Greetings FMS:

We are excited to be celebrating the graduations of our undergraduates (there are approximately 60 or so) along with one doctoral student in May. If you fit the profile, please consider attending two graduation events (in addition to “walking down the hill”): The Tensies and Awards Spectacular on Thursday, May 8th is the first event. We plan to take a group photo with the graduating seniors who will receive a parting gift that we hope they will use! [This is the first year this new gift has ever been offered.]

Seniors, also please keep in touch with us once you’ve flown the coop! We want to know of your whereabouts post-graduation. And those of you who are continuing on with us, take note of great summer offerings to help you complete your major sooner.

Best regards,

Tamara Falicov
Chair, Film and Media Studies

On May 16th, the School of the Arts is having a graduation ceremony that is very moving – a senior from each department is selected to give a speech, and it always gives me goose bumps hearing the dreams and aspirations that each graduating class has shared. Please also attend this powerful event with parents and loved ones.
Please join us at the FMS Annual Student Recognition Ceremony at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 8th at Liberty Hall. This event celebrates the work of all FMS students and scholarships and departmental awards will be announced. There will be door prizes and gifts for graduating seniors!

Check out the May 2013 newsletter for photos of last year’s event. Go to: http://film.ku.edu/newsletters.

The School of the Arts & Student Interdisciplinary Research Grants presents

"Future of Moviegoing: The Alamo Drafthouse Cinema"

by Juli Stone Pitzer

When: Friday, May 9th from 1:00-2:00 p.m.
Where: Oldfather Studios, room 120

Juli will be presenting an introduction to her dissertation research "Changes in 21st Century Movie Theatre Business Practices" and her case study on the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema of Austin, TX. Her Spring 2014 research was made possible by SOTA/SIRG funding.

FREE Pizza & Soda provided
Coming Attractions

Department of Film and Media Studies
School of the Arts
Annual Student Recognition Ceremony and Film Awards Spectacular!
Thursday, May 8, 2014
♦ Scholarship Presentations
♦ Award Presentations
♦ Tensie Awards
♦ A fond farewell to graduating students
6:30 p.m.—Catered reception
7:00 p.m.—Program begins
Liberty Hall, downtown Lawrence

The School of the Arts
Convocation Recognition Ceremony
Friday, May 16, 2014
Check-in begins at 6:00 p.m.
Crafton-Preyer Theatre, Murphy Hall
Regalia information:
Undergraduates: Cap, gown, WHITE tassel
M.A. candidates: Cap, gown, BLACK tassel, WHITE hood
Ph.D. candidates: Cap, gown, BLACK tassel
Questions? Contact Amanda McCoy (amccoy@ku.edu; 785-864-6159).

Graduate Studies
Doctoral Hooding Ceremony
Saturday, May 17, 2014
3:30 p.m. Lied Center
Contact: 785-864-8040
www.graduate.ku.edu/doctoral-hooding-ceremony

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Distinction/Highest Distinction and Master’s Hooding Ceremony
Saturday, May 17, 2014
10:30 a.m.
Lied Center
For Master’s Hooding questions: 785-864-1784 or cynthia@ku.edu
For DHD questions: 785-864-3513 or kjh@ku.edu
Contact: 785-864-3500

University of Kansas
142nd Commencement
Sunday, May 18, 2014
10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Procession - "Walk down the Hill"
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Program
Memorial Stadium
Commencement Ceremony Info: commencement.ku.edu
Hey everyone, Wild West is back this summer with our New Mystery, Suspense, Thriller Event! The Wild West Film Festival is a 48 hour film competition in which teams of film makers are challenged to create a short Mystery Film, 5 minutes or less, with a given set of criteria. Teams sign up June 20th, 7:00 p.m., at The Lawrence Arts Center (http://lawrenceartscenter.org/) or early sign up online http://wildwestfilmfest.org/category/online-sign-up/.

After registering the $25 entry fee online, teams will automatically receive the secret criteria Friday June 20th at 7:00 p.m. via e-mail and will have until Sunday at 10:00 p.m. to submit their film online or to a designated location. The top 25 films, First, Second, Third places, and a People’s Choice Award will be presented: 7:00 p.m., June 29th at the Lawrence Arts Center. A DVD featuring the screened films and t-shirts will be available for purchase.

This year we are proud to announce our partnership with the Free State Festival (http://lawrenceartscenter.org/free-state-festival/), a five day celebration of film, music, art and ideas! The festival will attract audiences through the involvement of guest artists, panelists and curators in the cross-disciplinary mediums of cinema, music, performing and visual arts. Thematic emphasis for this year’s festival will include the relationship between film and music and the centennial anniversary of infamous Lawrence resident William S. Burroughs.

