Michael Slowik  
mslowik@mail.sdsu.edu  
Office Hours: Wednesday 2-4 pm and by appointment  
Office: Little Theatre 171A

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**  
Students will consider literary and filmic precedents and the social, political, economic, historical and cultural contexts of their production work. Thesis production projects should show evidence of a critical concern with formal issues as well as technical excellence.

This course is designed to enable students to conceptualize and write a TFM Masters Thesis Proposal. This class includes individual writing, group analysis of examples, and peer feedback. In addition to the work done directly in class, students will identify and consult with the members of their thesis committees, especially the thesis chair.

**OBJECTIVES**  
- Identify and express in writing the central concept of TFM Masters Thesis proposal.
- Identify and express in writing the significant sub-problems involved in the creation of the creative project.
- Assemble a bibliography and filmography relating to the creative project, discussing in specific terms the relevance of each entry to the project.
- Identify and justify the aesthetic strategies involved in the execution of the creative project.
- Master the required presentation format (MLA), and source citation protocols.

**EVALUATION**  
**Attendance and Class Participation**  
Regular attendance and active participation is expected and essential. The success of the seminar and the success of your proposal depend on a high level of trust and critical interaction among students. Absences will negatively impact your evaluation.

| Chapter 1 | 25% |
| Chapter 2 | 35% |
| Chapter 3 | 15% |
Power Point Presentation of Film and related Literature
Each student will make a class presentation and lead discussion. Students will choose a film and theme of direct relevance to their thesis project. Students will discuss the genre and theme of the film, and relate it to a reading that will inform their Thesis Proposal.

At least one week prior to each presentation, the presenter will provide copies of appropriate critical readings to the class. Please post your reading on the Forum (BB) or make copies available. Half the grade for this assignment depends upon timely delivery of the reading and thoughtful discussion of it.

These readings should compliment the film screened and the themes discussed. (Note that critical readings are not usually found on the Internet. This will require research in books and/or professional journals.) The class session itself will include a PowerPoint presentation, the screening of a portion of the film selected by the presenter, and a discussion of the film and the readings in terms of the presenter's thesis proposal. The PowerPoint will be emailed to the instructor.

Reflection Journal/Artist's Notebook
Students should keep a journal and make at least weekly entries. These entries can consider the challenges and triumphs of the creative process. It's a place to record significant observations, to record dreams, and to pose questions for further research and development. You may include notes about the development of characters, conflicts and locations. The journal is a place for you to systematically reflect and consider the progress you are making in your creative journey. Insofar as you may choose to critically consider the “process of your production” in your thesis Chapter 4, the journal can provide important “raw footage.”

Chapter 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING
Statement of Problem
Statement of the Sub problems
Goals and Objectives
Definition of Terms
Delimitations
Significance of Project

Chapter 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, FILMS AND GENRES
Literature on Project Topic
Literature on Project Style
Related Film Theory
Films and/or genres that relate Thematically
Films and/or genres that relate Stylistically

Chapter 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES
Formal approach (style, aesthetic approach)
Tactics and strategies employed in solving stated problem

Appendix:
Treatment and/or Script
Budget
Timeline
Crew

Writing Style and Mechanics
A thesis should be clear, concise and coherent. It makes a case based on evidence and research. The best academic writing is not personal or colloquial; nor is it unnecessarily abstract or convoluted.

See the recommended texts for guidance regarding both writing style and the intellectual, emotional and psychological challenges of the process. How long should your thesis proposal be? How long should your film be? Only as long as necessary. (Films longer than 30 minutes are not encouraged and may not be supported by the TFM Program.)

Demonstrate your familiarity with the topics, techniques and approaches you are proposing. Rely on the writings and insights of the best scholars and filmmakers you can identify. Review the examples of successful theses on BB. Frame the writing process as an opportunity to become a better, more grounded filmmaker, rather than as an obstacle to be overcome.

