

Interpreting Film

Overview

The purpose of “Interpreting Film” is to better educate people as to the finer qualities and nuances of cinema and film and its contribution to society. Regularly, movies are seen as pure entertainment value and unless the box office numbers are large, many films are simply dismissed. Too often, people completely ignore the hard work and dedication that went into the production of the films. Every piece of the construction of films, from writing a screenplay to editing, involves more artistry than most realize. An incredible amount of creativity goes into character development and subplots as well as set design and even a musical score; moreover, the sheer quantity of societal symbolism and allusions embedded in the films is astounding.

Every other week, we will hold a screening and informal group discussion of a different film. What we will discuss will depend on the film. Options could include editing techniques, production based comments, underlying themes and symbolism present in the plot line. Occasionally, we will present film series open to the L/L community and beyond. These will call attention to causes that we feel need to be more widely recognized by the general student body. Examples include a Black History Month Series and a Women’s Awareness Film Series (in conjunction with the Women’s Health Clinic). A major point of the program will be our attendance at the Vermont International Film Festival in late October. This will hopefully help us with our largest goal of planning and implementing a UVM Student Film Festival, co-sponsored with the UVM Program Boards Film Committee, by the late spring. By completing all of these goals, we hope to not only be able to critically examine films to discover the purpose and meaning of the work, but to also gain a better appreciation of films in general, whether they be independent films, documentaries, or major blockbusters.

Learning Objectives

Each member of the Interpreting Film suite will develop their ability to critically analyze films presented to the program.

Action Steps

- Members will utilize material from the Bailey/Howe Library, as well as other outside sources. Certain materials may be assigned by the academic advisor, program director, or fellow program members.
- Faculty will be invited to give lectures on cinematic concepts (e.g. symbolism, set design, movement of plot, manipulation of time, etc).

- Members are encouraged to take a Film and Television Studies course to even better understand and analyze films.
- Members will attend bi-weekly scheduled meetings, in which they will view films containing cinematic techniques and lead discussion groups pertaining to the content and presentation of the film.
- Members will be assigned to review movies on the L/L main desks movie roster to be kept in a binder at the main desk. We will also implement a recording process for the films viewed within the program.
- Members will read a novel recently adapted to film (ex. The Kite Runner) and must compare the film adaptation to the novel in written form.

Members will be introduced to and become familiar with several different thought processes (e.g. social, scientific, philosophical) and then recognize, interpret, and discuss the ways in which the techniques are represented in the film, using knowledge gained during Learning Objective #1.

Action Steps

- Faculty members will be asked to come in and speak on subjects of expertise; present a film with a theme and then lead a discussion group, making connections to the theme and movie.
- Small groups of members of the program (all members included) will be responsible for researching a theme, and then presenting a film pertaining to their theme to the program (twice a semester).
 - Focus will be put on:
 - Relating the film to their theme through interpretations, criticisms, and analysis
 - Using their knowledge to form their own ideas and critiques, to add their own insight about the relationship between the film and theme
- By researching films members will become better acquainted with the themes of their chosen movie, and then be able to give a strong presentation to the group. By presenting their movie they will become comfortable with speaking to the public. They will develop well formed opinions, share their ideas, and learn how to appreciate opinions of others.
- Each group will be encouraged to advertise their upcoming film with posters, e-mails, and other announcements to the UVM community.

Members will come to understand the processes through which films are made. They will learn how to appreciate the works of others. It is important that, as individuals, we learn to accept other people's points of view and opinions.

Action Steps

- During first semester we will work with programs such as Anime as an Art Form, to discuss different techniques used to make film.

- Second semester, members of the program will work with these programs to advertise and run a student film festival on campus.
- Through this we will be exposed to a number of different viewpoints and become familiar with tastes and styles of students on campus.

The members will expand their cultural boundaries through exposure to a wide range of films, to become familiar with issues outside our comfort zones.

Action Steps

- We will watch films and documentaries pertaining to cultural differences and social issues
- A film and culture inter-programming event with the Russian house will help with our comparison of different genres and cultural themes present around the world.
- A staff member from the anthropology and sociology department will come in and speak about cultural differences
- We will meet with ALANA to speak about different issues that surround us here in our everyday lives.

Community Service

The suite will sponsor film series that will run in different and easily accessed public areas, such as the Fire Place Lounge. We will be working with the Women's Center, as well as other offices on campus, to bring films that are specifically themed to raise awareness in the community (e.g. health related movies, like *A Closer Walk*). We also will volunteer at the 18th Annual Vermont International Film Festival and organize an Oscar Gala in order to raise money for the arts in local schools. In addition, we will be participating in our 2nd Relay for Life as a team.

Plans for Interaction with other L/L programs

I would like to see at least two inter-programming events per semester.

In the Fall:

1. We will have a Film Night with the Anime as an Art Form Program. This will include an explanation the history of Anime and an explanation of how it is produced. We will then watch a film of their choice (ex. Princess Mononoke) and after discuss the differences between Anime and the animation that we are used to and why they appreciate it so much and believe that, in fact, it is an art form. This event would be open to the L/L community.
2. We will also have an event with the Russian House. Beginning with a Russian dinner, we will have a discussion on the cultural history of Russian Cinema and its differences with Western Hollywood Cinema. After viewing the movie of their choice, we will then

discuss what is to be learned from watching foreign films and more specifically discuss the plot of the movie viewed. This event will also be opened to the L/L community.

In the Spring:

1. We would also like to cooperate with Animalia to plan a movie night that could be in conjunction with a blanket drive for a local animal shelter.
2. With ALANA house we will schedule an appropriate movie to be viewed for a Black History Month Film Night (ex. Separate but Equal). After viewing, we will discuss the significance of the movie and the impact it specifically had, and films like it, have on society as a whole. This event will be opened to the UVM community.