The FMS Newsletter has gone electronic!

You can find our current, past, and future newsletters on our Film and Media Studies Department website: https://film.ku.edu/newsletters

Inside this issue:

- Coming Attractions 2
- Recognitions and Accomplishments 3
- Out & About 4-9
- Alumni in the News
- Alumni News
- Academic Calendar
- And More 10-11
Coming Attraction

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Fall Graduation Ceremony

Date: Sunday, December 13, 2015
Time: 2:00–3:30 p.m.
Event Contact Phone Number: (785) 864-3500
Event Contact Email: clas109@ku.edu

Event Location
Lied Center
1600 Stewart Dr.
Lawrence, KS 66045

The ceremony recognizes College of Liberal Arts & Sciences graduating students from Summer and Fall 2015. Doors open at 1:30 p.m. for guests and students must arrive by 1:00 p.m. The ceremony begins at 2:00 p.m.

Students must RSVP and request tickets. No guests will be admitted without a ticket. Students are offered 4 tickets but can request additional tickets if needed when they RSVP for the event through the MyKU portal. Graduates and guests are invited to stay after the ceremony to celebrate during a reception serving snacks and drinks.
Recognitions and Accomplishments

Mike Van Esler, doctoral candidate, was recently accepted to the HASTAC Scholars program. The HASTAC Scholars program is an innovative student community. Each year a new cohort is accepted into the program, and the Scholars come from 75+ universities, and dozens of disciplines. They are building a community of students working at the intersection of technology and the arts, humanities and sciences. HASTAC Scholars, blog, host online forums, develop new projects and organize events. Much of the work centers around rethinking pedagogy, learning, research and academia for the digital age. As part of the program, Mike will be presenting his research twice this year at KU events.

Check it out – Four FMS classes made the College blog…

FMS 100 Introduction to the Film Medium: http://blog.college.ku.edu/humanities/12-classes-you-didnt-take-in-high-school/

FMS 177 Cuban Cinema: Tropical Reels: http://blog.college.ku.edu/humanities/19-classes-you-didnt-know-you-could-take-in-the-ku-core/

FMS 302 Seminar in: The Blaxploitation Film: http://blog.college.ku.edu/students/10-classes-for-the-current-events-junkie/

FMS 380 American Popular Culture of: The American Gangster Film http://blog.college.ku.edu/students/11-electives-to-spice-up-your-schedule/
**Out & About**

Professor **Michael Baskett** gave the opening Keynote address at the 2nd International Conference on the Film Histories of Taiwan and Asia: Film Wars in the 1930s and 1940s which was held at the Taipei National University of the Arts from 10/31 - 11/1. Prof. Baskett’s talk was entitled, “The Problem of Empire: Japan’s Film Wars in Asia,” which examined how both Hollywood and the Japanese film industry took great pains to avoid the appearance of such “formal” film empires as Great Britain or France, but in fact functioned as defacto empires locked in a bitter struggle for market supremacy throughout East Asia during the 1930s and 1940s. Based on primary materials in Chinese, Japanese, English, and French, Baskett demonstrated how the discourse of Film War in Asia at this time provides a useful opportunity to reexamine the basic ideas of “empire,” “war,” and especially “film” from non-Western contexts thus arriving at a more nuanced perspective on the function of film and culture within the context of global expansionism.

**Chi-Raq** is a modern day adaptation of the ancient Greek play “Lysistrata” by Aristophanes. After the murder of a child by a stray bullet, a group of women led by Lysistrata organize against the on-going violence in Chicago’s Southside creating a movement that challenges the nature of race, sex and violence in America and around the world.

Directed by the critically acclaimed filmmaker Spike Lee and co-written by Lee and **Kevin Willmott**, **Chi-Raq** features an all-star cast including: Nick Cannon, Wesley Snipes, Jennifer Hudson, Teyonah Parris, D.B. Sweeney, Harry Lennix, Steve Harris, Angela Bassett with John Cusack and Samuel L. Jackson.

Watch the trailer here:

Copied from: http://www.chiraqthemovie.com/

**“Raq” and roll**

“Chi-Raq,” the latest bit of movie controversy from Kansas’ **Kevin Willmott** now has a poster, trailer and release date: Dec. 4. Willmott, an associate professor of film and media studies at the University of Kansas, co-wrote the satire with director Spike Lee. The title (pronounced “shy-rack”) is a combination of Chicago and Iraq, equating the city’s gun violence to a Middle Eastern battleground. Ouch. They based the screenplay on Aristophanes’ ancient play “Lysistrata,” a comic account of the women of Greece withholding sex from their husbands until they end the Peloponnesian War. Stars include Nick Cannon, Wesley Snipes, Jennifer Hudson, Angela Bassett, John Cusack and narrator Samuel L. Jackson.

