

FOLSOM CORDOVA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



Critical Approaches to Cinema - Ethnic Studies

CAC Approval Date: October 22, 2025 Board Approval Date: December 11, 2025	Course Length: 2 Semesters
Grading: A-F	Credits: 5 Credits per Semester
Proposed Grade Level(s): 11, 12	Subject Area: Ethnic Studies Elective Area (if applicable): English
Prerequisite(s): None	Corequisite(s): None
CTE Sector/Pathway:	
Intent to Pursue 'A-G' College Prep Status: Yes	
A-G Course Identifier: (b) English	
Graduation Requirement: Yes	
Course Intent: District Course Program (if applicable):	
Folsom Cordova Unified School District 2024-2025 Nondiscrimination Statement The Folsom Cordova Unified School District prohibits discrimination, intimidation, harassment (including sexual harassment) or bullying based on a person's actual or perceived ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or association with a person or a group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. For questions or complaints, contact: Jim Huber, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services Compliance Officer, Section 504 Coordinator, ADA Coordinator (students) jhuber@fcusd.org 916-294-9000 x 104580 Shannon Diaz, Director of Compliance Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator sdiaz@fcusd.org 916-294-9000 x 104415	

**1965 Birkmont Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA 95742**

The Folsom Cordova Unified School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment.

Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the Folsom Cordova Unified School District's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both. The District Title IX Coordinator is:

**Shannon Diaz, Director of Compliance
Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator
sdiaz@fcusd.org
916-294-9000 x 104415
1965 Birkmont Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA 95742**

The District nondiscrimination policy can be located at:

<https://www.fcusd.org/district/about-us/nondiscrimination-statementpolicy>

The District's nondiscrimination complaint procedures can be located at:

Students: <https://www.fcusd.org/departments/compliance/complaints/uniform-complaints>

Staff: <https://www.fcusd.org/departments/compliance/complaints/nondiscrimination-in-employment>

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or sex-based harassment, or make a complaint of sex discrimination or sex-based harassment under Title IX, please refer to:

Students: <https://www.fcusd.org/district/about-us/title-ix-notificationsexual-harassment>

Staff: <https://www.fcusd.org/departments/compliance/complaints/sexual-harrassment-title-ix>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Critical Approaches to Cinema - Ethnic Studies asks students to watch films through four critical lenses or approaches.

The first semester of this course lays the foundation for the study of reading visual media. Students will learn two theoretical frameworks common to a typical advanced English course: an Aesthetic Approach and a Mythological Approach. Students will move beyond a plot-level understanding of the story to interpret how structures of film—sound and lighting, framing and camera angles, tropes and archetypes—create meaning.

The second semester of the course is designed to meet the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum anchor standards by using film as the central text for exploring identity, histories, systems of power, and agency/solidarity/futures. Through the Civic Approach, students critically analyze how films reflect, challenge, or reinforce power structures and inequalities, paying particular attention to the representation of African American, Chicano/Latino, Asian American, Native American, and other

communities. This analysis engages students in questioning stereotypes, examining who has power and who does not, and considering how filmmakers use storytelling to advance or resist dominant ideologies. Through the Cultural Approach, students study a wide range of global and U.S. films that highlight diverse voices and cultural perspectives, emphasizing the importance of understanding multiple ways of seeing and knowing. Together, these approaches ensure that students engage with the lived experiences and contributions of marginalized communities, while also recognizing the role of cinema in shaping cultural literacy, building empathy, and fostering a vision of equity and social justice.

DETAILED UNITS OF INSTRUCTION:

Unit Number/Title	Unit Essential Questions	Examples of Formative Assessments	Examples of Summative Assessment
1. Aesthetic Approach: The artistry of filmmaking	How do visual and auditory elements create stories, viewpoints, and meaning?	*Discussion *Daily Writing Prompts *Frame and Scene Analysis *Quizzes	*Film Review *Presentation *Film Analysis *Tests
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed). CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.			
2. Mythological Approach: The Hero's Journey	What does the film teach us about humanity and the transcendent nature of storytelling? What tropes and archetypes are represented?	*Discussion *Writing Prompts *Storyboarding *Mapping	*Presentation *Film Analysis *Expository Essay
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.			

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**3. Civics
Approach:
Affirming or
challenging
power
structures.**

How do stories affirm or question power structures and stereotypes?
Historically, how have groups been represented?

*Discussions
*Writing Prompts

*Research history of the subject and compare/contrast to the film.
*Presentation
*Argumentative Prompt and Response

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3

Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

**4. Cultural
Approach:
Celebrating
movies from
around the
world**

How do stories affirm or question power structures and stereotypes?
Historically, how have groups been represented?

*Discussions
*Writing Prompts

*Research history of the subject and compare/contrast to the film
*Presentation
*Argumentative Response

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1

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Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

RELEVANT STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS, CONTENT/PROGRAM SPECIFIC STANDARDS:

Link to Common Core Standards (if applicable):

Educational standards describe what students should know and be able to do in each subject in each grade. In California, the State Board of Education decides on the standards for all students, from kindergarten through high school.

<https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>

Link to Framework (if applicable):

Curriculum frameworks provide guidance for implementing the content standards adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE). Frameworks are developed by the Instructional Quality Commission, formerly known as the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission, which also reviews and recommends textbooks and other instructional materials to be adopted by the SBE.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/esmcchapter3.pdf>

Link to Subject Area Content Standards (if applicable):

Content standards were designed to encourage the highest achievement of every student, by defining the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level.

<https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>

Link to Program Content Area Standards (if applicable):

Program Content Area Standards apply to programs such as International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, Career and Technical Education, etc.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kNWkAcucFLT38W5a-6igQBI_Lqr_Wm_NaUki2WC3QI/edit?tab=t.0

TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Textbooks

Board Approved	Textbook Title ISBN #	Author(s)	Publisher	Edition
	<i>N/A</i>			