Take particular care regarding word choice, spelling, grammar and sentence construction.

Read your work out loud. Does it make sense? Is it easy to follow? Ask friends and colleagues whose writing you respect to look over a draft. This class is best used as forum for the development of ideas; polishing your prose means making a commitment to write and rewrite, to revise and reconsider. A poorly crafted proposal is an impediment. If your writing skills are not as strong as you would like, seek out help at the writing center or from a more experienced writer and editor.

See the resources on BB under Research and Writing. In particular it is essential that you format your proposal following the MLA style guidelines. (See: http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c08_o.html)

Make your words as expressive as your film.
Budgets
The budget should reflect the prevailing rates for all equipment and services. It should reflect a realistic estimate of the time commitment required to complete the production. See the templates on BB.

Include columns that reflect Cash-on-Hand, In-kind Contributions and To be Raised. The advantages of this more rigorous budgeting are a realistic valuation of your time and effort, and the creation of a model that will be useful in producing professional productions.

Working with a Thesis Chair
The sooner you identify and recruit a chair, the more you and your work will benefit. It takes time and some effort to build a strong relationship with your chair. Faculty members generally do not react well to last minute requests with a looming deadline.

Pick a faculty member who has a clear appreciation both for your talents and for the story you are choosing to tell. Develop working methods grounded in clear communication and mutual respect. Your chair can be an invaluable source of resources, suggestions and useful criticism. Chairs take no small pleasure in the success of their students.

Assignments and Due Dates
Meeting deadlines is an essential requirement of the course. To earn an “A” the work must be excellent and students must submit each assignment on time according to the specifications on the detailed schedule below.

In order to receive graduate credit for the course the work must earn a “B.”

Note: Class 12 is scheduled for Veterans Day 11/11. Although class will not meet, assignments will still be due no later than Tuesday 11/12 at 9 a.m.

Rewriting and revising is expected and encouraged. Feel free to work ahead of the schedule below. This is much preferable to falling behind.

Work is due electronically on the dates indicated below at the beginning of the class session. Assignments should be 12 pt font, Times New Roman, double-spaced and submitted on Blackboard.

Note that a draft is usually due in class a week before it is submitted for a grade. This first due date is an opportunity for you to get feedback from peers and the instructor. It is essential that all of these deadlines are met. Failure to do so will seriously jeopardize the likelihood of your thesis proposal being approved for production beginning Spring 2013.
Submitting work
Work should be submitted electronically to mslowik@mail.sdsu.edu
Name your files according to this protocol
lastname.abstract.doc
lastname.chapter1. draft 1.doc
Note: this timeline does not include the dates of the individual in-class PowerPoint presentations.

Chapter 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worksheet Goals &amp; Objectives</th>
<th>Due Class</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals &amp; Objectives</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worksheet Problem &amp; Sub-problem</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>Noon 9/23; emailed to instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement of the Sub-problem</td>
<td>Noon 9/23; emailed to instructor</td>
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<td><strong>Draft of Chapter 1 for grade</strong></td>
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Chapter 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, FILMS AND GENRES

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Literature on Project Topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature on Project Style</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worksheet Related Film Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Related Film Theory</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worksheet Films and/or genres that relate Thematically</td>
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<tr>
<td>Films and/or genres that relate Thematically</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worksheet Films and/or genres that relate stylistically</td>
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<td>Films and/or genres that relate stylistically</td>
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Chapter 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

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<th>Worksheet Methods and Procedures</th>
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<td><strong>Draft of Chapter 3 for grade</strong></td>
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Appendix:
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Due in Class</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract, Treatment and/or Script</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Timeline</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Crew</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of Appendix for Grading</td>
<td>14</td>
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Week 16. ABSTRACT, FINAL PROPOSAL including Appendix, and COMMITTEE FORM DUE IN CLASS 12-9-13.

