Syllabus for COM 401-002
Alamo Films
M 5:30-8:00 PM--Ferguson 179

Instructor: Larry J. King
Office: LAN 413
Phone: (936) 468-1260
Office Hours: T TH: 3:30-4:30 PM
E-mail: lking@sfasu.edu

Text: Readings for this course will be provided in D2L.

Course Description: This course examines how popular films have fostered the development of the myth of the Battle of the Alamo and served as representations of prevailing cultural attitudes and values. As part of this class, we will view several film depictions of the Battle of the Alamo. We will learn how to view these films from a critical viewpoint, looking for structure and meaning.

Course Adaptations: Students with documented disabilities who need course adaptations or accommodations need to make an appointment with your instructor as soon as possible.

Cellular Phones: Please remember to turn off all cell phones before class begins, and do not use your cell phones for text messaging or checking messages during class. If you violate this request you will be asked to leave the classroom.

Late work: Student work that is turned in after the due date will not be accepted, unless the student has a valid excuse for not turning the work in on time. Valid excuses would include sickness, a death in the family, and family emergencies. "I just could not get it done," is not a valid excuse. If you have a question about the validity of your excuse, please talk to your instructor.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam; falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment; helping or attempting to help other student(s) in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: submitting an assignment as
one's own work when it is at least partly the work of another person; submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty:

Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, resubmission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.

Procedure for Addressing Student Academic Dishonesty

A faculty member who has evidence and/or suspects that academic dishonesty has occurred will gather all pertinent information and initiate the following procedure:

1. The faculty member will discuss all evidence of cheating or plagiarism directly with the student(s) involved.
2. After consideration of the explanation provided by the student(s), the faculty member will determine whether academic dishonesty has occurred. The faculty member may consult with the academic unit head and/or dean in making a decision.
3. After a determination of academic dishonesty, the faculty member will inform the academic unit head and submit a Report of Academic Dishonesty with supporting documentation to the office of the dean of the student’s major. This report will become part of the student's record and will remain on file with the dean's office for at least four years even if the student withdraws prior to receiving a grade.
4. For a serious first offense or subsequent offenses, the dean of the student’s major will determine a course of action, which may include dismissal from the university. The dean may refer the case to the college council for review and recommendations before making this determination.

A student's record of academic dishonesty will not be available to faculty members. The purpose of the record is for the dean to track a pattern of academic dishonesty during a student's academic career at Stephen F. Austin State University.

Student Appeals:

A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Academic Appeals by Students (6.3).

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54):
http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades.pdf
At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Active Military Service (6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities:**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004/468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/). Once this has been completed, please schedule an appointment with me so we can work out specifics about the accommodations needed.

**Attendance:**

Because the majority of the learning in this class is based on viewing films and participating in discussion, part of your grade for the course will be determined by your attendance and active participation in class. For your attendance grade, you will begin the semester with 100 points for attendance. On each absence 14 points will be subtracted from your attendance points. No absences will be allowed for evaluated activities such as class discussions, presentations, or when papers are due. However, students will be allowed to make up work for such absences only when conditions are clearly beyond the student's control and these conditions are well documented. This means that if you are absent from a class meeting when there is no graded activity, there is no need to provide documentation for the absence to your instructor, and your instructor will not hear excuses for absences from regular class meetings. Absence from the course which exceeds 25% of the class meetings (or 4 absences) will result in automatic failure of the course.

**Participation:**

Active participation in the class discussion of these films is essential for the success of the class. Therefore, your class participation will be graded by your instructor using the criteria below. Your instructor will give you a participation grade after each class discussion. These grades will be averaged to provide your participation grade for the semester. Your average participation grade will be converted to a percentage and you will receive that percentage of the 100 participation points.
Criteria for Class Participation Grade

Participation will be graded on a scale from 0 (lowest) through 4 (highest), using the criteria below. The criteria focus on what you demonstrate and do not presume to guess at what you know but do not demonstrate. This is because what you offer to the class is what you and others learn from. I expect the average level of participation to satisfy the criteria for a 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Absent or no participation.</td>
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| 1     | • Present, not disruptive.  
       | • Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much.  
       | • Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion. |
| 2     | • Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic information from the film, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze the film.  
       | • Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the film or readings), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class).  
       | • Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on.  
       | • Demonstrates sporadic involvement. |
| 3     | • Demonstrates good preparation: knows facts about the film and has thought through implications of them.  
       | • Offers interpretations and analysis of the film (more than just facts) to the class.  
       | • Contributes will to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students’ points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion.  
       | • Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement. |
| 4     | • Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed the film exceptionally well, relating it to the readings and other material (e.g., reading, course material, discussions, experience, outside readings, etc.).  
       | • Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the film, e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further.  
       | • Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students’ comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps the class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc.  
       | • Demonstrates ongoing outstanding active involvement. |
Critical Essays: The films we watch in class should be viewed from a critical standpoint, not just for entertainment. By critical we mean that we are looking for the meaning and significance of these films. To assist you in forming critical insights into these films, you will be required to write brief, 2-3 pages, critical essays on each the films. In these essays, you will be expected to apply elements of one of the critical approaches we have discussed in class to assist you in finding underlying structure and meaning in the films. It is important for you to think analytically about the films and develop clear arguments for your claims. These essays will form the basis of our class discussion of the films. Your essays will be graded based on your meeting the specific requirements for the assignment, neatness, completeness, consistent use of style, spelling, grammar, punctuation, readability, organization, and the quality of your ideas. These essays must be neatly typed in proper APA or MLA format and style. You should have complete citations and a reference list. One point will be deducted from your grade for each grammatical, spelling, style, or format error, so carefully proofread your paper. In addition to the printed copy of your essay, you must also submit an electronic copy of your paper as an attachment to an e-mail sent to your instructor. Each of these essays are worth 10 points for a total of 80 points.

