

## Media Literacy Syllabus 2016-2017

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### Purpose of Course:

The primary focus of this course is to examine various forms of media in popular culture and to understand their impact on culture in terms of both their advantages and their limitations. Students will be encouraged to think critically about how media are used to influence and shape public opinion and attitudes. More specifically, the following objectives will be taught through projects, tests, reading, writing, journaling, and oral presentations: critical analysis of various forms of mass media (development of critical reading and viewing skills); to discover how “facts” can be manipulated to shape perception; to create an awareness of the different types of media, their historical backgrounds and various purposes; and an understanding of the technical aspects of film (camera, light, and sound).

### Texts and Media Resources:

A great deal of the material in class will be articles, essays, handouts, and videos taken from the Center for Media Literacy as well as other sources. Newspaper clippings and magazine articles, advertisements from a variety of sources, recordings of television programs and commercials, documentaries or instructive videos related to media topics are also essential components of the course.

#### Other texts include:

*Models for Writers: Short Essays for Composition* (Alfred Rosa and Paul Eschholz)

*The Riverside Reader* (Joseph Trimmer)

*Understanding the Film* (Jan Bone and Ron Johnson)

*Understanding Mass Media* (edited by Bill Jawitz)

### Films:

Many of the films or film excerpts that are shown in class will be selected from the attached list. Because of time constraints, all of these films may not be used. I have also included the director and film rating. This list does not include educational videos that may be used to enhance understanding of the various units of study. Educational videos may examine political, social, and economic factors related to the media and may include clips or segments from film, television, magazines, and other media that are part of popular culture.

### Possible Books for Sustained Silent Reading (SSR):

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Lois Lowry's series: *The Giver*, *Gathering Blue*, *Messenger*, *Son*

Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*; *The Lord of the Rings* series

Karl Weber and Participant Media's *Food Inc.: A Participant Guide*

Assigned book from departmental reading list

### Topics for Analysis and Discussion:

For each form of media, we will evaluate: 1. characteristics of that particular form of media; 2. how that form is used to communicate in our culture and its impact, both positive and negative; and 3. advantages and limitations of such a medium.

commercial and magazine advertising  
comics and animation  
censorship in relation to media, books and films  
newspaper and television news  
corporate control, responsibility and issues related to media

television programs  
music  
film  
Internet and social media

### **Course Requirements:**

homework	research-based projects and assignments
class work and projects (both individual and group)	media circle assignments
essays	tests and quizzes
oral presentations	critiques
class discussion and seminar	Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)

### **Grading Policy:**

Students will access individual grades through the program Parent Portal. Grading will be done on a total point system; point values are based on the importance and complexity of each assignment. For example, tests will be worth 100 points, and quizzes, projects, and other assignments may vary.

If a student is absent or needs to check on assignments, it is his or her responsibility to make up missing work in accordance with the deadlines outlined in the syllabus. If there are questions about an assignment or additional materials that the student needs, arrangements need to be made for a time to come after school. Instructional time will not be used to do this.

Please see the student handbook for the University School policy regarding cheating and plagiarism.

**Late work policy:** Please see the Policy for High School English Department which is posted on the web page. This is extremely important to your child's success.

### **Electronic Devices:**

Electronic devices will occasionally be used for class assignments, projects, and activities. These are allowed to be used in class only when the teacher has given permission to do so. Students using an electronic device without permission are subject to the consequences outlined in the student handbook.

### **Materials:**

- \* Three-ring notebook with assigned tabs
- \* Pens and pencils
- \* College-ruled notebook paper
- \* Textbook, classroom handouts and/or notes, and any other supplementary materials

### **Classroom Expectations:**

- \* Be on time to class and seated when the bell rings.
- \* Be prepared for class. You will not be allowed to return to your locker once class begins.
- \* You are responsible for and expected to give your very best work. In order to be successful in this class, you will be expected to complete all homework and class assignments.
- \* Be fully present in class. Listen actively and engage in the learning process.
- \* Respect the dignity and worth of every person in the classroom. This includes your peers, your teacher, and the perspectives of those individuals studied in class. Use "I" statements in class discussion.

# Film List

Julian Amyes: *Great Expectations* (Not Rated, BBC video)

Gillian Armstrong: *Little Women* (PG)

Richard Attenborough: *Gandhi* (PG)

Brad Bird: *Iron Giant* (PG)

Jeffrey Blitz: *Spellbound* (G)

Steve Box and Nick Park: *Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (G)  
*Wallace and Gromit in Three Amazing Adventures* (NR)

James Cameron: *Avatar* (PG-13)

Godfrey Reggio: *Powaqqatsi: Life in Transformation* (G)

Alfonso Cuaron: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (PG)

Alfonso Cuaron: *Gravity* (PG-13)

Robert Enrico: *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (Not Rated)

Chris Eyre: *Smoke Signals* (PG-13)

Victor Fleming and George Cukor: *The Wizard of Oz* (PG)

Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske: *Alice in Wonderland* (G)

Davis Guggenheim: *An Inconvenient Truth* (PG)

Peter Jackson: *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (PG-13)

Steve James: *Hoop Dreams* (PG-13)

Robert Kenner: *Food, Inc.* (PG)

Micha X. Peled: *China Blue* (Not Rated)

Jacques Perrin: *Winged Migration* (G)

Harold Ramis: *Groundhog Day* (PG)

Godfrey Reggio: *Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance* (Not Rated)

Thomas Riedelsheimer: *Rivers and Tides* (Not Rated)

Phil Alden Robinson: *Field of Dreams* (PG)

Ben Stiller: *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (PG)

Peter Weir: *The Truman Show* (PG)

Orson Welles: *Citizen Kane* (PG)

