

ECO 277-01: Economics through Film
Fall 2015 – Prof. Daniel Diaz Vidal

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Class meetings: TTh: 1:10pm – 2:25pm

Classroom: Baxter Hall, Room 214

Office hours: W 10am to 12am, 1pm to 3pm, or by appointment (text me with your name and preferred time). Or just walk in anytime I am in my office.

My office is a place for me and you to work. I will let you know when I will be in my office and you are welcome to come in and share the space. I would also like students to come in and answer each other's questions. You don't really know how well you know a topic until you try to explain it. Inside and outside my office: I recommend you study, part of the time, in groups.

Course Materials

1. A Netflix, Amazon Prime or other similar type of video streaming services.
Amazon Prime, and other similar services will allow you to rent/buy movies which you are expected to gain access to on your own terms. Maybe you can watch them in groups?
2. [Criterion On Demand](#)
This is a collection the library's video streaming service with over 1000 titles.
3. [Lilly Library Video Search](#)
The library has many more dvd and vhs copies of movies, as well as a few more that can be streamed directly from its website.
4. Other Readings made available on the course website.

Course Goals and Content

This course uses media, primarily film, to illustrate a wide array of economic concepts such as: rational choice, money laundering, efficiency, market failure, opportunity cost, the business cycle, structural change, scarcity, specialization, inflation, market structures, barriers to entry, etc. The course will touch on a number of subfields of economics such as economic history, environmental economics, game theory, the economics of crime, etc. The course will make use of films to complement traditional approaches to teaching economics. In this sense, clips and entire films will be used to motivate in-class discussion, to promote interest in the subject matter, to increase retention of the concepts and theories discussed and to illustrate the significance of economics in the "real" world. We will be watching a number of clips in class and entire movies such as "Grapes of Wrath", "Scarface", "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre", "Trading Places", "Of Mice and Men" and "Mad Max." Prerequisite: Econ 101

Paper and Presentation

You are to choose a film that you particularly enjoy and argue why it might be a great addition to this course. You are to convince me that the piece you have chosen could improve the critical thinking abilities of the students at the college and that it addresses one or more economic concepts or issues of relevance. Write a 3-4 page paper that is typed, double spaced and that uses font 12 and Times New Roman style. Cite your sources using APA style.

Please talk to me about this if you need help picking the right topics or film. A first sketch of your topic and ideas, which should look like a great number of ideas placed on paper, is due by October 1st via email. A **first draft**, is due by November 1st. The deadline for this paper will be December 1st, so plan ahead, divide the writing and planning processes in blocks and use the pieces we have watched and our in-class discussions as a source of inspiration.

You must also give a 5 minute (exactly) presentation on the film you chose. Make sure you highlight its relevance to the course and why it would be a great addition to the curriculum. Have fun with this, gentlemen.

Exam Information

They will consist of multiple choice, short answer, graph and long answer questions. All examinations will be partially comprehensive. Please bring something to write with and a calculator. No other materials are allowed (no books or notebooks). I will not give make-up examinations. All excuses should be discussed in advance. If you have a legitimate excuse to miss the test the weight for that test will be uniformly distributed over the remaining grading items.

Homeworks:

A minimum of 8 homeworks will be assigned and they will usually be due a week after they are announced in class. In any case, the due date will be announced in class and you are responsible for finding out about announcements if you missed a lecture. The lowest grade will be dropped.

Course Grades

Your grade will be determined as follows:

1 st midterm exam	15%	September 29 th
2 nd midterm exam	15%	October 29 th
Final exam	25%	December 17 th at 1:30pm
Homework	15%	Due date on the assignments
Paper/Presentation	20%	Oct 1 st , Nov 1 st , Dec 1 st
Participation	10%	--

Grading scale

91 to 96% = A	81 to 86%=B	71 to 76%=C	60 to 66%=D
89 to 90% = A-	79 to 80%=B-	69 to 70%=C-	0 to 59% = F
87 to 88%=B+	77 to 78%=C+	67 to 68%=D+	

The instructor may (at his discretion) add an equal number of points to every student's individual final points (but do not count on it). The instructor may (at his discretion) increase the final grade of any student with excellent in-class participation by a letter grade (**but cannot be done based on a student's request!**) In general, incompletes cannot be granted. The instructor may, at his discretion, decide to grant an incomplete due to very serious circumstances (a health problem or similar).

