Course Topic
This class will focus on a particular strain of film that we might call the “prisoner of war” film. These are movies that may or may not take place in prisoner of war camps, but they are all films about imprisonment and the possibility of freedom in a world at war. Through these films, the class will investigate the way “imprisonment” is used to comment upon larger social, political and aesthetic issues, particularly the possibility of freedom in a society defined by its disciplinary systems. Films to be viewed will include straightforward prisoner-of-war films, such as *The Grand Illusion*, *The Great Escape*, and *The Bridge On the River Kwai*; but also films that imagine different forms of incarceration during times of war: *Casablanca*, *The Sound of Music*, and *M*A*S*H*. Alongside the films, we will read excerpts from Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault’s thinking about the rise of what he calls “discipline” in the early modern period, with his focus on both the disciplinary mechanisms of prison and the military as generalized models, will frame our discussions of the films. In addition to the Foucault, we will discuss 20th century history, film history, and film terminology. Writing assignments will include weekly critical responses, and a final project.

There are two primary goals for this course. First, we will critically engage with the course texts—the films and essays—through both writing and discussion in an effort to understand each, both on their own terms and in relation to the larger themes explored in the class. Secondly, as this is a creative writing class, these examples will serve as models and perhaps suggest ideas and themes we might explore in our own creative fiction, and will help us consider the ways in which a choice of topic or theme or setting might lead to the exploration of larger political and social themes, and vice versa.
Course Expectations

Writing

Critical Responses. A critical response is a 300 – 500 word analysis/response to the assigned text. Your goal for each critical response is to identify and discuss the ways in which the film deals with its setting, characters, and themes to create a larger set of meanings. Ideally, you will focus on a particular aspect of the film, discuss how it functions on the local level, and how it works in relation to the larger meanings of the text. There will be one critical response assigned for each film. Each critical response will be due the Monday of the week following the film’s showing. These will be graded on a scale of 0 (not acceptable) to 3 (excellent).

**All writing assignments are due at the beginning of the class on which they are listed on the schedule. Late work will not be accepted without prior permission from me. If for some reason you need an extension on an assignment, you must talk to me prior to the assignment’s due date.**

Critical Definitions
Due to the difficulties of scheduling film screenings for the course (one film takes up to a week of class time, severely cutting into our class discussion time), you will post your written responses to the Foucault readings on Blackboard discussion forums.

1. Definitions. Rather than ask for a critical writing response to the reading assignments, I will instead assign two or more terms for each reading assignment that you will need to define, using a combination of evidence and quotes from the text, summary, and your paraphrase and interpretation of these quotes and summaries. I expect to see no less than 250 words for each assigned definition. Additionally, you should feel free to pose a question to the class to help in understanding some aspect or implied consequence of the term. (Students may help each other by answering such questions, or we can address them in class.) Each group of definitions will be due on the related Blackboard Discussion Board by the start of Monday’s class on the weeks when we’re watching a film. (See the course calendar for clarification)

2. Discussions. I will expect you to read your classmates’ posts, and to prepare to discuss the Foucault in class.

3. Grading for Critical Definitions. Your post of your definitions and discussion question will be graded on the same scale used for the Critical Responses, 0 – 3.

Creative Assignments. A creative assignment is a creative response (a five page story) that answers, through its form, characters, situations, etc., a question or problem assigned by me. There will be two creative assignments due through the course of the semester. See the course schedule for due dates. These will be graded on the same scale, 0 – 3.

Final Projects. Your final project will consist of 12 to 15 pages of fiction. It should consist of one complete, self-contained story written for this class and this class alone (you may choose to revise and expand one of your creative assignments for the final project). Additionally, your project must include a three to five page statement/essay explaining your work, and discussing your project in relation to the work we’ve read and discussed during the semester. We’ll talk about this in more detail later in the term.