Check out our Video Promo for this year’s event! And our Documentary, A 48 Hour Journey as we follow a team through the process.

Keep a look out on www.wildwestfilmfest.org or our Facebook and Twitter for updates on Judges, Prizes, and event details.

For any questions or comments please contact us at: wildwestfilmfestival@gmail.com

Have Fun and good Luck!
-Wild West Staff
Recognitions and Accomplishments

KU’s annual event to honor our faculty and staff for their years of service to the University will take place at the Employee Recognition Ceremony on Wednesday, May 7 at 1:30 p.m. in the Kansas Union Ballroom. Service pins are given to 5, 10, and 15-year honorees, and service pins and gifts are given to honorees with 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, and 50 years of service. Four individuals from FMS will be honored: Michael Basket (10 years), Matt Jacobson (15 years), Catherine Preston (20 years), and Sarah Sahin (5 years). Congratulations!

Ph.D. candidate Sho Ogawa presented a seminar titled “Resisting the Heteronormative Timeline: Japanese Women’s Media and Sexuality as Subcultural Capital” at the Hall Center on April 28.

Check out FMS students’ work on the new KU After Effects YouTube channel: http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfyh2GdN68-UXGu-FkHwTiQ/videos

Ph.D. student Joshua Wille’s award-winning fan edit, Watchmen: Midnight, was recently reviewed in the Lawrence Journal-World. The feature article was written by Eric Melin, a KCTV5 film critic who is Editor-in-Chief of Scene-Stealers and an LJW staff writer.


Wille has also been invited to give a talk at the Free State Film Festival (formally the Free State Film Festival) hosted by the Lawrence Arts Center in June. His presentation, “Roschach Remixed: Fan Edits and the Making of Watchmen: Midnight,” will introduce the culture and practice of fan editing with before-and-after excerpts from his fan editing work.

Associate Professor Robert Hurst has been awarded sabbatical leave for Fall 2014 to work on his documentary “The Listeners”, which explores the effectiveness of crisis center phone lines, how these phone lines contribute to community mental health, and the volunteers who offer counseling. In the fall, Hurst will make a first edit of the documentary from more than one hundred hours of filmed interviews. The documentary will be completed in late summer 2015.

See related story on page 8.

Kevin Willmott’s film Destination: Planet Negro! won the Audience Favorite Award at the 4th Annual Show Me Justice Film Festival. Matt Jacobson was a producer, Director of Photography, and supervised Special Effects for the film. Robert Hurst also did sound design for the film. Destination: Planet Negro! also screened at the Kansas City Film Festival.

Derek Sellens (BGS 2010) and Matt Jacobson conducted community workshops and participated in the filmmakers’ roundtable at the Show Me Justice Film Festival. The festival was organized by Mark von Schlemmer (Ph.D. 2010), a professor at the University of Central Missouri.

FMS, SOTA, and KU were also represented by big wins at the Kansas City Film Fest in April: Best Heartland Narrative Feature Award Winner The Sublime and the Beautiful; Pop Tarts, Best Heartland Narrative Short; and Withered World, Best Web Series, all were made with many FMS and KU faculty, students, and graduates in the cast and crew.
Newport Film Festival— The big winner was “The Sublime and the Beautiful” – an American drama about a professor with seemingly everything who is confronted with losing it all – which received jury awards for best feature film, actor (Blake Robbins), director (Robbins) and cinematography (Lyn Moncrief).

The film also received a special jury prize for actress in a feature film, which went to Laura Kirk, who plays the aggrieved wife. http://www.ocregister.com/articles/won-612421-film-best.html


Patrick Clement (senior, FMS BA) reports that when he completed post production last month on his film “Somewhere Between Freedom and Protection, Kansas” he was looking for an illustrator that would interpret the visual aesthetics of the film for the festival season poster. Clement contacted the Department of Visual Arts and was put in contact with Charlotte Pemberton, a Design Major. Pemberton illustrated all of the elements and Clement designed the poster.

The film is a 20-minute short film set in Southwest Kansas and will premiere in June as an official selection at the Free State Film Festival in Lawrence. Last month a work-in-progress cut of the film won a cinematography award at the Harvard College Film Festival in Cambridge, MA.

Current FMS Major Ryan Douglass was a First AC on the film and Journalism major James Hoyt was a Production Assistant. The film features music from the Lawrence-based trio Olassa.

