



“THE FLICKS”  
Oakland University’s  
Prospective Regular Cinema—

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*TOJ Notes: The Editors*

Several months ago, we have heard, the Office of Student Affairs approved and budgeted a group of faculty who promise to provide a cinema public showing on a weekly basis during the heart of the semester beginning with Winter 2005. The participating faculty include: Barbara Oakley, Engineering; Barbara Mabee, Modern Languages; Carl Osthaus, History; Don Mayer, SBA; and Sherm Folland, Economics. These non-profit entrepreneurs coordinate with Jean Ann Miller of Student Affairs.

What kinds of films are planned? “The Flicks” cinema proposes to bring quality films emphasizing different peoples of the world and different places. The films they have so far listed as possibilities could be called “artsy”; for example, many will be foreign films with English subtitles, others, critically acclaimed English language films, historical fiction and documentaries. But, of these kinds of movies, they aim for ones that students will find entertaining. All will have an academic seal of approval.

To connect the films with an academic purpose, The Flicks project borrows a method that has been used successfully at other schools. Films shown will be only those that have been selected by OU faculty who promise 1) to offer at least

50 students an academic bonus for attending the movie and satisfying the teacher's related requirements; and 2) to discuss the film in class, weaving it into the subject at hand. The Flicks group has a pre-screened, pre-approved list of well over 150 films sorted by department, that is, by their guesses at the interests of individual departments. A faculty may nevertheless propose a film not on this list; it will then be screened by someone in the group, which will then report back to that faculty member. The group expects to be flexible.

What financial risk is born by the faculty or his department? The single and correct answer is "None". While schemes used elsewhere often ask the department to financially guarantee the showing, in Oakland University's case, the Office of Student Affairs has offered to pick up the tab, at least for the present. That means there is no risk to the individual faculty member or to his or her department. It also means that the public presentations may be free of charge to all comers.

The Flicks will have its own website, on which updated schedules, times of showings, reviews of the films, maps and contact information will appear. The group hopes to gradually build a "natural" student audience, students who come for the film itself without need or concern for academic bonuses. They also hope to build a community audience, and to this purpose newspaper advertisements will be purchased.

Why bother? Several departments, for example, Modern Languages and History, have a number of faculty members with experience in using movies to teach. Others around the campus have expressed a similar interest. The Flicks group, in effect, organizes these interests into a shared public entertainment. They hope that it becomes another reason for finding the campus a good place to come back to OU and hang out, and get to know better and identify with other OU students. For our residential students, many of whom already stick with us on weekends, it might be viewed as Student Affairs's gesture of good will.

But, what movies are on this list? Many are popular for-

eign films, critically acclaimed American movies and documentaries; other selections are inspired by showings at the Detroit Film Theater, Main Art, or Maple Theater. Some are “classics” in their genre. Examples might serve better. Among the French films listed are *Amelie*, *Café au Lait*, *Tatie Danielle*, and *When the Cats Away*; Japanese: *Shall We Dance?* *Roshomon*; German: *Wings of Desire*, *Nosferatu*, *Nobody Loves Me*; History: *Burnt by the Sun*, *Goodbye Lenin*, *Gettysburg*, *Central Station*, *Raise the Red Lantern*; Economics: *Grapes of Wrath*, *Big Night*; Engineering: *Apollo 13*; Physics: *Stephen Hawking Documentary*. And so on.

The complete list of lists is available as an email document by writing to *folland@oakland.edu*. The first public presentation is scheduled for late January 2005.