**Course Title：Cinematic Sociology**

**Instructor**: Meimei Xu

**Instructor Affiliation**: School of Journalism and Communication

**Semester**: Autumn semester

**Course Level**: Undergraduate

**Credit**: 2

**Course code：**

**Course Description**

Cinematic Sociology is a one-of-a-kind resource that helps students recognize and critique sociological concepts as they appear in blockbuster or phenomenal films. This course focuses on various social issues like gender, class, poverty, family, race, crime &c. with film analytic tools. In the class, students will learn to treat cinema per se as a constructive element of our society and to combine their personal film experiences with social imagination.

The course mainly includes of two parts: 1. General introductions to film study and sociological investigations respectively, i.e. definitions, theories and methodologies; 2. Five case studies to demonstrate how the social analysis is effectively accomplished with cinematic perspectives. In the class, students are encouraged to carry on their own social observation projects in aid of film analytic skills.

**Assessment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reading report | 20% |
| Class participation | 20% |
| End of Semester Paper | 60% |

**Syllabus：**

1. **Week 1: Introduction**   
   *This class introduces key practical aspects of the course including the syllabus, assignments, presentations, and final paper.*

**Assignment:** filling up a Survey [on their current understanding of course relevant knowledge]

1. **Week 2: What is Cinematic Sociology?** *This class will introduce briefly the history of cinematic sociology and two basic methodologies in this field.*

**Readings:**

* + 1. Sutherland: Chapt 1
    2. Giddens: Chap. 1

**Assignments:**

1. Report [first personal encounter with film]
2. Assignment #1 is due
3. **Week 3: “From Caligari to Hitler”—Siegfried Kracauer’s film theory**   
   *This class will watch the film master piece “The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari” and discuss Siegfried Kraucauer (1889-1966)’s analysis on the psychological history of the German film.*

**Readings:**

* + 1. Giddens, Chap. 19
    2. Kracauer, pp. 3-11

**Assignments:** Assignment #2 is due

1. **Week 4: How to think like a sociologist and express like a filmmaker?**   
   *This class clarifies the fundamental differences/similarities between a sociologist and a filmmaker, and how they apply their theories and methodologies respectively to cultivate our social behaviors and enrich our knowledge on the world and human nature.*

**Readings:**

* + 1. Mills: pp.3-24
    2. Giddens: Chap. 3

**Assignments:** An analysis on a chosen cluster of films with sociological considerations.

1. **Week 5: Film Analysis on Social Issues** *This class will introduce various sociological theories and film theories, as well as how they can be combined effective in discourse analysis.*

**Readings:**

* + 1. Berger: pp13-30: Introduction
    2. Giddens: chap. 4

**Assignment:** 1. Draft a social topic that you care about mostly.

2. Assignment #4 is due.

1. **Week 6: Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies** *In this class, a broad range of social study methodologies and analytic software (like MAXQDA & SPSS) will be introduced. Moral issues in social researches will also be discussed.*

**Readings:** Humphreys: Introduction

**Assignments:** 1. Assignment #5 is due.

2. Draft the methodology for the chosen social topic

1. **Week 7: Social Issues**  
   *This class discusses various social topics that Anthony Giddens covers in his reknowned oeuver, such as ethnicity, sexuality, and global inequity.*

**Readings:** Giddens: Chap. 7\8\9\10\14

**Assignments:** 1. Assignment #6 is due

2. Reconsider the chosen topic with theoretical supplements.

1. **Week 8: Discussion and Group Assignment**  
   On this day, groups report their chosen topics to TAs. We will also discuss the theories and methodologies of those topics collectively. Groups will be assigned based on the similarity of the topics.
2. **Week 9: Lecture: Film and late Qing Society: Li Hongzhang’s film activities?** *In this class, through the case study of Li Hongzhang, the most famous political figure in late Qing China, and his film activities, it will be demonstrated how film study is applied to the analysis of the pre-modern society.*  
     
    **Readings:** Giddens: Chap. 2.
3. **Week 10: Lecture: Film and War: Man’ei and Li Xianglan** *This class lectures on the film star Li Xianglan and her cinematic involvements into the second Sino-Japanese War, showing the possibility of analyzing a macro-issue like war with the film skill set.*

**Readings:** Giddens: Chap. 12

1. **Week 11: Lecture: Film and Geopolitics: Cinematic Exchange Among Russia, China and Mongolia.** *This class discusses the international relationships and geopolitics through a case study.*

**Readings:** Giddens: Chap. 20

1. **Week 12: Film and Contemporary Society: European Refugee Crisis** *This class gives a case study on the film analysis of 2016 European Refugee Crisis and demonstrates how to observe a macro social phenomenon with film analytic skills.*

**Readings:** Giddens, Chap. 13

1. **Week13: Film and Journalism***This class examines the role of Journalist in society with a rich number of films (ca. 30 relevant films) and discuss how “the media” become a more and more important part of nowadays society.*

**Readings:** Giddens, Chap. 15

1. **Week 14: Group Presentations**
2. **Week 15: Group Presentations**
3. **Week 16: Group Presentations**

**Basic Readings:**

1. Giddens, Anthony: *Sociology* (5th edition), Polity Press, 2006.
2. Sutherland, Jean-Anne and Kathryn Feltey: *Cinematic Sociology, Sage Publication*, 2012.
3. Kracauer, Siegfried, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, Princeton University Press, 2004.
4. Mills, C. Wright: The *Sociological Imagination* (4th Anniversary edition), Oxford University Press, 2000
5. Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckman: *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Penguin Books, 1991.
6. Humphreys Laud: *Tearoom Trade*, Aldine Transaction, 1975.