Canvas. Late work is not accepted. Please save all your work until after you have checked your final course grade. Then if you have questions about your final grade, you can bring in past work, and if necessary, corrections can be made.

Online Classroom Protocol

- Plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and will merit a 0 for the assignment.
- This course can cover controversial content, so civility and courteousness are always expected. While we may not agree with other perspectives and opinions stated, respect is mandatory.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/”
This schedule is subject to change with fair notice. Changes will be posted online under Announcements.

### Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | 8/21-8/26 | SPORTS  
*The Endless Summer* (Bruce Brown, 1966; 95 min). A film that birthed surf-and-travel culture, and one which is ripe for social sciences criticism.  
Readings:  
| 2    | 8/27-9/3  | ACTION – Labor Day Weekend  
Spend a long weekend evening or the holiday at the movies! Enjoy an action blockbuster in situ by watching *The Meg* or *Adrift* at your local theater. |
| 3    | 9/4-9/9  | ANIMATION  
| 4    | 9/10-9/16 | DOCUMENTARY  
*Blackfish* (Gabriela Cowperthwaite; 90 min). Take a look at whale captivity for human access.  
**DUE 9/16: Video Review (Submit on Canvas by 11:59pm)** |
| 5    | 9/17-9/23 | FILM NOIR & CRIME  
*Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974; 130 min). Considered by many to be one of the greatest films of all time it is a complex story of corruption in the |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>development of the American Dream [specifically, by bringing water from the Owens Valley to southern California].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Readings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9/24-9/30</td>
<td>WESTERN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Readings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/1-10/7</td>
<td>ROMANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Brokeback Mountain</em> (Ang Lee, 2005; 135 min). A beautifully filmed, but tragic portrayal of star-crossed lovers that also challenges cowboy iconography. It was widely acclaimed though elicited considerable controversy at the time of release.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Readings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8    | 10/8-10/14| **DRAMA**  
*Into the Wild* (Sean Penn, 2007; 148 min) Tragic biographical retelling of Chris McCandless’ postgraduate days traveling across North American wilderness.  
Readings:  
| 9    | 10/15-10/21| **DRAMA Cont.**  
*127 Hours* (Danny Boyle, 2011; 94 min) Biographical retelling of mountaineer Aron Ralston’s time spent trapped in a slot canyon while hiking in Canyonlands National Park, Utah.  
Readings:  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%A9%20Biopic%E2%80%9a%20Contemporary%E2%80%A9Film%E2%80%A9Genre%E2%80%A9&amp;f=false</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Kennedy, Christina B. 1994. “The myth of heroism: Man and desert in Lawrence of Arabia” in Aitken/ Stuart and Leo Zonn, <em>Place, Power, Situation &amp; Spectacle: A Geography of Film</em>. Rowman &amp; Littlefield Publishers, London: Only pages 161-162. <a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=kCiYSkJd0eUC&amp;pg=PA161&amp;lpg=PA161&amp;dq=the+myth+of+heroism+lawrence+of+arabia&amp;source=bl&amp;ots=b6rwnDqoBO&amp;sig=QafNH7MYLVUax7xF6V2ehIoIzS&amp;hl=en&amp;sa=X&amp;ved=0ahUKEwjUsseMyOLOAhVQymMKHXJYCQY6AEIODAE#v=onepage&amp;q=the%20myth%20of%20heroism%20lawrence%20of%20arabia&amp;f=false">https://books.google.com/books?id=kCiYSkJd0eUC&amp;pg=PA161&amp;lpg=PA161&amp;dq=the+myth+of+heroism+lawrence+of+arabia&amp;source=bl&amp;ots=b6rwnDqoBO&amp;sig=QafNH7MYLVUax7xF6V2ehIoIzS&amp;hl=en&amp;sa=X&amp;ved=0ahUKEwjUsseMyOLOAhVQymMKHXJYCQY6AEIODAE#v=onepage&amp;q=the%20myth%20of%20heroism%20lawrence%20of%20arabia&amp;f=false</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Ralston, Aron. Video Footage from Canyon <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NerTo86BE9w">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NerTo86BE9w</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/22-10/28</td>
<td>HORROR Cont.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Jaws</em> (Steven Spielberg, 1975; 124 min). A heroic journey pitting man versus monster, arguably symbolizing WWII.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Readings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>10/29-11/4</td>
<td>HORROR – Halloween</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Shining</em> (Stanley Kubric, 1980; 146 min) Examine masterful spatial disorientation and a seditious subtext about Native Americans persecution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Readings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/5-11/11</td>
<td>EPIC - Election Day &amp; Veteran’s Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Readings:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topics in Physical Geography - Physical Geography in Film, 49315, Fall, 2018**