PLAGIARISM
Students must be especially careful to avoid “borrowing” from Internet sources and each other. There will be “zero-tolerance” for plagiarism. Cheating or plagiarism will result in an “F” for the course and a report to the office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Be sure to cite all of your sources with page numbers and urls as appropriate.

Required Book
SDSU Master Thesis and Project Manual

Recommended
[You must produce a Works Cited for all quotes. A correct citation includes: Author. Title. Place of Publication: Publisher. Date of Publication. Medium.]


Research Guides
http://www.paperrater.com/
http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c08_o.html
http://library.sdsu.edu/guides/sub.php?id=37
IDENTIFYING YOUR PROJECT CONCEPT

WEEK 1: August 26
Classwork: Be prepared to tell us what you know about your proposed thesis project.
Sign up for presentations.
Thesis Choice Pro Con Worksheet (BB)

WEEK 2: September 2 - Labor Day No Class.
Classwork: None

Note: Identify and consider possible committee members, especially a thesis chair

Chapter 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING
WEEK 3: September 9
Library Orientation 1:30 – 3:00 LA78

Classwork: Read at least two of the exemplary thesis proposals posted on BB.

Note: Set up meetings with possible thesis chair and committee members this week

WEEK 4: September 16
Writing Due:
Worksheet: Goals & Objectives
Goals & Objectives for the project (at least one page)
Classwork: Peer feedback

WEEK 5: September 23
Writing Due:
Worksheet: Problem & Sub-problem
At least four pages of Chapter 1, including your goals and objectives and a statement of the problem and sub-problems. In addition, you must submit a list of at least three academic sources and three films that are relevant to your project. This writing must be submitted to me electronically by noon, Friday, September 20.
Classwork: Instructor Feedback

Note: Your committee should now be established. From here on in, you should be in communication with at least your chair regarding the development of your project. You should consult with your chair and/or other committee members as you develop production elements such as script, schedule, budget etc.
WEEK 6: September 30
Writing Due:
Draft of Chapter 1 for peer feedback
Classwork: Feedback

Chapter 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, FILMS AND GENRES

WEEK 7: October 7
Writing Due:
Draft of Chapter 1 for grade
Worksheet: Literature on Project Topic
Literature on Project Topic
Classwork: Feedback

WEEK 8: October 14
Writing Due:
Literature on Project Style
Worksheet: Related Film Theory
Related Film Theory
Classwork: Feedback

WEEK 9: October 21
Writing Due:
Worksheet: Films and/or genres that relate Thematically
Films and/or genres that relate Thematically
Classwork: Feedback

WEEK 10: October 28
Writing Due:
Worksheet: Films and/or genres that relate stylistically
Films and/or genres that relate stylistically
Classwork: Feedback

Chapter 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

WEEK 11: November 4
Writing Due:
Draft of Chapter 2 for grade
Worksheet Methods and Procedures
Formal approach/Methods and Procedures
Classwork: Feedback
WEEK 12: November 11 – Veterans Day. No class

WEEK 13: November 18
Writing Due:
Draft of Chapter 3 for grade

Abstract
Appendix:
Budget
Timeline
Crew
Classwork: Feedback

WEEK 14: November 25
Submission of Abstract & Appendix for Grading
No class ---individual meetings with students

WEEK 15: December 2
No class ---individual meetings with students

Writing Due:
Correct Formatting and Review. Identify any remaining revisions. Prepare Title Page and Table of Contents.

WEEK 16: December 9
ABSTRACT, FINAL PROPOSAL including Appendix, and COMMITTEE FORM DUE IN CLASS 12-9-13
Secure Committee Signatures and submit scanned signature form, abstract and complete proposal in hardcopy and electronically to mslowik@mail.sdsu.edu

Name your files according to this protocol
lastname.committee.doc
lastname.abstract.doc
lastname.proposal.doc

With the endorsement of the instructor, the Committee Form and the Abstract will be forward by the instructor to the Faculty for their approval.

Students will be notified regarding the acceptance of their thesis proposal by email.