Proposal to teach an 8-10 week course in the History and Aesthetics of Film for Olli – Leonard King

My background: I taught at Maret School for 43 years until I retired in June 2016. I started teaching a year long History and Aesthetics of Film in 1973 before VCRs were invented and few colleges, let alone high schools were teaching courses in film criticism. My Masters (from the University of Rochester) and my unfinished Ph.D. thesis (from UCLA) were on German Expressionist Films, 1919-1932. I am presently teaching a variation of this course in the evenings to adults at Maret.

Students would see the films before the sessions so that we would use the class time to discuss the films, and I would break down a scene or two to show what the director is doing in that scene. I selected the films to demonstrate a sense of cinema as a unique form of communication with its own language, psychology, and appeal; as a developing art form from its silent beginnings in the 1890s to the present; as a source of philosophy and individual expression; and in the context of the social, political and economic history of the country in which the film was made. These films are available at many sources including YouTube, Netflix, and Amazon. The website, canistream.it, provided additional sites.

Class 1 – Chaplin, *Modern Times,* and the nature of comedy, the relation between the director’s biography and the film, and Chaplin’s critique of America.

Class 2 –Fritz Lang, *M,* and German Expressionism, especially the way the films of this period reflect the history and psychology of Germany between the wars.

Class 3 – Orson Welles, *Citizen Kane*

Class 4 – Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window*

Class 5 and 6 – A History of Hollywood from the 1940s through the 1970s using *Casablanca* and *The Graduate* to illustrate the changes in the industry, American values, and representations of romance.

Class 7 – Spike Lee, *Do the Right Thing,* and the history of the portrayals of African Americans in Hollywood films.

Class 8 – Ingmar Bergman, *Wild Strawberries.* Discussion of the differences between European and American films of this period as well as an analysis of aging, dreams, and philosophy in the film.

I can also add films by Truffaut, Fellini, Kurosawa, and other non-American directors.