

KRAM 2020 Syllabus

Course Instructor: Dr. Michael Walker

Course Dates: May 1 - May 31, 2020

Note: Everyone is adjusting to course changes due to COVID-19. While I expect this means that many of us are looking for time to kill this May, I clearly recognize that this will not be true for everyone. So please, do not be daunted by the course requirements; see below for details on taking the course for a letter grade, and pass/fail. I also welcome auditors for any "lecture" or discussion section.

Grading: *All grading is on the basis of class participation.* For those interested in taking the course for a letter grade, the basic structure is a set of 2 weekend lectures tied to a particular theme, plus one midweek lecture that typically helps set the stage for the next weekend's lectures, or further explores themes from the past week. In some weeks, a greater number of options are present, and those taking the course for a grade are expected to choose the two weekend lectures and one midweek lecture that they prefer to attend. Optional lectures are marked with a *, though extra participation is of course encouraged.

There is also a Dogstar "Song of the Week" that course participants are expected to listen to.

Letter grades will be allocated as follows. Note that those taking the course for a letter grade must also attend the mandatory lecture. There is a class exercise tied to the mandatory lecture that is optional, but strongly encouraged, for those taking the course for a letter grade.

A+: 14+ lectures

A: 9-13 lectures

A-: 5-8 lectures

B+: 4 lectures

B: 3 lectures

C: 1-2 lectures

There is also a pass/fail option for enrollment. Passing the course requires attendance at the mandatory lecture, *and at least nominal participation* in the class exercise tied to the mandatory lecture.

Meeting Times: The course is designed to be undertaken at one's own leisure, though I am happy to coordinate lecture times to accommodate video chat, text-chain, or (if restrictions are eased) in-person viewings together.

There will also be weekly discussion sections, held over happy hour. While optional, I strongly encourage attendance. The timing of these will be determined after final course enrollment, and may be subject to change from week to week.

Course Outline

Weekend 1 (May 1-3): Bill & Ted's Excellent Weekend

Ease into KRAM with the Wyld Stallyns. Be excellent to each other!

1. Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure
2. Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey

Dogstar Song of the Week: Washington

Midweek Flick: Keep the early Keanu vibes going, but change up the feel! Choose either art-house or gritty instead of buddy comedy:

1. My Own Private Idaho
2. River's Edge

Weekend 2 (May 8-10): Keanu Acts in Period Pieces

The time-traveling continues! Accents! Elaborate costumes!

1. Much Ado about Nothing
2. A Walk in the Clouds (or should I say, "Un Paseo por los Nubes") -- LOVE EACH OTHER! Plus a nice lead-in to next weekend...
3. Little Buddha*

Dogstar Song of the Week: The History Light

Midweek Flick: Keanu does voice-over work! Do you want something light and breezy? Or dark and heavy? Either way, we've got a choice for you!

1. Toy Story 4
2. A Scanner Darkly

Weekend 3 (May 15-17): Rom-Com Weekend!

If you aren't sheltering-in-place with your SO, get those Zoom dates ready! There's a lot to work with here, and a great chance to choose-your-own-adventure and go beyond the main course material. Pick 2!

1. Always Be My Maybe - the most amazing Keanu cameo of all time. When I heard there was a Keanu cameo, I was excited but kept expectations low so as not to be disappointed. They were exceeded beyond all expectations. Instant KRAM classic. Plus San Francisco!
2. Sweet November - workaholic Keanu needs to become more spontaneous and zen, as in Point Break
3. The Lake House - reprising two of Keanu's favorite things, time travel and Sandra Bullock!

4. Destination Wedding - perhaps the most awkward sex scene ever put to film, plus learn how to scare off cougars (the animal, not older women. Check out Keanu in Something's Gotta Give for more on that)

Dogstar Song of the Week: Cornerstore

Midweek Flick:

1. Johnny Mnemonic: *Start the transition to action movies, plus I want to know what next year is going to be like! (set in 2021)*
2. Choose another movie from weekend 3 or weekend 4.

Weekend 4 (May 22-25): Keanu knows G/Kung-Fu

Memorial Day weekend provides an extra opportunity to go deep on action Keanu. While this gives more of a highlight-reel, feel free to dive into sequels and tre-quels.

1. Matrix (series)
2. John Wick (series)
3. Man of Tai Chi and/or 47 Ronin*

Dogstar Song of the Week: A Dreamtime

Midweek Flick: Keanu plays sports!

1. Youngbloods: *Get ready for Keanu & the Swayze with both of them in a hockey movie also featuring Rob Lowe!*
2. The Replacements and/or Hardball*

Week 5: Can't Miss Classics

Closing out the month, and celebrating 5 years since the Point Break Groom's Cake, with the OG classics (and let's be real, I might just watch Point Break twice instead of also watching Speed)

1. ***Point Break*** (mandatory lecture)
2. Speed

Dogstar Song of the Week: Swim

Weekend 5 Class Exercise: Eat meatball subs and/or play the Point Break drinking game while watching Point Break. See course website for further discussion of possible rules.

Note: If you do not like one of weeks 1 - 4, please feel free to substitute one weekend with:

Keanu deals with the Devil:

1. The Devil's Advocate
2. Constantine

3. Dracula* (not quite the Devil, but close enough)

Alternate option: Keanu is a lawyer! Substitute “The Whole Truth” for “Constantine” (or substitute this as the midweek flick leading into Keanu deals with the devil weekend)

Additional Course Notes

Some general advice: it’s always nice to see some new movies. Keanu has been in enough films there’s usually always something new that can be brought in. If you’re looking for something new beyond the films listed here:

- Chain Reaction: saw this for the first time in May last year. Really builds on Keanu’s implausible educational history from Point Break (football scholarship to law school). Here, Keanu was getting a PhD in physics but after doing experiments in his apartment and causing an explosion, he now works as a machinist for a green energy lab and makes a key discovery that leads to the discovery of a new green energy technology. But then he’s framed for an explosion and has to go on the run. Also featuring Morgan Freeman and Rachel Weisz.
- Day the Earth Stood Still: some have said this is the perfect role for Keanu
- Thumbsucker