

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](http://sjsu.instructure.com) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the course management system through [MySJSU](http://my.sjsu.edu) 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):

- Benchley, Peter. 1974. *Jaws*. Bantam Books. New York, NY. 278 pp.

OR

- King, Stephen. 1977. *The Shining*. Doubleday. New York, NY. 447 pp.

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 (\pm 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 (\pm 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 (\pm 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

	Points Possible
Participation (15-film online discussions)	600 (40-each)
Movie Review Video	50
Human Conflict Essay	100
Biopic Essay	100
Greatest Films Critique	100
Final Exam Essay	150
TOTAL	1,100

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](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

49315 / Topics in Physical Geography – Geography in Film, Fall 2018, Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change with fair notice. Changes will be posted online under Announcements.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/21-8/26	<p>SPORTS</p> <p><i>The Endless Summer</i> (Bruce Brown, 1966; 95 min). A film that birthed surf-and-travel culture, and one which is ripe for social sciences criticism.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aitken, Stuart C. 1994. I'd rather watch the movie than read the book. <i>Journal of Geography in Higher Education</i> 18, no. 3: 291. Available through the MLK library website https://library.sjsu.edu • Lefebvre, Martin. 2011. On landscape in narrative cinema. <i>Canadian Journal of Film Studies</i>, 20. No. 1: 61. http://www.filmstudies.ca/journal/pdf/cjfs-20-1-lefebvre-landscape-narrative.pdf • Roger Ebert Review http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-endless-summer-1967 • Rafferty, Terence (2011 Apr 29). Oh, Kahuna, What Became of That Endless Summer? <i>New York Times</i> http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/01/movies/california-and-the-end-of-beach-movies.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fmovies&action=click&contentCollection=movies&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=search&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=sectionfront&_r=0
2	8/27-9/3	<p>ACTION – Labor Day Weekend</p> <p>Spend a long weekend evening or the holiday at the movies! Enjoy an action blockbuster in situ by watching <i>The Meg</i> or <i>Adrift</i> at your local theater.</p>
3	9/4-9/9	<p>ANIMATION</p> <p><i>The Red Turtle</i> (Michaël Dudok de Wit, 2017). A silent and contemplative look at what's really important in life.</p>
4	9/10-9/16	<p>DOCUMENTARY</p> <p><i>Blackfish</i> (Gabriela Cowperthwaite; 90 min). Take a look at whale captivity for human access.</p> <p>DUE 9/16: Video Review (Submit on Canvas by 11:59pm)</p>
5	9/17-9/23	<p>FILM NOIR & CRIME</p> <p><i>Chinatown</i> (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</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		<p>development of the American Dream [specifically, by bringing water from the Owens Valley to southern California].</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escher, Anton. 2006. The geography of cinema – a cinematic world. <i>Edkunde</i>. 307-314. Available for download at https://www.erdkunde.uni-bonn.de/archive/2006/the-geography-of-cinema-a-cinematic-world • Roger Ebert Review http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-chinatown-1974 • Lukinbeal, Chris. 2005. Cinematic landscapes. <i>Journal of Cultural Geography</i> 23, no. 1: 3. http://academic.csuohio.edu/kneuendorf/frames/phx/creativegeography/lukinbeal_05.pdf •
6	9/24-9/30	<p>WESTERN</p> <p><i>The Revenant</i> (Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, 2015; 156 min). A survival and revenge epic pitting man versus nature in the Great Plains' harshest of winters.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alter, Alexandra (2016 Feb 26). 'The Revenant' Author Michael Punke Has a Day Job. <i>New York Times</i> http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/27/movies/the-revenants-author-has-a-day-job.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fmovies&action=click&contentCollection=movies&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=search&contentPlacement=3&pgtype=sectionfront • Mitchell, Lee Clark. 1996. <i>Westerns: Making the man in fiction and film</i> University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Introduction Only https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=SdS2ViQG1DEC&oi=fnd&pg=PR13&dq=depiction+of+the+west+film+geography&ots=wqEzJtJO9&sig=T6Fol96jDywVE0bcbRutMJHYBpY#v=onepage&q=depiction%20of%20the%20west%20film%20geography&f=false
7	10/1-10/7	<p>ROMANCE</p> <p><i>Brokeback Mountain</i> (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.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floyd, Kevin. 2001. Closing the (heterosexual frontiers: Midnight cowboy as national allegory. <i>Science & Society</i> 65, no. 1: 99. Available through the MLK library website https://library.sjsu.edu • Hicklin, Aaron (2015 Jul 28) Brokeback Mountain: 10 Years On. <i>Out</i> http://www.out.com/out-exclusives/2015/7/28/brokeback-mountain-10-years-oral-history

