ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

GENERAL STUDIES PROGRAM COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM

Courses submitted to the GSC between 2/1 and 4/30 if approved, will be effective the following Spring.

Courses submitted between 5/1 and 1/31 if approved, will be effective the following Fall.

(SUBMISSION VIA ADOBE.PDF FILES IS PREFERRED)

DATE Sept. 22, 2011

1. ACADEMIC UNIT: School of Transborder Studies

2. COURSE PROPOSED: TCL/FMS 294 Race, Migration, and the Musical Film

(prefix) (number) (title) (semester hours)

3. CONTACT PERSON: Name: Desirée Garcia Phone: 617-834-3244

Mail Code: 6303 E-Mail: desiree.j.garcia@asu.edu

4. ELIGIBILITY: New courses must be approved by the Tempe Campus Curriculum Subcommittee and must have a regular course number. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact the General Studies Program Office at 965-0739.

5. AREA(S) PROPOSED COURSE WILL SERVE. A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study. (Please submit one designation per proposal)

Core Areas
- Literacy and Critical Inquiry-L
- Mathematical Studies-MA CS
- Humanities, Fine Arts and Design-HU
- Social and Behavioral Sciences-SB
- Natural Sciences-SQ SG

Awareness Areas
- Global Awareness-G
- Historical Awareness-H
- Cultural Diversity in the United States-C

6. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED.
   (1) Course Description
   (2) Course Syllabus
   (3) Criteria Checklist for the area
   (4) Table of Contents from the textbook used, if available

7. In the space provided below (or on a separate sheet), please also provide a description of how the course meets the specific criteria in the area for which the course is being proposed.

CROSS-LISTED COURSES: ☐ No ☑ Yes; Please identify courses: FMS 294

Is this an multisection course?: ☑ No ☐ Yes; Is it governed by a common syllabus? ______

Carlos Velez-Ibáñez Chair/Director (Print or Type)

__________________________ Chair/Director (Signature)

Date: ____________________________

Rev. 1/94, 4/95, 7/98, 4/00, 1/02, 10/08
Rationale and Objectives

The humanities disciplines are concerned with questions of human existence and meaning, the nature of thinking and knowing, with moral and aesthetic experience. The humanities develop values of all kinds by making the human mind more supple, critical, and expansive. They are concerned with the study of the textual and artistic traditions of diverse cultures, including traditions in literature, philosophy, religion, ethics, history, and aesthetics. In sum, these disciplines explore the range of human thought and its application to the past and present human environment. They deepen awareness of the diversity of the human heritage and its traditions and histories and they may also promote the application of this knowledge to contemporary societies.

The study of the arts and design, like the humanities, deepens the student’s awareness of the diversity of human societies and cultures. The fine arts have as their primary purpose the creation and study of objects, installations, performances and other means of expressing or conveying aesthetic concepts and ideas. Design study concerns itself with material objects, images and spaces, their historical development, and their significance in society and culture. Disciplines in the fine arts and design employ modes of thought and communication that are often nonverbal, which means that courses in these areas tend to focus on objects, images, and structures and/or on the practical techniques and historical development of artistic and design traditions. The past and present accomplishments of artists and designers help form the student’s ability to perceive aesthetic qualities of art work and design.

The Humanities, Fine Arts and Design are an important part of the General Studies Program, for they provide an opportunity for students to study intellectual and imaginative traditions and to observe and/or learn the production of art work and design. The knowledge acquired in courses fulfilling the Humanities, Fine Arts and Design requirement may encourage students to investigate their own personal philosophies or beliefs and to understand better their own social experience. In sum, the Humanities, Fine Arts and Design core area enables students to broaden and deepen their consideration of the variety of human experience.

Revised October 2008
Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

## ASU - [HU] CRITERIA

**HUMANITIES, FINE ARTS AND DESIGN [HU]** courses must meet *either 1, 2, or 3 and at least one of the criteria under 4* in such a way as to make the satisfaction of these criteria **A CENTRAL AND SUBSTANTIAL PORTION** of the course content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Identify Documentation Submitted</th>
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1. Emphasize the study of values, of the development of philosophies, religions, ethics or belief systems, and/or aesthetic experience.

2. Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of written, aural, or visual texts, and/or the historical development of textual traditions.

3. Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of material objects, images and spaces, and/or their historical development.

