Course Description: A genre is a category. To define a genre is to identify a constellation of elements that when brought together in a certain way create a unique entity. A genre is not just a checklist of individual features; it is a conglomeration of interdependent features, both situational and substantive, that make up an artifact’s identity. These interdependent features are brought together by an organizing principle that defines a genre. This course examines the musical genre to identify that organizing principle. In particular, you will be watching films, reading texts, engaging in class discussions, and writing papers about musicals produced at the studio, M-G-M, during Hollywood's golden era. MGM was famous for its lavish spectacles and especially its musicals. Most of its best musicals were in turn made by their production unit, the Arthur Freed unit. Freed was a producer who gathered top talent to efficiently churn out some of the best musicals in film history. We will look at the musical as a genre within the context of the history and films of the Arthur Freed unit at MGM.

Course Outcomes: (1) By the end of the class, students should be able to identify the organizing principle of the genre under examination. (2) Students should be familiar with the significant films of the genre from the historical era studied. (3) Students should be conversant about the evolution of the genre within the context studied. (4) Students should understand the artistic elements of the genre.

Assignments & Grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>50 (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Classic Musical Paper</td>
<td>100 (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modern Musical Paper</td>
<td>200 (40%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genre Participation Paper</td>
<td>150 (30%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>500 (100%)</strong></td>
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Participation & Attendance:

**Prompt and regular attendance is expected.** Attendance is taken and more than 2 absences will count against 1/3 of a letter grade off your final grade for each day more than 2 missed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freely offers substantive, unprompted comments</td>
<td>45-50 points (A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offers an occasional comment</td>
<td>40-44 points (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responds when prompted</td>
<td>35-39 points (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present, without comments</td>
<td>30-34 points (D)</td>
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</table>
Policies:
- Late papers will not be accepted. If you are gone, you should e-mail it on time.
- Cell phones should be turned off prior to entering the classroom.
- Students should not arrive late or leave early for film screenings.
- Students should not talk while films are being screened.
- Any missed screenings must be made up on your own.

Grading: The following definitions are used in assigning grades for coursework.
- A = Excellent 90 – 100%
- B = Very good 80 – 89%
- C = Satisfactory 70 – 79%
- D = Passing 60 – 69%
- F = Unsatisfactory Below 59%

Assignment Descriptions

The Classic Musical Paper (Paper 1): Min. 4 pages
Select a film that is considered to be a classic musical (see the attached list of suggestions). Explain why it is considered to be a classic of the genre. Consider arguments made by Rick Altman and class discussions in relation to the stylistic elements of your chosen film.

The Modern Musical Paper (Evolution of the Genre) (Paper 2): Min. 4 pages
After describing a film from the classical musical genre in the earlier assignment, the next task is to see how a modern musical (post-1965) fits or does not fit with the genre (see the attached list for suggestions). You will examine how it is similar to classical musicals in terms of content and style and on the other hand, what makes it modern and different. How does the modern situation to which the film is responding (the cultural situation in which the film is produced with contemporary concerns) influence the message and cinematic style of the film as a modern musical? Does it still count as a musical?

Genre Description Paper: (Paper 3): Min. 5 pages
The genre description exam will include an analytical discussion of 5 films considered in class. The analysis must include a discussion of substantive (what is the movie about, who are the characters), stylistic (how is the film shot, what cinematic decisions have been made), and aesthetic issues (how do these films fit into the genre and/or challenge the genre). Ultimately, you must make an argument for the organizing principle of the genre. What is the central conflict in all musicals?

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty directly concerns ethical behaviors which affect both the academic environment and the civic community. All work is assumed to be original work produced only by the student submitting the work for a grade. Excessive help, plagiarism, failure to cite references and sources, falsification of data, or other misrepresentations of work submitted for a grade will be considered dishonest and will result in a failing grade for the assignment or course. In addition, a department may deny admission to or dismiss from a program a student who has engaged in academic dishonesty, and the dean of faculty or the dean of students may exclude such a student from extracurricular activities or expel him or her from the College, even on the first instance of academic dishonesty. Any student who has questions about what constitutes academic honesty should discuss those issues with the instructor.

Disabilities: Students with disabilities, physical or learning, are entitled to appropriate accommodation. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the Access Center (Heather Angelle) T 2144, ext. 6645, in a timely way to approve and provide the accommodation.
College Outcome – **Ways of Knowing** (copy taken from the College catalogue)

As an institution of higher learning the College has the responsibility to help students recognize and value different ways of knowing, ranging from aesthetic to analytical. The student should not only receive knowledge (propositional and procedural) but also learn to evaluate, integrate and construct knowledge. A liberal arts education provides students with the ability to reason in a diverse world.