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holmes, Grayson, Leo Zonn and Altha J. Cravey. 2004. Placing man in the New West: Masculinities of <i>The Last Picture Show</i>. <i>GeoJournal</i> 59, no. 4: 277. Available through the MLK library website https://library.sjsu.edu Mechanic, Michael. (2014 May/June). Novelist Larry McMurtry's last kind words. <i>Mother Jones</i> http://www.motherjones.com/media/2014/05/larry-mcmurtry-brokeback-mountain-last-kind-words Roger Ebert Review http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/brokeback-mountain-2005
8	10/8-10/14	<p>DRAMA</p> <p><i>Into the Wild</i> (Sean Penn, 2007; 148 min) Tragic biographical retelling of Chris McCandless' postgraduate days traveling across North American wilderness.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buchmann, Anne, Kevin Moore and David Fisher. 2010. Experiencing film tourism: Authenticity & fellowship. <i>Annals of Tourism Research</i> 37, no. 1: 229. Available through the MLK library website https://library.sjsu.edu Krakauer, Jon (2015 Feb 11). How Chris McCandless died: An update. <i>The New Yorker</i> http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/chris-mccandless-died-update Riley, Roger, Dwayne Baker, and Carlton S. Van Doren. 1998. Movie induced tourism. <i>Annals of Tourism Research</i> 25, no. 4: 919. Available through the MLK library website https://library.sjsu.edu Roger Ebert Review http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/into-the-wild-2007 Saverin, Diana (2013 Dec 18). The Chris McCandless Obsession Problem. <i>Outside</i> http://www.outsideonline.com/1920626/chris-mccandless-obsession-problem
9	10/15-10/21	<p>DRAMA Cont.</p> <p><i>127 Hours</i> (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.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bingham, Dennis. 2010. <i>Whose lives are they anyway?: The biopic as contemporary film genre</i>. Rutgers University Press: New Jersey. Introduction Only pages 1-28. https://books.google.com/books?id=NW-v7-tlRZYC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Whose%20%80%A9Lives%20%80%A9Are%20%80%A9They%20%80%A9Anyway%20%80%A9The%20%80%A9%20%80%A9+Biopic%20%80%A9as%20%80%A9Contemporary%20%80%A9Film%20%80%A9Genre%20%80%A9&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwY6PxiLOAhUM4WMKHR2oA08Q6AEIHjAA#v=onepage&q=Whose%20%80%A9Lives%20%80%A9Are%20%80%A9They%20%80%A9Anyway%3F%20%80%A9The%20%80%A9%20%80