4. In addition, to qualify for the Humanities, Fine Arts and Design designation a course must meet one or more of the following requirements:
   a. Concerns the development of human thought, including emphasis on the analysis of philosophical and/or religious systems of thought.
   b. Concerns aesthetic systems and values, literary and visual arts.
   c. Emphasizes aesthetic experience in the visual and performing arts, including music, dance, theater, and in the applied arts, including architecture and design.
   d. Deepen awareness of the analysis of literature and the development of literary traditions.

### THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE:

- Courses devoted *primarily* to developing a skill in the creative or performing arts, including courses that are *primarily* studio classes in the Herberger College of the Arts and in the College of Design.
- Courses devoted *primarily* to developing skill in the use of a language – However, language courses that emphasize cultural study and the study of literature can be allowed.
- Courses which emphasize the acquisition of quantitative or experimental methods.
- Courses devoted *primarily* to teaching skills.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (from checksheet)</th>
<th>How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)</th>
<th>Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of visual texts and the historical development of visual texts</td>
<td>This course is devoted to the study of the history and evolution of the American musical film, a longstanding and unique genre in American film history. We study the context in which the musicals were made as well as the visual and aural language that the genre developed.</td>
<td>The syllabus indicates the historical approach of the course, which allows students to understand the form and function of the earliest musical films (such as The Jazz Singer, 1927) through more recent examples like Hairspray (2007). The syllabus is also organized according to subgenre of the musical film, such as the backstage/show musical and the folk musical, in order to communicate the variations in form and aesthetics over time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concerns aesthetic systems and values, visual arts</td>
<td>While focusing on the form and aesthetics of the musical film, this course materializes the process of film production and reception.</td>
<td>This course communicates to students the social function of the musical genre. In lectures and reading assignments, we study the extent to which the musical engages with, reflects, and produces contemporary sociocultural values. For example, we analyze the ways in which the &quot;Latin&quot; musicals of the World War II era emphasized maintaining friendly relations with American allies like Mexico. (See week 7). Or, we examine the ways in which the Black-cast folk musical denied the migration of African Americans into northern cities. (See week 5).</td>
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TCL/FMS 294: Race, Migration, and the Musical Film

Course Description:
The musical film is the quintessential creation of the classical Hollywood studio system. The musical’s style and polish, star-making potential, and inflated budget made it a product that only Hollywood, as the leading filmmaking center in the world, could sustain. Throughout its history, this most mainstream of genres has been the most criticized for its “escapism” and all-pervasive “whiteness.” Yet, it has also been one of the few genres to feature and promote performers of racial and ethnic groups such as Al Jolson, Lena Horne, and Carmen Miranda. To what extent does this prototypical Hollywood product ignore or reflect the dynamics of race and ethnicity in American society?

This course will examine the musical film and its portrayal of racial and ethnic actors and characters during Hollywood’s “golden age” through the present. We will focus on the representation of groups that played a significant role in the making of the genre: African Americans, Jews, Latinos, and Asian Americans. The course will begin with an analysis of the first “talking” and “singing” film, The Jazz Singer (1927), and will trace the musical’s evolution through the Great Depression, World War II, and the Civil Rights and post-Civil Rights eras. With the aid of course readings and film screenings, we will explore issues of ethnoracial representation and performance and the relationship between ideology and genre. The course will focus on recurring themes and tropes such as migration, displacement, the construction of race and ethnicity, the relationship between racism and economic oppression, forms of community and spectatorship, and assimilation and separatism.

At the end of this course, students should be able to question such simplistic notions as “good” and “bad” films, to work through and then move away from questions of positive/negative stereotypes, and to engage along with film historians and theorists in the history of critical frameworks of and around the representation of ethnoracialized groups.
TCL/FMS 294
Race, Migration, and the Musical Film, 1927-The Present
Class Meetings: Thursdays 4:40-7:30pm, INTDSBB161A
Prerequisites: none

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Attendance and Participation Policy:
This is a discussion class so attendance and participation are mandatory. The “participation” part of your grade includes attendance, punctuality, and frequent and thoughtful comments in class. I will take attendance promptly at the beginning of each class. Absences will only be excused with proof of illness.

Students should be prepared for each class, which includes completing the reading and having thoughtful comments prepared for class discussion. A crucial part of being prepared for the day’s discussion is bringing the reading with you to class. In order to make sure that students are completing the reading, I will occasionally administer a pop quiz.