Selected Ways of Knowing Outcomes
The student shall:
1. Articulate a critical response to creative works
2. Use qualitative and quantitative data in a systematic approach to arrive at reasoned conclusions
3. Move from intuition into insight through investigation and critical reflection
4. Reflect on and challenge perceptions, actions and values based on new information

How this Course Connects to the **Ways of Knowing** Outcome

It is easy to underestimate a film. Most people are so accustomed to viewing cinematic works that they overlook the finer points of the art form. An uncritical response to a film usually focuses on whether or not the viewer enjoyed the film or found it entertaining. The film genre courses will press student to examine not only the story, but also the elements that compose the story, the parts that make it what it is. What exactly does a film need to have to be considered a western or a screwball comedy or a neo noir? What can it omit and still fit in the genre? Students will be asked to critically examine a film’s content as well as its style, and to take an objective view of a film in terms of its category and place within that category.

These determinations can only be made through analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. A multitude of films must be examined to craft a genre definition. Once viewed, all of the films in the database must be analyzed for content and stylistic elements. Although “gut instinct” may lead a student to examine a film initially, only the analysis of the data can truly define the boundaries of a genre.

In these ways, the Film Genres courses which strive to place films within a larger context of their construction fulfills the “Ways of Knowing” outcome.
Course Schedule:

**Week 10**
- **M March 19:** Go over syllabus.
  - Read for Friday: *The American Film Musical*: Chap. 3 (structure of the musical)
  - *M-G-M’s Greatest Musicals: The Arthur Freed Unit*: Preface, Chap. 4 (pp. 90-118)

- **W March 21:** Screening: *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944, 1h53m)

- **F March 23**
  - Read for Monday: *The American Film Musical*: pp. 59-74 (top) (re: audio dissolve)

**Week 11**
- **M March 26**
  - Screen in class part 1: *Musicals Great Musicals* (45m)
  - Read for Friday: *M-G-M’s Greatest Musicals: The Arthur Freed Unit*: pp. 223-235

- **W March 28:** Screening: *Easter Parade* (1948, 1h47m)

- **F March 30**
  - Read for Monday: *The American Film Musical*: pp. 74-89 (visual, personality dissolves)

**Week 12**
- **M April 2**
  - Screen in class Part 2: *Musicals Great Musicals* (45m)

- **W April 4:** Screening: *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950, 1h47m)
  - (Easter break: no class F Ap 6)

**Week 13**
- (Easter break: no class M Ap 9)

- **W Ap 11:** Screening: *An American in Paris* (1951, 1h53m)

- **F Ap 13**
  - Discuss *Annie Get Your Gun*, the folk musical
  - No Reading: Paper 1 due Monday

**Week 14**
- **M Ap 16**
  - *Paper 1 Due*
  - Discuss *An American in Paris*

- **W Ap 18:** Screening: *Singin’ in the Rain* (1952, 1h43m)

- **F Ap 20**
  - Read for Monday: *The American Film Musical*: pp. 110, Conclusion: pp. 360-364
Week 15
M Ap 23
Screen in class: Glorious Technicolor (60m)
Read for Monday: M-G-M’s Greatest Musicals: The Arthur Freed Unit: Chap. 13 (pp. 397-419)

W Ap 25: Screening: The Band Wagon (1953, 1h51m)

F Ap 27: No Class (away for conference)

Week 16
M Ap 30:
*Paper 2 Due
Discuss The Band Wagon, Technicolor, book conclusions
Read for Friday: M-G-M’s Greatest Musicals: The Arthur Freed Unit: Chap. 15 (pp.453-495)

W May 2: Screening: Gigi (1958, 1h59m)

F May 4 (last day)
Discuss Gigi / Wrap-up/ Evaluations

W May 9: Final exams due by 1pm at: T4405
Film Paper Suggestions

**Research film plots at www.imdb.com**

Arthur Freed Films

Silk Stockings (1957) (producer)
Invitation to the Dance (1956) (producer)
Kismet (1955) (producer)
It's Always Fair Weather (1955) (producer)
Brigadoon (1954) (producer)
The Belle of New York (1952) (producer)
Show Boat (1951) (producer)
Royal Wedding (1951) (producer)
Pagan Love Song (1950) (producer)
Crisis (1950) (producer)
On the Town (1949) (producer)
Any Number Can Play (1949) (producer)
The Barkleys of Broadway (1949) (producer)
Take Me Out to the Ball Game (1949) (producer)
Words and Music (1948) (producer)
The Pirate (1948) (producer)
Summer Holiday (1948) (producer)
Good News (1947) (producer)
Till the Clouds Roll By (1946) (producer)
Ziegfeld Follies (1946) (producer)
The Harvey Girls (1946) (producer)
Yolanda and the Thief (1945) (producer)
The Clock (1945) (producer)
Meet the People (1944) (executive producer) (uncredited)
Girl Crazy (1943) (producer)
Du Barry Was a Lady (1943) (producer)
Best Foot Forward (1943) (producer)
Cabin in the Sky (1943) (producer)
For Me and My Gal (1942) (producer)
Panama Hattie (1942) (producer)
Babes on Broadway (1941) (producer)
Lady Be Good (1941) (producer)
Little Nellie Kelly (1940) (producer)
Strike Up the Band (1940) (producer)
Babes in Arms (1939) (producer)
The Wizard of Oz (1939) (associate producer) (uncredited)
Classical Musical Suggestions: (for Paper 1)

1927
The Jazz Singer

1929
Applause
The Broadway Melody

1930
Animal Crackers

1932
Love Me Tonight

1933
42nd Street
Duck Soup
Footlight Parade
Gold Diggers of 1933
Hallelujah, I'm a Bum!