Collaboration and Working Together:

You are encouraged to study together and to think out loud about the movies we watch and the projects you are working on, but you are expected to produce your own work to turn in. Any incident of copying another's work, however small, will result in an F in the class and a report to the Dean of Students.

Copying another student's work will be treated the same way as cheating on an exam or plagiarizing another's work. Everyone involved (copiers and those who allow others to copy) will be reported to the Dean of the Students.

Any recording without explicit permission in class or in my office will be understood as academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Academic Honesty Guide for further information on this: <http://www.wabash.edu/news/docs/AcademicHonestyGuide.pdf> (particularly recommended for freshmen).

Getting Help:

While your professor is your primary resource for assistance with course work, you may also wish to use the services provided by Wabash College for all students. There will be econ tutors available and I will announce the time and place in class.

Academic Support Services: Julia Rosenberg, Director

Location: Armory 101B Phone: 361-6024 rosenbej@wabash.edu

In addition to the Quantitative Skills and Writing Center, assistance with study skills such as time management, test taking, and textbook reading is provided through individual conferences with Ms. Rosenberg, workshops, and other means.

Please do let me know immediately if you need special accommodations.

Economics tutors will be available: Goodrich 101 TBA; 2 evenings 7-9 pm (Scott Campbell and Jared Valentine).

Film studies...

Classroom Protocol:

In order for all of us to enjoy an optimal educational environment I will request that we all observe certain basic ground rules.

- 1 Please do not start whispering or gathering up your materials before the lecture is completely over.
- 2 If you are attending the lecture, plan on being there for the entire duration of the class. If you absolutely must leave early for a good reason, on any given day, please send me a prior email, sit near the door and leave quietly.
- 3 The use of computers and/or any other electronic equipment must be authorized by the instructor.
- 4 Food or drink within reason is OK so long as you are not obviously distracting others.
- 5 Very Important: You are very welcome to interrupt with any questions related to the material being covered.

Extra Credit Short Film (5% points):

Write a script and make a short film that touches directly or indirectly on economics. It shouldn't be more than 10-15 minutes long and you can form groups of up to 5 students for this project. You need to send me an email by September 10th with all group members and 3 potential stories (1 paragraph description will suffice). Clearly identify the economic issues discussed in the film and make sure it is also relatively appealing to the general public. A sketch of sequences and ideas will be due, via email, on October 8th. The Script will be due on Nov 8th, again via email, and the film should be ready by no later than December 1st. I'm not fishing for a new Spielberg here, so relax and just take this as an opportunity to be creative. Have fun!

<http://www.raindance.org/7-rules-for-writing-short-films/>

<http://www.stuff.tv/features/how-make-short-film-11-pro-tips-movie-making>

Tentative schedule:

27-Aug	TH	Introduction
1-Sep	T	Theory-Discounting and Choice
3-Sep	TH	Boys From The Hood/Friday
8-Sep	T	Theory-The Economics of illegal markets
10-Sep	TH	American Gangster/Highway Rick
15-Sep	T	Theory- Cost of Crime
17-Sep	TH	Scarface/The Untouchables
22-Sep	T	Theory-Money (launder) and illegal markets
24-Sep	TH	All the President's Men/Cocaine Cowboys
29-Sep	T	<u>EXAM1(First Draft)</u>
1-Oct	TH	Theory-Medieval Trade/Banking/Ideas
6-OCT	T	Merchant of Venice/The name of the Rose
		Theory-Gold/Migrations/Growth/Nat
8-Oct	TH	Resource Econ
13-Oct	T	How the West Was Won/Pale Rider
15-Oct	TH	Theory-Banking/Great Depression
20-Oct	T	It's a wonderful life/Trading Places
22-Oct	TH	Theory-Gold Standard/G. Depression
27-Oct	T	Wizard of Oz (Grapes of Wrath)
29-Oct	TH	<u>EXAM 2</u>
3-Nov	T	Theory/Inequality
5-Nov	TH	Inequality for All/The Terminator
10-Nov	T	Theory Unions
12-Nov	TH	Matewan/On the waterfront
17-Nov	T	Theory- Natural Resource Econ
19-Nov	TH	Mad Max/The 11th Hour
24-Nov	T	Thansksgiving Break
26-Nov	TH	Thansksgiving Break
1-Dec	T	Presentations
3-Dec	TH	Presentations
8-Dec	T	Presentations
10-Dec	TH	Presentations
15-Dec	Tues	FINAL at 1:30pm