Logline: A young girl must choose between her ill grandmother and a scholarship that will take her away from the small town her family founded.

The entire cast and crew list can be found here http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3563580/

“Threads” is the name of the debut short-film project from the newly formed Women of Lawrence Film (WOLF), and it can be viewed as four separate standalone vignettes — each shot in a different location on downtown Massachusetts Street — or in its interrelated 20-minute entirety. The individual pieces of “Threads” will premiere at during the June 27 Final Friday in their respective filming locations on Mass. Street. WOLF will also host a screening of a female-directed feature on June 29 at the Free State Film Festival, and “Threads” will appear in its entirety as that movie’s opening program.

Filmmaker focuses on volunteers who answer suicide hotline

When University of Kansas filmmaker Bob Hurst set out to make a film about suicide, he didn’t want to follow in the path of other recent documentaries that appealed to the public’s morbid fascination with the subject.

He didn’t visit the Golden Gate Bridge or Japan’s Suicide Forest. Instead, Hurst, an associate professor of film and media studies, stayed closer to home and began filming college-age volunteers who answered a statewide suicide prevention hotline at Headquarters Counseling Center.

The documentary, “The Listeners,” examines how to prevent suicide and shape public policy to better fund the services that do.

At the heart of the documentary, Hurst asks why volunteers, not physicians or other health care professionals, are the ones who answer the calls of those contemplating suicide.

“I think there are good reasons for it. I don’t think it is a failing on the part of professional medicine. It partly has something to do with the empathy any person can provide to another person, which does require training but not an advanced professional degree,” he said.

Starting last fall, Hurst filmed a group of 13 volunteers, most between ages 19 and 22, as they went through the training process, then began to field calls. The documentary also will include interviews from professionals in the field, including those taken at this spring’s American Association of Suicidology Conference.

Hurst found that because the volunteers were strangers, they could provide critical care in ways that others, such as ministers, family members or teachers, couldn’t.

Recent research on the effectiveness of crisis line counseling also has found that highly trained volunteers can provide such care.

“If you call these hotlines, you aren’t going to get someone who is going to solve your problems in that moment. You are going to get someone who cares and listens to you, which research tells us is just as important,” Hurst said.

Hurst has worked on other film projects with ties to social issues, such as “Patriot Guard Riders,” which focuses on a group of motorcycle riders who travel to the funerals of fallen soldiers to form a shield between protesters and the soldier’s family.

Unlike other recent documentaries that highlighted popular suicide spots, Hurst said, he was looking for a film that searched for ways to solve the problem. “In terms of literature and other films, there isn’t a lot out there,” he said.

Hurst hopes to finish the documentary in the fall of 2015 and would like to see the film broadcasted nationally on public television and then offered for distribution for universities, high schools and other groups.

“Really it is to start a dialogue on how we are looking at the state of mental health care and what can we do to offer support to individuals. We know support for mental health care has eroded significantly over the past several years, and there are consequences to that,” Hurst said.

Copied from https://news.ku.edu/2014/04/17/ku-filmmaker-focuses-volunteers-who-answer-suicide-hotline
Recognitions and Accomplishments

Film and Media Studies to present Lifetime Achievement Award

Cinematographer and University of Kansas alumnus Ward Russell will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Department of Film and Media Studies this week at their annual award ceremony at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 8, at Liberty Hall. The ceremony is open to the public.

“Ward Russell is the consummate Hollywood professional, master of stylish photography in the industry and immensely collegial to the profession and to the students,” said John Tibbetts, associate professor of film and media studies. “Add Ward to the list of many motion picture professionals on either side of the camera who not only make KU proud, but keep contacts with the department and the students.”

Russell is best known for his work on the films “Days of Thunder,” “The Last Boy Scout” and “X-Files, the Movie.” He now adapts his Hollywood art to the world of photography through WARD RUSSELL Photography and Brite Lite Productions.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to recognize important contributions in film and media studies in the span of a career. Russell is the third recipient of this award. The previous awards have been awarded posthumously to Russell A. Mosser and Bill Gilbert.

The Department of Film & Media Studies is one of four departments in the School of the Arts. As part of the KU College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, the School of the Arts offers fresh possibilities for collaboration between the arts and the humanities, sciences, social sciences, international and interdisciplinary studies.