**Out & About**

Professor Tamara Falicov's conference paper on the politics of film funding at international film festivals given at the Trinidad and Tobago film festival was covered by a writer from Filmmaker Magazine.

Excerpt from the article:
Besides providing much-needed visibility and prestige, film festivals are also marketplaces and training venues, in which first- or second-time filmmakers can gain valuable entrepreneurial guidance. This is of particular importance considering that a film’s heaviest production costs are incurred after it has been shot. Indeed, while shooting a film has arguably never been cheaper or easier, filmmakers still face numerous obstacles when it comes to actually getting their work viewed. Editing, color-correction, subtitling, grading and mixing — but also pitching, marketing, selling: these form the practical difference between a film acquiring some kind of shelf life and disappearing before it has even been shown.

Such observations were the starting point for a short lecture presented at this year’s Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival by film scholar Tamara Falicov, of the University of Kansas. Falicov’s main focus was the increasingly viable funding opportunities open to filmmakers in the global south — Africa, Latin and Central America, the Caribbean, East Asia and the Middle East — and how many of these are obtained through competitive schemes established by film festivals in Europe.

At a growing number of such festivals, collaborative workshops, training grants and residency programs are being dedicated to script development, production funds, and post-production finance strategies. These aren’t obscure initiatives: as reference points, Falicov lists the Rotterdam Film Festival’s Hubert Bals Fund (which began in 1989), the Berlinale’s World Cinema Fund (2004), Tribeca’s Latin American Film Fund (2009), and MexiCannes (2008). Further initiatives dedicated to documentary practices have recently emerged in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco.

While such schemes have undeniably helped to advance filmmakers from the global south onto international distribution platforms, however, Falicov is wary of the complex artistic-industrial relationships that such festivals are cultivating. Her starting point is to ask why the investments are being made. The quid pro quo of these awards, which are often decided through a juried competition, is that the festival in question provides financial assistance and industrial expertise to a film — perhaps in its latter stages and in need of final funding — before hosting its premiere, and promoting the film as its own discovery.

As a case study, Falicov draws upon a competitive prize at the San Sebastian Film Festival, where six Latin American works-in-progress are judged by owners of post-production professionals mainly based in Madrid. “What they were going to get in return for funding the film was the [distribution] rights in Spain,” Falicov notes. “There’s a commercial interest here. These guys — and gals, but mainly men — were thinking, ‘Okay, what movie will have this sort of transnational arthouse aesthetic’? What is it that’s going to be global and local at the same time? What will work for multiple audiences and markets?”

Read the full article here:

Falicov was also invited to be a panel reviewer for a national NEH competition, and was invited to be an affiliate researcher in a new Center on the Study of Media and Society sponsored by Northwestern University and the University of San Andrés, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

---

The claymation Aliens Comes to Earth created by Megan Teahan in Professor Cathy Joritz’s FMS 374 Beginning Animation class was featured in KU Today on Friday, November 13 and on SOTA’s social media sites.

Watch it here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjwFk4ekyg0&feature=youtu.be

Beginning Animation student Hunter Harding had his short replacement animation, The Foul and the Egg, featured on SOTA social media sites on October 16. Here’s the link for his animation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYknFKimJFA
Citing 'Psycho' as evidence, scholar argues for fan editors' artistic freedom

One of scariest movies of all time, “Psycho” is Alfred Hitchcock's work at his finest. But a University of Kansas scholar thinks deleting a scene would make the movie even darker.

As part of an argument for why fan editors should have the artistic freedom to share their re-edited versions of feature films, Joshua Wille, a doctoral student in film and media studies, tweaked the final minutes of “Psycho.”

In 1998, while reviewing Gus Van Sant’s remake of the movie, film critic Roger Ebert questioned the use of a psychiatrist character to explain Norman Bates’ psychosis. Following Ebert’s suggestion, a fan editor by the name of “Stomachworm” made a cut of the film in 2009 that shortened the psychiatrist’s monologue at the police station. The cut, which was acknowledged by Ebert as being effective, is no longer accessible online because of copyright issues.

Wille reconstructed the alternative version based on Ebert’s critique, which keeps the first few seconds of the psychiatrist’s monologue. He then created another cut that takes out the psychiatrist’s speech entirely and jumps to Norman sitting alone in the jail cell with the voice of his mother in his head.

“That version presents a different kind of ending,” Wille said. “There is no voice of reason, no psychiatrist to care for Norman, no sympathetic authority figure. There is just Norman and his madness. And that is a real dark note to end the movie on.”