Page 7 of 10
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 13   | 11/12-11/18  | **FANTASY**  
Beasts of the Southern Wild (Benh Zeitlin, 2012; 93 min). Made by a New Orleans based collective, its success proves money, names, and establishment aren’t key to making great film.  
Reading:  
| 14   | 11/19-11/25  | **SCIENCE FICTION**  
Mad Max: Fury Road (George Miller, 2015; 120 min). The so-called feminist action flick in a franchise about an oil-obsessed post-nuclear dystopian future society in the Australian outback.  
Readings:  
- Jones, Eileen. (2015 May 18). Actually, Mad Max: Fury Road isn’t that feminist; and it isn’t that good, either. *In These Times*  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu/documents/3466696/Ecofeminism_as_Third_Wave_Feminism_Essentialism_Activism_and_the_Academy.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1472346008&Signature=gjVdp2KXCGIDSlaz9mMJpnMIydY%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DEcofeminism_as_Third_Wave_Feminism_Essen.pdf  
DUE 11/25: Human Conflict Essay (Submit on Canvas by 11:59pm) |
|      |        | EXPERIMENTAL  
*Baraka* (Ron Frike, 1993; 96 min) A non-narrative cinematic kaleidoscope of Earth’s geographic phenomena, and an inspiring way to end any course.  
Readings:  
http://cadair.aber.ac.uk/dspace/bitstream/handle/2160/6679/Imagining%20geographies%20of%20film.pdf?sequence=1  
https://books.google.com/books/about/Landscape_Allegory_in_Cinema.html?id=XRhdAQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button#v=onepage&q&f=false  
• Roger Ebert Review  
| Final Exam | 12/7 | DUE: Submit your final exam essay to Canvas essay by 5:00 pm. The essay prompt has been provided above in Course Assignments. |
APPROVED MOVIE LIST

The Magnificent Seven (John Sturges, 1960)
Lawrence of Arabia (David Lean, 1962)
The Birds (Alfred Hitchcock, 1963)
Easy Rider (Dennis Hopper, 1969)
Local Hero (Bill Forsyth, 1980)
The Sheltering Sky (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1990)
A River Runs Through It (Robert Redford, 1992)
Last of the Mohicans (Michael Mann, 1992)
The River Wild (Curtis Hanson, 1994)
The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill but Came Down a Mountain (Christopher Monger, 1995)
Seven Years in Tibet (Jean-Jacques Annaud, 1997)
The China Syndrome (James Bridges, 1979)
The Bounty (Roger Donaldson, 1984)
Gorillas in the Mist (Michael Apted, 1988)
Dances with Wolves (Kevin Costner, 1990)
Thelma and Louise (Ridley Scott, 1991)
Alive (Frank Marshall, 1993)
Twister (James de Bont, 1996)
Dante's Peak (Roger Donaldson, 1997)
Titanic (James Cameron, 1997)
Volcano (Mick Jackson, 1997)
Hard Rain (Mikael Salomon, 1998)
Deep Impact (Mimi Leder, 1998)
The Beach (Danny Boyle, 2000)
The Perfect Storm (Wolfgang Peterson, 2000)
The Day After Tomorrow (Roland Emmerich, 2004)
Motorcycle Diaries (Walter Salles, 2004)
Open Water (Chris Kentis, 2003)
Touching the Void (Kevin Macdonald, 2004)
Duma (Carroll Ballard, 2005)
Encounters at the End of the World (Werner Herzog, 2007)
Trouble the Water (Tia Lessin and Carl Deal, 2008)
The Way Back (Peter Weir, 2011)
On the Road (Walter Salles, 2012)
The Impossible (Juan Antonio Bayona, 2012)
All is Lost (J.C. Chandor, 2013)
Tracks (John Curran, 2013)
Maidentrip (Jillian Schlesinger, 2014)
Wild (Jean-Marc Vallee, 2014)
Everest (Baltasar Kormakur, 2015)
San Andreas (Brad Peyton, 2015)
The Shallows (Jaume Collet-Serra, 2016)
Leave No Trace (Debra Granik, 2018)