Assistant Professor Cathy Joritz has been selected present a paper about her digital depictions of the Virgin Mary at the Eighth International Conference of Iconographic Studies held in Rijeka, Croatia from June 3 – 6. The Conference is organized by the Center for Iconographic Studies, Department of Art History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka, Croatia, the Cultural Iconology and Semiology Research Group, University of Szeged, Hungary, the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade The Institute for the Study of Culture and Christianity, Belgrade, and the Visual Art Department, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Invited speakers in attendance will be from Germany, Norway, Great Britain, South Africa, Italy, Hungary, the United Kingdom, Spain, Croatia, Poland, Slovakia, Canada, Russia, Armenia, South Africa, and the USA.

Joritz’s presentation is entitled: Nuestra Señora de la Purisima Concepcion (The Virgin of the Immaculate Conception) – Beyond the Walls of San Jose de Gracia, Trampas, New Mexico. In Joritz's words: This presentation will focus on comparing and analyzing a series of contemporary, digitally revised, feminist interpretations of the original painting of the Nuesta Señora, the central holy figure on the giant 17th century altar screen of the Church San Jose de Gracia in New Mexico.

Professor Joritz will be the only presenter from the United States.
Film with KU ties to screen throughout the country this spring

"The Sublime and Beautiful," a feature film shot in and around the University of Kansas and drawing from the talents of the university’s students and alumni, will screen at a series of film festivals throughout the country this spring.

A window into the raw emotions of grief, the independent film premiered January at Slamdance, held in Park City, Utah. Written and directed by Blake Robbins, the film follows the path of grief for university professor David Conrad (played by Robbins) and his wife, Kelly, after their three children die in a drunken-driving accident in a small Midwestern town.

Laura Kirk, a KU lecturer and alumna, portrays the grieving mother who is struggling with the loss of her children under an already strained marriage.

The intense drama is a departure for Kirk, who has worked with lighter material in the past. She co-wrote and starred in the critically acclaimed comedy "Lisa Picard is Famous." Filmaker Magazine critic compared Kirk’s performance as Kelly to some of the most explosive scenes in "A Woman Under the Influence."

“This was a super dark place to have to live for a couple of weeks,” Kirk said. “That style of raw, in-the-moment, no-holds-barred acting is a pretty exciting way to work, and you don’t get to work that way very often.”

Robbins, whose aunt was paralyzed because of a drunken-driving accident, wanted to create a realistic portrait of complicated characters grieving. “I was looking for a less-Hollywood version of this story, one that was a lot more raw and a little grittier,” Robbins said.

Known for his work in "The Office," "Oz" and "Sons of Anarchy," Robbins has family from southeast Kansas and attended Independence Community Junior College, Independence, Kan. He connected to Kevin Willmott, a KU associate professor of film and media studies, at the junior college’s annual William Inge Theatre Festival. Robbins worked on several of Willmott’s works, including "Jayhawkers," "The Battle of Bunker Hill" and "The Only Good Indian." The latter two films also featured Kirk.

Setting the film in Lawrence was a natural fit because of the script’s needs for a Midwestern university town as well as Robbins’ KU connections. In 2012, the film was shot in Lawrence over 12 days with a limited budget.

The film featured KU students and alumni as producers, actors and production assistants. In all, more than 40 cast and crew members with KU ties participated in making the film.

"The Sublime and Beautiful" was one of 10 narrative films chosen out of 5,000 submissions to be shown at Slamdance. From the reviews of that showing, the film has been selected for film festivals throughout the country.

Kirk said audiences are drawn to the film’s honest look at grief and have created a dialogue around it.

“It’s a rough film, it’s a brutal film, but it definitely speaks to people on a certain level,” Kirk said.

The movie has received distribution and will be available on digital platforms, including iTunes and Netflix this spring. It will play at the Atlanta Film Festival, Cleveland International Film Festival, Charleston International Film Festival, Kansas City FilmFest and Milan International Film Festival.

Copied from: https://news.ku.edu/2014/03/18/film-ku-ties-screen-throughout-country-spring
2014 Spring Break Career Week in Los Angeles

I did not know there were so many Jayhawks in California doing film. I would recommend this trip to anyone who is serious about wanting to make the move to California to be a filmmaker. – Gioia Caruso

The trip to L.A. was a once-in-a-life time experience for me. It exceeded all expectations I had. We visited several studios and talked to KU grads and it was amazing. – Laura Damon

I would like to thank Gordy Hoffman for making this trip possible, and Josh Nathan for driving us around everywhere. This trip was probably the highlight of my college career, I will never forget the people I met, mainly because they helped me get a better understanding of the film industry and what it will take to make it in Hollywood, and even elsewhere. – Samantha Hickman