The “Psycho” cuts are discussed in the article “Dead Links, Vaporcuts, and Creativity in Fan Edit Replication,” which Wille wrote for the journal Transformative Works and Cultures (http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/663).

Fan editors, Wille said, maintain their work is noncommercial, stand against video piracy and demand that their viewers own a legal copy of the film or television show before downloading the fan-edited version. Because popular video viewing sites, such as YouTube and Vimeo, frequently take down fan edits on the grounds of copyright infringement, fan editors often share their transformative works on the same channels that distribute pirated content. And when these controversial online sites are deactivated on the grounds of piracy, access to fan edits like “Psycho: The Roger Ebert Cut” are jeopardized.

“Fan editing is experimental and critical in nature. The media industry and regulatory practices aren’t caught up with the wave of creativity that is happening,” Wille said.

In the article, Wille coins the term “vaporcut” to describe actor and “Star Wars” fan Topher Grace’s re-edit of the "Star Wars" prequel trilogy into a single 85-minute fan edit, “Star Wars Episode III.5: The Editor Strikes Back.” The fan edit has never been made publicly available; however, it has been discussed online, and a description of its alternate narrative structure is available.

Pulling from the word vaporware, which is used to describe technology that is rumored, written and talked about, but never actually released, Wille uses vaporcut to describe fan edits that are discussed but not available to viewers. They are different from fan edits that once were available online but have been removed from the web.

“If we are going to conscientiously study fan edits, we need to be careful not to give credence to works that are unsubstantiated. We have to be careful how we talk about them,” Wille said.

Wille also looks at the fan edits created by director Steven Soderbergh, who has recut the much malign 1980 film “Heaven’s Gate,” created a mash-up of the 1960 and 1998 versions of “Psycho” and changed “Raiders of the Lost Ark” to black and white and rescored the film. Soderbergh also made a fan edit of “2001: A Space Odyssey” that he eventually removed from his website at the request of Warner Bros. and the estate of Stanley Kubrick.

In addition to his own work re-editing “Psycho,” Wille points to new fan edits that have been created by people trying to reconstruct Grace and Soderbergh’s projects.

“Fan editors have attempted to manually recreate these elusive works, but they naturally produce variants that reflect their own creative choices, similar to the way in which an inspired cook may deviate from a recipe,” Wille said.

Image courtesy Giphy.com, Joshua Wille.

Out & About

Distinguished San Francisco-based film historian and critic David Thomson was a guest of FMS and the University of Kansas on 11-13 November 2015. He gave presentations on Alfred Hitchcock and Orson Welles in John Tibbetts’ “History of the American Sound Film” class and at the Kansas Union in Woodruff Auditorium. At the Hall Center he presented a tribute to Orson Welles on the occasion of Welles’ Centenary Year; after which he joined John Tibbetts for a Q&A. Also pictured here is his interview with producer Laura Lorson at Kansas Public Radio. On each occasion Mr. Thomson also spoke about his books on film, including THE BIG SCREEN, THE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF FILM, ROSEBUD (about Orson Welles), and his newest, HOW TO WATCH A MOVIE.

Kevin Willmott’s documentary on the Gordon Parks Elementary School premiered on November 12 on KCPT public television in Kansas City.

The film, shot over an entire school year, is directed by Kevin Willmott, photographed by Eric L. Smith, edited by Mark von Schlemer, and produced by Scott Richardson and Sam Zeff for Do Good Productions. Nancy Seelen is Executive Producer.

For more information: http://kcpt.org/highlights/coming-november-gordon-parks-elementary/

Congratulations to Ph.D. student Carl Swanson and his wife Ashleigh on the birth of their daughter! Edith Louise Swanson was born in the wee hours of October 19th at 6 lbs., 7 oz., with a full head of hair and her father’s nose.
Out & About

Pulling from nearly 40 years of interviews, University of Kansas Professor John Tibbetts’ latest book contains a who’s who of Hollywood Greats.

“Those Who Made It: Speaking with the Legends of Hollywood” reaches as far back as “The Jazz Singer” to bring readers original interviews about the making of groundbreaking films that span the history of classical Hollywood.

Narrating are the Hollywood legends who audiences rarely see on film: directors, cinematographers, composers, stunt people, editors, sound designers and animators.

“I wanted to recognize the people behind the camera,” said Tibbetts, associate professor of film and media studies. “Most of the time we are looking at the finished product that is in front of the camera. But now we are behind the camera. We have an angle on filmmaking that we don’t often get.”