Final Project Proposal. A 2-page proposal for your final project will be due Week 12 (see course schedule). Your proposal will outline the project you intend to write, placing your own ideas within the context of one or more works we’ve read for class.
**Participation**
Class discussions will be the foundation of our class meetings. It is therefore imperative that you read the assigned texts, complete the weekly writing assignments, Blackboard discussions, and creative exercises, and that you actively engage in all class discussions, in person and online.

You will be expected to complete all writing assignments.

**Attendance**
Attendance is required, and absences should occur only in case of emergency. However, you may miss one class without penalty, including the classes in which films are screened. Missing more than one class will affect your overall course grade. Excessive absences will be grounds for dismissal from the class.
Additionally, I expect everyone to arrive to class on time. Habitual tardiness will adversely affect your grade.

**Grades**
- Final Project: 40%
- Midterm Essay: 20%
- Critical Responses: 10%
- Definitions Assignments: 10%
- Creative Assignments: 10%
- Discussion/Participation: 10%

**In order to pass this class, all major assignments must be completed.**

**Cell Phones, Laptops, iPads and other electronic devices**
In order to avoid receiving calls or texts during class time, please turn off your cell phone before entering the classroom. Laptop and tablet computers are NOT allowed in the classroom.

**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism is using another person’s words and/or ideas as though they were your own, and, as you might suspect, it is not allowed. Plagiarism is also using work you produced for one class in another. This is also not allowed. **Plagiarism is a serious offense that can result in expulsion from the University.** More importantly, it will not be tolerated in this class. Any student suspected of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Life and will automatically fail the plagiarized assignment.

I encourage all students to familiarize themselves with the Office of Student Life tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism:

**This syllabus, including the course schedule, is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**
Spring 2016 Calendar

Week 1
W, Jan 20: Introduction

Week 2
M, Jan 25: *The Grand Illusion* (1937, 114 minutes)

Week 3
M, Feb 1: Discuss – *The Grand Illusion*  
Discuss – Foucault, "The Body of the Condemned" & “Docile Bodies” (Blackboard)  
**DUE:** response to *The Grand Illusion*  
**DUE:** Definitions assignment (Foucault, “The Body of the Condemned” [two parts] & “Docile Bodies”)

Week 4
M, Feb 8: *Stalag 17* (1953, 120 minutes)  
**DUE:** Definitions assignment (Foucault, “The Means of Correct Training”; “Panopticism”)

Week 5
M, Feb 15: Discuss – *Stalag 17*  
Discuss: Foucault, “The Means of Correct Training”; “Panopticism”  
**DUE:** response to *Stalag 17*  
**DUE:** Creative Assignment #1

Week 6
**DUE:** Definitions assignment (Foucault, “Complete and Austere Institutions”; “Illegalities and Delinquency”; “The Carceral”)

Week 7
M, Feb 29: Discuss – *The Bridge On the River Kwai*  
**DUE:** response to *The Bridge On the River Kwai*  
Discuss – Foucault, “Complete and Austere Institutions”; “Illegalities and Delinquency”; “The Carceral”

Week 8 -- SPRING BREAK
M, Mar 7: no classes

Week 9
M, Mar 14: *The Great Escape* (1963, 172 minutes)
Week 10
M, Mar 21: Discuss – *The Great Escape*
DUE: response to *The Great Escape*
DUE: Creative Assignment #2

Week 11 (Course Drop Deadline: Fri, Apr 1)
M, Mar 28: *Casablanca* (1942, 102 minutes)
DUE: Definitions assignment (Foucault, “Space, Knowledge, and Power”)

Week 12
M, Apr 4: Discuss – *Casablanca*
DUE: response to *Casablanca*
Discuss –Foucault, “Space, Knowledge, and Power”
DUE: final project proposal

Week 13
M, Apr 11: *The Sound of Music* (1965, 174 minutes)

Week 14
M, Apr 18: Discuss – *The Sound of Music*
DUE: response to *The Sound of Music*

Week 15

Week 16
M, May 2: Discuss – *M*A*S*H*
DUE: Final Project