

# TEACHING THROUGH THE CINEMATIC ARTS

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## *AN INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION*

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## *EXTENDED ABSTRACT*

Instructors in a variety of disciplines use cinema as part of their teaching: Communication (Proctor & Adler, 1991); Criminal Justice (Cook & Bacot, 1993; Oliver, 2011); Management (Bumpus, 2005; Bell, 2008; Champoux, 2001; Pandey, 2012); Counseling (Higgins & Dermer, 2001); Ethics (Teays, 2017); Foreign Policy (Kuzma & Haney, 2001); Organizational Behavior (Champoux, 2015; Holbrook, 2009; Smith, 2009); International Studies (Boyer, 2002); Cultural Competency (Kelly, 2012), and Leadership (Reed, 2016). Feature films and television series serve as another tool to assist students in understanding concepts, introduce difficult subject matter, and demonstrate both positive and negative behaviors. The use of feature films, documentaries, and television shows can enrich active learning and appeal to different learning styles (Neilson, Pillai, & Watson, 2003; Pandey, 2012). Films and television shows also have the advantage of being a more globalized medium than other forms of popular culture, are relatively accessible when compared to academic journals, and provides similarity to qualitative research as both rely on narrative processes (Bell, 2008).

According to Trier (2006), instructors should include popular culture in their pedagogical toolkit as today's students are inundated with media images from popular culture. Educators teach in a culture controlled by all kinds of visual media, including feature films, online videos and television shows (Kuzma & Haney, 2001). Students today spend a vast part of their time with audiovisual mediums, particularly through online avenues such as YouTube and Netflix. Film, therefore, is a powerful instructional tool that can engage students with a topic, providing a focal point for analysis (Teays, 2017) and serving as a common experience for discussion (Oliver, 2010). According to Berk (2009), movies and television shows prompt emotional reactions such as excitement, laughter or anger. As a result, the presentation of both verbal and visual materials tends to be effective in the introduction of complex topics (Berk, 2009). In this post-MTV environment, motion pictures are a comfortable vehicle that can aid in maintaining student interest in complex concepts (Champoux, 1999). According to Kuzma and Haney (2001), film "stimulates the senses, grounds abstract concepts, engages the emotions, contextualizes history, and facilitates an active learning classroom environment" (p. 34). The use of feature films provokes discussion and self-assessment of one's values and identity (Pandey, 2012). Movies such as *The Big Short* (finance, ethics), *Remember the Titans* (diversity, stereotypes, team building), *The Breakfast Club* (interpersonal communications, stereotypes) and *We Are Soldiers* (leadership theory).

The use of film as pedagogical device may vary in application. Champoux (2015, 2007, 2005, 2003, 2001) utilized film clips ranging from three to 10 minutes to illustrate specific topics dealing with management and organizational behavior. Enlow and Popa (2008) used a complete film to frame ethical concepts and situations by analyzing fictional scenarios within that film. Holbrook (2009) also used a single film to exam organizational behavior concepts. Reed (2016) created a graduate course in which a different film was viewed in class as a way to discuss different leadership theories. We have used all three of these variants as well as allowing students to choose fictional organizations from film as a way to analyze organizational behavior and leadership. Therefore, the use of film provides a number of different approaches to study numerous topics.

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