As a scholar, author, former television and radio journalist for CBS, and one-time editor of “American Classic Screen,” Tibbetts has conducted thousands of interviews over the past four decades. He has written about music composers, the science fiction and horror genre, and Hollywood’s early stars. In this book, Tibbetts selected interviews on pioneering work that covered a broad range of Hollywood eras.

“Each of these interviews not only represent a period of Hollywood history but also an important film from that time,” Tibbetts said.

Among the film innovators is Bernard Brown, the sound engineer for the first talking picture film, “The Jazz Singer.”

“That was like talking to a chapter of history,” Tibbetts said of his interview with Brown.

Tibbetts included his conversations with John Houseman, who was Orson Welles’ producer for “Citizen Kane” and Glen MacWilliams, a cinematographer for Douglas Fairbanks and Alfred Hitchcock. Ray Bradbury, author of “Fahrenheit 451,” talks about the movies he wrote that helped launch the science fiction craze.

Tibbetts brings readers inside the Memphis Belle, the first B-17 bomber to complete 25 missions during World War II and subject of an iconic 1943 war movie and a 1990 feature film. Tibbetts interviewed both the filmmakers and the plane’s crew members.

Readers are treated to the hair-raising antics of Richard Farnsworth, who performed stunts in “Gone with the Wind,” “The Ten Commandments” and “Spartacus.” Later in life, he starred in movies such as “The Grey Fox” and “The Straight Story.”

“There are wonderful stories about him stunting in Hollywood at his peak,” Tibbetts said. “He is riding on horseback, falling off cliffs and having arrows shot into him.”

The book also contains interviews from Muppet master Jim Henson and his precursor, puppet master “Buffalo Bob” Smith of “Howdy Doody” fame.

Director Steven Spielberg talks about the “The Color Purple,” Terry Gilliam about “Brazil,” George Miller about “Mad Max” and Bernardo Bertolucci about “The Last Emperor.” Robert Altman, Wayne Wang, Mira Nair and Michael Moore also share the secrets of their craft.

While in New York to interview Spielberg about “The Color Purple,” Tibbetts heard word that cameraman Alan Daviau was available for an interview. The two met at a bar and talked for hours.

“It was one of the most wonderful interview experiences I ever had. And Alan knew everything, where all the bodies were buried,” Tibbetts said. “What a lucky break that was.”

Tibbetts includes interviews from famed composer Philip Glass about his groundbreaking scoring for the cult film “Koyaanisqatsi” and from film preservationist Kevin Brownlow and composer Carl Davis about their work on restoring the five-hour epic “Napoleon.”

From big-name directors to lesser-known cameraman, Tibbetts said some of his interview subjects were reflecting back on their careers while others were caught in the moment reacting to change.

“These interviews serve as time capsules for me, too,” Tibbetts said. “And in that way it has given me a chance to preserve memories that I think are worthwhile in sharing.”

**Out & About**

Doctoral student **Patrick Terry** helped organize the Japan Foundation Film Festival at the Lawrence Public Library in early November. The festival featured four documentaries that explored a variety of social issues in contemporary Japan. Attendance was good both days of the festival.

Read more about the Japan Foundation Festival here: https://www.facebook.com/events/187343421601146/

Professor **Cathy Joritz** had an article published in *IKON 8/2015, Christian Iconography in Modern and Contemporary Art*, edited by Professor Marina Vicelja (University of Rijeka, Croatia, Center for Iconographic Studies) and published by Brepols Publishers, Belgium.

Her article is titled *Nuestra Señora de la Purisima Concepcion. Beyond the Walls of San Jose de Gracia, Trampas, New Mexico*. In this article Joritz provides a brief analysis of the retablo of the Virgin Mary displayed on the 17th century altar screen in the church *San Jose de Gracia* in Trampas, New Mexico and describes the aesthetic and contextual decisions influencing her own digitally revised, feminist interpretations of the original painting. Further, she questions whether digital image-making techniques, including animation, can create fresh perspectives of this icon, reawaken interest in the Virgin Mary and Mariology and still function as traditional retablos.

Joritz was the sole American contributor to *IKON 8*, a 299 page publication, which includes articles written by authors from across the globe.

Information about the book can be found here: [http://www.brepols.net/Pages/ShowProduct.aspx?prod_id=9782503553733-1](http://www.brepols.net/Pages/ShowProduct.aspx?prod_id=9782503553733-1)
**Alumni in the News**

**Shoshana Rose, Ian Weaver** and **Daniel Suffield** are just like any other KU film graduates. They have dreams of making big time movies; they have experience working on local indie films, but one thing sets them apart.

They run a YouTube channel with over 100,000 subscribers called Gaming Wildlife.