Joshua Nathan (FMS BGS 2011) and Gordy Hoffman were both wonderful and it was nice having Josh around to ask questions about neighborhoods and the actual process of getting a job. – Laura Damon

Brian Bartelt of Post Haste Sound, a post production studio, gave the group a tour.
2014 Spring Break Career Week in Los Angeles

It was amazing to see how many KU graduates were actually living out in L.A. and how successful they are. I did an internship in L.A. before the trip and it is easy to get overwhelmed by the people from the big name schools such as Emerson, USC, and Cal State, to name a few. But meeting the KU alumni out there and hearing their experiences showed me it is possible to work in L.A. – Laura Damon

This spring break trip was an invaluable experience. I met many KU alums who are working out in LA. It was very encouraging to see and hear how these alums made the move and transition from Kansas to California. Everyone I met had an amazing story, and I learned a lot in my short time with them. – Gioia Caruso

One of my favorite tours was The Sleepy Hallow writing room. It was incredible to sit and watch the group of writers talk about the show and come up with new ideas. – Gioia Caruso

I also enjoyed visiting different post production houses like MTI with Mike Robe and Stargate with Chris Martin. – Gioia Caruso

With Devin Schwyhart (FMS BGS 2012) and Caleb Knueven (FMS BGS 2011).
2014 Spring Break Career Week in Los Angeles

We went to Disney Studios and took a tour of the Animation department – it was amazing! – Laura Damon  Photo with Michele Winn.

The experience was wonderful but I think the best thing was meeting a wide range of people who are in all levels of the industry – entry level to high levels. – Laura Damon

My favorite thing we did was the Paramount tour, but I also enjoyed the tours of Disney, Post Haste Sound, Titmouse Studio, Fox Studio and Universal Studios. – Samantha Hickman

It was a great experience to be able to talk with independent filmmakers, someone who works at a small post production house, and those that worked at the main studios like Disney and Universal. It gave me a better idea of all the different opportunities California has to offer. – Gioia Caruso

Meeting with KU grads and talking to them about what they went through when moving to L.A. is a big help for us in terms of what to expect when deciding on whether or not we want to pursue a career in Hollywood. – Samantha Hickman

Runyan Canon with Gordy Hoffman.
Recent Events

Film Screening

Hannah Arendt

with an introduction by Professor Cathy Joritz,
from the department of Film and Media Studies

In the award-winning HANNAH ARENDT, the sublime Barbara Sukowa returns with director Margarethe von Trotta. Von Trotta, known for her brilliant new biopic of the influential German-Jewish philosopher and political theorist, Arendt's reporting on the 1961 trial of ex-Nazi Adolf Eichmann in The New Yorker—controversial both for her portrayal of Eichmann and the Jewish council—inflamed her now-famous concept of the "Banality of Evil".

TUESDAY, APRIL 15 6PM
Woodruff Auditorium
Free and Open to the Public

pre-/pro-/anti-/post-
Yugoslav Cinema: a symposium

Featuring film screenings and discussion by:
* Greg DeCuir, Jr. (Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade)
* Aida Vidan (Harvard University),
* Misha Nedeljkovich (The University of Oklahoma)
* Vitaly Chernetsky (The University of Kansas)

Friday, April 25th * 11:00-4:30 *
Spencer Art Museum Auditorium

hosted by the Departments of Film & Media Studies and Slavic Languages & Literatures, the Hill Center for the Humanities and the Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies
Alumni News

Alex Meisch, BGS 2012, reports that he is in his second year as a paid intern on the coaches’ video staff of the Minnesota Vikings.

Academic Calendar

- Thursday, May 8 — Last day of classes
- Friday, May 9 — Stop Day
- Monday, May 12 — First day of finals
- Friday, May 16 — Last day of finals
- Monday, May 26 — Memorial Day, offices closed
- Tuesday, June 3 — First day of summer classes


Equipment Check-out, Editing Rooms, and Computer Lab

The computer lab and all editing rooms will be closed on Friday, May 9th for Stop Day.

All personal film projects will need to be copied from the lab and editing computers by May 18 because the hard drives will be erased on May 19th.

Please be sure to copy your projects onto your personal devices so you don’t lose them!

Sydney Stone
Advising Specialist

Office Hours in FMS:
Thursdays and Fridays
215 Oldfather Studios
sydneymstone@ku.edu
785-864-3500

Film Festivals, Contests, Local Film Jobs, Call-for-Papers
Announcements of film festivals, contests, local jobs, call-for-papers, etc. are kept in a binder in the reception area at Oldfather Studios (room 204). Check it out!