Discussion Leadership: Small groups of students will be assigned to each film. You will lead, with the help of your instructor, a class discussion on the critical analysis of the assigned film. This is to be a discussion—not a speech or oral reading session. You should think of probing questions that you can ask to engage the class in a thought provoking dialog about the film. This assignment will be worth a total of 25 points. You will do two discussion leadership for two films for a total of 50 points. You will be graded on the quality of your analysis, the ideas you present, your probing questions, and the discussion you promote.

Critical Analysis Papers: The purpose of this paper is to display: (1) your ability to employ the procedures of a specific critical approach in the analysis of one or more of the films we view in this class, (2) your ability to develop and defend a critical claim, and (3) your ability to write in clear and lucid prose. In this paper you will select one or more film and analyze the film or films using a critical approach of your choosing. You will also present the results of you paper to the class during our scheduled finals period.

Your paper should be 8-10 pages in length and in proper APA or MLA format. Simply staple your paper together,
do not put them in a folder or binder. Your papers will be graded based on your meeting the specific requirements for the assignment, neatness, completeness, consistent use of style, spelling, grammar, punctuation, readability, organization, and the quality of your ideas. These papers must be neatly typed in proper APA or MLA format and style. You should have complete citations and a reference list. One point will be deducted from your grade for each grammatical, spelling, style, or format error, so carefully proofread your paper. In addition to the printed copy of your paper that you bring to class, you must also submit an electronic copy (Word or rtf) of your paper in the drop box in D2L. These papers are worth 100 points.
# COM 401-002
Grades—Fall 2017

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<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points Available</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Essays</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Leadership</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Analysis Papers</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>430</strong></td>
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A = 430-387
B = 386-344
C = 343-301
D = 300-258
F = 257-0
**August 28**

Course Introduction.

◆ For our next class read reading 1 on D2L (Chapters 1-4 in Rybacki and Rybacki).

**September 4**

The Purpose and Process of Criticism.

◆ For our next class read reading 2 on D2L (Chapters 5-7 and 9 in Rybacki and Rybacki).

**September 11**

The Process of Criticism.

◆ For our next class read reading 3 (The Battle of the Alamo) reading 4 on D2L (The Martyrs of The Alamo or The Birth of Texas and Davy Crockett at the Fall of the Alamo) on D2L.

**September 18**

History of the Battle of the Alamo.
View "Martyrs of the Alamo" (1915).
View "Davy Crockett at the Fall of the Alamo" (1926).

◆ For our next class read reading 5 on D2L (Heroes of the Alamo).

**September 25**

Discuss "Martyrs of the Alamo" and "Davy Crockett at the Fall of the Alamo."
Critical Essays on "Martyrs of the Alamo" and "Davy Crockett at the Fall of the Alamo" Due.
View "Heroes of the Alamo" (1937).

◆ For our next class read reading 6 on D2L (Man of Conquest).

**October 2**

Discuss "Heroes of the Alamo."
Critical Essays on "Heroes of the Alamo" Due.
View "Man of Conquest" (1939).

◆ For our next class read reading 7 on D2L (Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier).
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<th>October 9</th>
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| Discuss “Man of Conquest.”  
Critical Essays on “Man of Conquest” Due.  
View “Davy Crockett King of the Wild Frontier” (1955).  |
| For our next class read reading 8 on D2L (The Last Command). |

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<th>October 16</th>
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| Discuss “Davy Crockett King of the Wild Frontier.”  
Critical Essays on “Davy Crockett King of the Wild Frontier” Due.  

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<th>October 23</th>
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| Discuss “The Last Command.”  
Critical Essays on “The Last Command” Due.  
View “John Wayne’s The Alamo Documentary” (1960).  
View the Original Theatrical Trailer for “The Alamo” (1960).  |
| For our next class read reading 9 on D2L (The Alamo). |

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<th>October 30</th>
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<th>November 6</th>
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| Discuss “The Alamo” (1960).  
Critical Essays on “The Alamo” Due.  |
| For our next class read reading 10 on D2L (The Alamo: Thirteen Days to Glory). |

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<th>November 13</th>
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<th>November 20</th>
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<td>Thanksgiving break.</td>
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<th>November 27</th>
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| Discuss “The Alamo: Thirteen Days to Glory.”  

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<th>December 4</th>
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Critical Essays on “The Alamo” Due.  
Peer Review of Critical Analysis Papers. |

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<th>December 11</th>
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<td>Presentation of Critical Analysis Papers.</td>
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