Gaming Wildlife is a web series hosted on YouTube that features satirical takes on gaming culture. Over the past few years, the channel has garnered over 13 million views across all of its videos, while some of its more popular videos have reached a million views alone.

"Getting this many people to follow our channel is a huge deal because there's not a whole lot of people here in the Midwest that have been able to pull something off like this," Weaver said. "For me, this is the most successful thing I've ever been a part of."

The three met when they were film students at the University through KU Filmworks. Rose graduated in 2011, while Weaver and Suffield graduated in 2012. Rose writes scripts, Weaver acts and writes, and Suffield films and edits.

The channel grew out of a brainstorming session that spawned its first series called "Gaming Wildlife Foundation," which is a satirical look at different types of stereotypical gamers through the lens of a nature show akin to something seen on National Geographic. The channel is dedicated to gamers themselves rather than the games.

"There's a lot of media that exists for gamers, but it's all independent stuff like us," Rose said. "In the initial thought process, we were really trying to exploit a part of this cultural phenomenon that really hadn't [been] discovered or talked about, which is the people."

The initial success channel came when a video titled "If Electronic Arts were 100% honest with us..." hit the front page of Reddit and was shared across the internet. The video features Weaver acting as former Electronic Arts CEO John Riccitiello discussing several shady business tactics of the company. The video currently sits at 1.1 million views. The group attributes the success of the video to giving the voiceless a voice.

"People feel powerless in the shadows of these monolithic corporations," Rose said. "The gaming companies don't hear what the gamers actually want or how they're getting screwed over."

Despite the success, the trio has plans to take the project to the next level.

"I feel like it's not good enough, but I'm a perfectionist and I just want to be better," Suffield said. "Wherever we are just isn't good enough, and it pushes me to make everything better."

The members of Gaming Wildlife are like siblings. They joke around with each other and give each other a hard time, but, at the end of the day, it's obvious they still care about each other personally and professionally. The three have vastly different personalities, but they mesh together to create a cohesive unit. The creation of content and the success of their channel brings on a fair amount of stress, but the group knows how to handle it and move forward.

"Knowing who we are in our working relationships help us in terms of balance because this is the sort of stress that can destroy friendships," Rose said. "I'm very, very lucky to be involved with such paramount professionals."

Instead of taking the traditional route and going to Los Angeles or New York, Gaming Wildlife has found its niche on YouTube here in Lawrence. The channel even has viewers from Germany and Saudi Arabia, Weaver said. And through this alternative route, the group has been able to live out their dreams.

"To write a script and make a video of an idea I had last week and see it come up on to the YouTube screen and see 100,000 views pop up — for me this is a dream job," Weaver said.

Copied from: [http://www.kansan.com/arts_and_culture/ku-film-graduates-youtube-channel-gaming-wildlife-satirizes-gaming-culture/article_fc74fa00-8fae-11e5-8b2b-2314ee36f144.html](http://www.kansan.com/arts_and_culture/ku-film-graduates-youtube-channel-gaming-wildlife-satirizes-gaming-culture/article_fc74fa00-8fae-11e5-8b2b-2314ee36f144.html)
Alumni News

Last spring Dr. Mark von Schlemmer (Ph.D., KU 2010) was awarded promotion and tenure in his 5th year at the University of Central Missouri. Mark helped redesign the Digital Media Production degree in the department of Communication and has been the Festival Director of the Show Me Justice Film Festival for the past four years.

Academic Calendar

- Friday, December 11 — Stop Day
- Monday, December 14 — First Day of Finals
- Friday, December 18 — Last Day of Finals
- Tuesday, December 29 — Grade Submission Deadline
- Monday, January 18 — Martin Luther King Day, No Classes
- Tuesday, January 19 — First Day of Spring Classes

http://www.registrar.ku.edu/calendar/

Equipment Check-in: 10:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

Equipment Check-out: 1:00 p.m. — 3:00 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

Sign-up to check-out equipment in the binder on the table near the equipment room.

Sign-up for editing rooms by signing the edit room schedule posted on the editing room doors.

The computer lab is available for use during the following times:
- Monday from 11:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Tuesday from 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.,
- Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., and Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Check with your instructor or John McCluskey, Assistant Technical Director, for more information.

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!

Sydney Stone
Advising Specialist

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

Department of Film and Media Studies
Oldfather Studios
1621 W. 9th Street
Lawrence, KS 66044-2488
Phone: 785-864-1340
Fax: 785-331-2671
E-mail: film@ku.edu
Send your news items and updates to Karla Conrad, kmconrad@ku.edu.
To view past issues of the newsletter, go to our website: http://film.ku.edu/newsletters