

FOLSOM CORDOVA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



English 4: Methods of Film Criticism

CAC Approval Date: March 11, 2026 Board Approval Date: April 16, 2026	Course Length: 2 Semesters
Grading: A-F	Credits: 5 Credits per Semester
Proposed Grade Level(s): 12	Subject Area: English; Ethnic Studies Elective Area (if applicable):
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
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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:

Methods of Film Criticism is an English 4 course option, which deeply explores the meaning and messaging created in cinema and expands and extends students' technical knowledge and analytical skills. In this two semester course, students will learn and apply literary and rhetorical analysis to film. Throughout the course, students will read and apply film theory, film criticism, lenses, and analytical thought to film analysis. Media permeates our daily lives. Films are part of a cyclical social construct that both reflects and affirms the ideas of their time. Films have the ability to make meaning of the world and the human condition and communicate it to the masses. Films show us who we are, who we have been, and who we can be as individuals, as a community, as a society. Methods of Film Criticism builds on the foundation of our current Film as Visual Literature elective course, as it extends and expands technical, cinematic knowledge, and teaches students how to read a film critically. When reading a film critically, students apply film theory, lenses, context, and create assertions from these interpretations to defend their understanding of the film and the messages directors and screenwriters designed for their original audience. Reading a film is an artfully complex skill which high school years must build. They are emerging adults, consumers of content, innovators, global citizens, and the ability to see how messaging is

communicated via design and for what purpose is a necessary skill to being a productive and contributing member of society.

DETAILED UNITS OF INSTRUCTION:

Unit Number/Title	Unit Essential Questions	Examples of Formative Assessments	Examples of Summative Assessment
1. The World of Film: Technical and Cinematic Elements (Film as Visual Literature Level 1 Review Unit)	*How do we qualify a “good” film? * Which cinematic aspects of film create the most impact? *How do directors and screenwriters create meaning? *How do directors and screenwriters communicate messages?	*Technical Quizzes *Music Video Shot List *Short Film Analysis	*Technical Exam *Career Project
W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. SL.11-12.4.B Plan and present an argument that: supports a precise claim; provides a logical sequence for claims, counterclaims, and evidence; uses rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., analogy, appeal to logic through reasoning, appeal to emotion or ethical belief); uses varied syntax to link major sections of the presentation			
2. Methods of Media Criticism	*How do lenses shape the way we read and interpret film? *What is the relationship between framing, movement, sound, color, and symbolic meaning in film? *What do films say explicitly or implicitly and what impact does that have on an audience?	*Film Critiques *Timed Written Responses *Technical Quizzes	*Trailer Analysis (Timed Essay)
SL.11-12.4.B Plan and present an argument that: supports a precise claim; provides a logical sequence for claims, counterclaims, and evidence; uses rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., analogy, appeal to logic through reasoning, appeal to emotion or ethical belief); uses varied syntax to link major sections of the presentation to create cohesion and clarity; and provides a concluding statement that supports the argument presented. RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including			

figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

3. America at the Movies

- *How do films reflect the values or norms of their time?
- * How do films shape the values or norms of their time?
- *What makes an American film distinct?
- *What aspects make a film timeless?

- *Jigsaw presentation representative texts from a time period
- *Timed writes, short responses
- *Practice round: Socratic Seminar

- * Discussion/ Socratic Seminar

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.

W.11-12.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

4. Topics Across Time: A Comparative Study (Major Project Unit)

- *What is the value or impact in Hollywood revisiting film topics over a series of decades?
- *How does this film topic change, differ, or evolve over time?
- *How does the presentation of the film topic, its narrative, change, differ, or evolve over time and to what effect?
- *What does it mean for a cultural attitude or perception about a film topic to change over time or remain consistent?

- *Study proposal submission and approval
- *Research annotations
- *Research essay outline
- *Rough draft
- *Revised draft
- *Critiques on three topic films

- *Comparative Essay
- *Group Presentation

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.

W.11-12.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

5. International Films

- *What makes an International Film appeal to an international audience?

- *Jigsaw presentation representative texts from a region

- *Discussion/ Socratic Seminar
- *Screenplay Analysis

	*What can a film reveal about a culture? *How does history shape a film?	*Film Critiques	
W.11-12.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. W.11-12.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.			
6. Director Study	*What makes a director unique? *Can directors have a “fingerprint” or signature style? *How do directors gain inspiration? *What is the legacy or impact a director creates?	*Concept mapping: Director influenced by; Director influences *Film Charting *Critiques on three films	*Research Paper *Presentation
W.11-12.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. RI.11-12.6 Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints			
7. Film Canon and Contenders: Best Picture Winners and Lasting Impact	*What does a nomination for “Best Picture” convey about the quality or merit of a film? *What does it mean if a film wins? If it doesn’t win? *What is the role of canon in cinema?	*Film Critiques *Technical Quizzes *Research CFUs	*Group Presentation *Discussion/ Socratic Seminar
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.

W.11-12.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced

searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and

audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and

overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

SL.11-12.4.B Plan and present an argument that: supports a precise claim; provides a logical sequence for

claims, counterclaims, and evidence; uses rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., analogy, appeal to

logic through reasoning, appeal to emotion or ethical belief); uses varied syntax to link major sections of the

presentation to create cohesion and clarity; and provides a concluding statement that supports the argument

presented.

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.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/elaanchorstandards.asp>

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/sp/el/er/documents/eldstndpublication14.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.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/finalelaccsstandards.pdf>

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.

N/A

TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Textbooks

Board Approved	Textbook Title ISBN #	Author(s)	Publisher	Edition
<i>Text has been reviewed and will be adopted with the approval of this outline</i>	<i>Looking at Movies ISBN: 978-1-324- 08794-6</i>	Dave Monahan and Richard Barsam	W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.	8th