1934
Dames
The Gay Divorcee
The Merry Widow
Wonder Bar

1935
Broadway Melody of 1936
Gold Diggers of 1935
A Night at the Opera
Top Hat

1936
Anything Goes
Follow the Fleet
Gold Diggers of 1937
The Great Ziegfeld
Show Boat
Swing Time

1937
A Day at the Races
Shall We Dance

1938
Alexander's Ragtime Band

1939
Babes in Arms
The Wizard of Oz

1940
Little Nellie Kelly
Strike Up the Band
Tin Pan Alley
1941
Babes on Broadway
Ziegfeld Girl

1942
Footlight Serenade
For Me and My Gal
Holiday Inn
Panama Hattie
Road to Morocco
Star Spangled Rhythm
Yankee Doodle Dandy

1943
Cabin in the Sky
DuBarry Was a Lady
Stormy Weather
This is the Army

1944
Bathing Beauty
Hollywood Canteen
Meet the People

1945
Anchors Aweigh
The Bells of St. Mary's
Rhapsody in Blue
State Fair

1946
The Harvey Girls
Night and Day
Ziegfeld Follies

1948
The Paleface
The Pirate
The Red Shoes
Take Me Out to the Ballgame

1949
The Barkleys of Broadway
A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court
On the Town

1950
Summer Stock
Three Little Words
Young Man with a Horn

1951
The Lemon Drop Kid
Lullaby of Broadway
Royal Wedding
Show Boat
1952
Hans Christian Andersen
Million Dollar Mermaid

1953
Calamity Jane
Gentlemen Prefer Blondes
Kiss Me, Kate

1954
Brigadoon
Carmen Jones
Red Garters
Seven Brides for Seven Brothers
A Star Is Born
There's No Business Like Show Business
White Christmas

1955
Guys and Dolls
Kismet
Oklahoma!

1956
Carousel
The Girl Can't Help It
The King and I
Love Me Tender

1957
Funny Face
Jailhouse Rock
The Pajama Game
Pal Joey
Silk Stockings

1958
Damn Yankees
South Pacific

1959
Gidget
Li'l Abner
Some Like It Hot

Modern Musical Suggestions: (for Paper 2)

1960
Bells Are Ringing
Cinderfella
Expresso Bongo
Where the Boys Are

1961
The Parent Trap
West Side Story
1962
The Music Man
State Fair

1963
Bye Bye Birdie

1964
A Hard Day's Night
Mary Poppins
Muscle Beach Party
My Fair Lady
Pajama Party
The Umbrellas of Cherbourg
The Unsinkable Molly Brown
Viva Las Vegas

1965
Beach Blanket Bingo
Help!
The Sound of Music

1967
Camelot
The Young Girls of Rochefort
Doctor Dolittle
Thoroughly Modern Millie

1968
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
Finian's Rainbow
Funny Girl
Head (The Monkees)
Oliver!
Yellow Submarine - animated

1969
Hello, Dolly!
Paint Your Wagon

1971
Bedknobs and Broomsticks
Fiddler on the Roof
Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory

1972
Cabaret
1776

1973
Godspell
Tom Sawyer
American Graffiti

1974
Blazing Saddles
1975
At Long Last Love
Funny Lady
The Rocky Horror Picture Show
Tommy

1976
A Star Is Born
Nashville

1977
New York, New York
Saturday Night Fever

1978
The Buddy Holly Story
Grease
The Wiz

1979
Hair
The Muppet Movie

1980
Coal Miner's Daughter
Fame
Popeye
Xanadu

1981
Pennies from Heaven

1982
Annie
One from the Heart
Victor/Victoria

1983
Flashdance
The Meaning of Life
Yentl

1984
The Cotton Club
Footloose
Purple Rain

1985
A Chorus Line
Sweet Dreams

1986
Labyrinth
Little Shop of Horrors
True Stories
Under the Cherry Moon
1991
The Commitments
The Five Heartbeats

1992
Newsies
Sister Act
Strictly Ballroom

1993
The Nightmare Before Christmas (animated)

1996
Cannibal! The Musical
Evita

1997
Spiceworld

1999
South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut
Topsy-Turvy

2000
Dancer in the Dark
O Brother, Where Art Thou?
High Fidelity

2001
Glitter
Moulin Rouge!
Hedwig and the Angry Inch

2002
Chicago
Crossroads
8 Mile

2003
School of Rock

2004
Beyond the Sea
The Chorus
The Phantom of the Opera
Raise Your Voice

2005
Tim Burton's Corpse Bride
Rent
The Producers
Walk the Line

2006
High School Musical
Idlewild
Dreamgirls