Academic Integrity:
University Standards on Academic Integrity apply in this course. The ASU “Student Academic Integrity Policy” manual defines “Plagiarism” [as] using another's words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another's work or materials and for acknowledging and documenting the source appropriately.” There are severe sanctions for cheating, plagiarizing and any other form of academic dishonesty. Visit http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity for a more thorough definition and explanation. Please see me with any questions or concerns about citing sources.
Reading:


Readings with an "***" can be found on Blackboard.

Writing Assignments: (All writing assignments should be double-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font with standard margins and include a title and page numbers)

Reaction Paper: Zoot Suit – Write 3 pages on your reaction to the ASU School of Theatre and Film production of *Zoot Suit*. Detailed assignment to follow.

Midterm: The midterm will be comprised of one 3 short-answer essay questions, which will ask you to use the information from class lectures and readings to analyze the relationship between race, migration, and early twentieth century musical films.

Final Paper - You will be required to submit one (5-7 pages) research paper at the end of the semester. Your paper should synthesize class material with outside independent research to advance a specific argument. While you may determine your topic, it should include the analysis of a musical film we have not screened in class and it must be relevant to the experiences of racialized peoples and their place in American society. Your topic must be pre-approved by me before you begin to write.

Grade Breakdown:

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction Paper: Zoot Suit</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper (6 pages)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Weekly Schedule:

**Week 1**

Aug. 18: Introduction
Screening: *Hamlet 2* (Fleming, 2002)

**Week 2**

Aug. 25: Understanding Genre
Screening: *Grease* (Kleiser, 1978)

**Week 3**

Sept. 1: Early Forms – Jewish Ethnicity and Blackface
Screening: Excerpts from *The Jazz Singer* (Crosland, 1927), *A Night at the Opera* (Wood, 1935), *Whoopie* (Freeland, 1930)

**Week 4**

Sept. 8: The Show/Backstage Musical
Altman, “The Show Musical,” 200-234
Screening: *Flying Down to Rio* (Freeland, 1933)

**Week 5**

Sept. 15: **Black-Cast Musicals during WWII**
Screening: *Cabin in the Sky* (Minnelli, 1943), Excerpts *Hallelujah!* (Vidor, 1929)

**Week 6**

Altman, “The Folk Musical,” 272-298
Screening: *Meet Me in St. Louis* (Minnelli, 1944)

**Week 7**

Sept. 29: **Good Neighbors**

Screening: *Down Argentine Way* (Cummings, 1940)

**Week 8**

Oct. 6: **Self-Reflexivity**
Screening: *The Music Man* (DaCosta, 1962)

**Midterm Due**

******Oct. 7th-23rd – Zoot Suit at the Lyceum Theatre, ASU Tempe Campus******

**Week 9**

Oct. 13: **Asian Subjects and the Postwar Musical**


**Week 10**

Oct. 20: **The Ethnic Revival**
Screening: *Saturday Night Fever* (Badham, 1977); Excerpts *West Side Story* (Robbins/Wise, 1961)

**Week 11**

Oct. 27: **Postwar Hollywood Jews**
Screening: Fiddler on the Roof (Jewison, Excerpts Funny Girl (Wyler, 1968), The Jazz Singer (Fleischer, 1980), Yentl (Streisand, 1983)

ZS Reaction Paper Due

Week 12

Nov. 3: Post-Civil Rights Era Musicals
*Herman Gray, "Reaganism and the Sign of Blackness," 14-34
Screening: The Wiz (Lumet, 1978); Excerpts Lady Sings the Blues (Furie, 1972)

Week 13

Nov. 10: Chicanos and the Musical Film
Screening: Zoot Suit (Valdez, 1981); Excerpts La Bamba (Valdez, 1987)

Week 14

Nov. 17: The International Musical
Screening: Billy Elliot (Daldry, 2000)

Nov. 24: Thanksgiving Break

Week 15

Dec. 1: Race in the Contemporary Musical Film
Matthew Tinkcom, "Dozing Off During History: Hairspray's Iterations and the Gift of Black Music," in Cohan, The Sound of Musicals, 200-211

Screening: Hairspray (Shankman, 2007), Dreamgirls (Condon, 2006), Cadillac Records (Martin, 2008)

Final Paper Due Thursday Dec. 8, 2011 by 5pm