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		<p>%A9%20Biopic%E2%80%A9as%E2%80%A9Contemporary%E2%80%A9Film%E2%80%A9Genre%E2%80%A9&f=false</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kennedy, Christina B. 1994. “The myth of herosism: Man and desert in Lawrence of Arabia” in Aitken/ Stuart and Leo Zonn, <i>Place, Power, Situation & Spectacle: A Geography of Film</i>. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, London: Only pages 161-162. https://books.google.com/books?id=kCiYSkjd0eUC&pg=PA161&lpg=PA161&dq=the+myth+of+heroism+lawrence+of+arabia&source=bl&ots=b6rwnDqoBO&sig=QafNH7MYIVUax7xF6V2ehIoIxZs&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjUsseMyOLOAhVQymMKHXJYCOYO6AEIODAE#v=onepage&q=the%20myth%20of%20heroism%20lawrence%20of%20arabia&f=false • Ralston, Aron. Video Footage from Canyon https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NerTo86BE9w • Roger Ebert Review http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/127-hours-2010 DUE 10/21: Biopic Essay Due (Submit on Canvas by 11:59pm)
10	10/22-10/28	<p>HORROR Cont. <i>Jaws</i> (Steven Spielberg, 1975; 124 min). A heroic journey pitting man versus monster, arguably symbolizing WWII.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champlin, Charles and Meredith Woerner. (2015 Jun 20). LA Times’ Original 1975 Review of ‘Jaws’ Unearthed: We Hated It. http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/herocomplex/la-et-hc-jaws-original-review-20150619-story.html • Neff, Christopher 2014. The <i>Jaws</i> effect: How movie narratives are used to influence policy response to shark bites in Western Australia. <i>Australian Journal of Political Science</i> 50, no. 1: 114. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10361146.2014.989385?src=recsys <p>Roger Ebert Review http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/jaws-1975</p>
11	10/29-11/4	<p>HORROR – Halloween <i>The Shining</i> (Stanley Kubric, 1980; 146 min) Examine masterful spatial disorientation and a seditious subtext about Native Americans persecution.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascher, Rodney (2013). <i>Room 237</i> is a documentary film deconstructing <i>The Shining</i> <p>Roger Ebert Review http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-the-shining-1980</p>
12	11/5-11/11	<p>EPIC - Election Day & Veteran’s Holiday <i>Apocalypse Now</i> (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979; 153 min). Journey upriver in a disturbing Vietnam War adaptation of Joseph Conrad’s <i>Heart of Darkness</i>.</p> <p>Readings:</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carter, Sean, and Derek P. McCormack. 2006. Film, geopolitics and the affect logics of intervention. <i>Political Geography</i>, 25: 228. http://n.ereserve.fiu.edu/010007875-1.pdf • Hellmann, John. 1982. Vietnam and the Hollywood genre film: Inversion of American mythology in the Deer Hunter and Apocalypse Now. <i>American Quarterly</i> 34, No. 4: 418. Available through the MLK library website https://library.sjsu.edu • Roger Ebert Review http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-apocalypse-now-1979 <p>DUE 11/11: Great Films Critique (Submit on Canvas by 11:59pm)</p>
13	11/12-11/18-	<p>FANTASY</p> <p><i>Beasts of the Southern Wild</i> (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.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roger Ebert Review http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/beasts-of-the-southern-wild-2012
14	11/19-11/25	<p>SCIENCE FICTION</p> <p><i>Mad Max: Fury Road</i> (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.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.O. Scott Review <i>New York Times</i> http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/15/movies/review-mad-max-fury-road-still-angry-after-all-these-years.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fmovies&action=click&contentCollection=movies&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=search&contentPlacement=7&pgtype=sectionfront • Bialik, Mayim (2015 Jun 4). My Feminist Review of 'Mad Max: Fury Road' kveller. http://www.kveller.com/mayim-bialik-my-feminist-review-of-mad-max-fury-road/ • Dockterman, Eilana. (2015 May 7) <i>Vagina Monologues</i> writer Eve Ensler: How <i>Mad Max: Fury Road</i> became a 'feminist action film' <i>TIME Magazine</i> http://time.com/3850323/mad-max-fury-road-eve-ensler-feminist/ • Jones, Eileen. (2015 May 18). Actually, Mad Max: Fury Road isn't that feminist; and it isn't that good, either. <i>In These Times</i> http://inthesetimes.com/article/17960/actually-mad-max-fury-road-isnt-that-feminist • Stasia, Cristina Lucia. 2004. "'Wham! Bam! Thank you ma'am!': The new public/private female action hero" in Gillis, Stacy, Gilliam Howie and Rebecca Munford. <i>Third wave feminism: A critical exploration</i>. Palgrave

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		<p>Macmillian, London. Chapter 14 (pages 175-184 Only). http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/3466696/Ecofeminism_as_Third_Wave_Feminism_Essentialism_Activism_and_the_Academy.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1472346008&Signature=gjVdp2KXCGIDSIaZ9mMJpnM1ydY%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DEcofeminism_as_Third_Wave_Feminism_Essen.pdf</p> <p>DUE 11/25: Human Conflict Essay (Submit on Canvas by 11:59pm)</p>
15	11/26-12/2	<p>EXPERIMENTAL <i>Baraka</i> (Ron Frike, 1993; 96 min) A non-narrative cinematic kaleidoscope of Earth's geographic phenomena, and an inspiring way to end any course.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aitken, Stuart C. and Deborah P. Dixon. 2006. Imagining geographies of film. <i>Edkunde</i> 326-336. http://cadair.aber.ac.uk/dspace/bitstream/handle/2160/6679/Imagining%20geographies%20of%20film.pdf?sequence=1 • Melbye, David. 2010. <i>Landscape allegory in cinema: From wilderness to wasteland</i>. Palgrave Macmillan, New York. Introduction Only 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 http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-baraka-1992
Final Exam	12/7	<p>DUE: Submit your final exam essay to Canvas essay by 5:00 pm. The essay prompt has been provided above in Course Assignments.</p>

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)