



Well, the semester started with a bit of a bang. Several of us received overloads in our teaching assignments. Many thanks to Kelly Gregg, Joe Morgan, Ted Klimasewski and yours truly for picking up the pieces (*i.e.*, extra classes to teach) and allowing the Department to move forward.

The open house for the Collaborative Classroom and the Student Study Lounge was a success. I expect that both rooms will help build student morale and improve student learning. I am always open to suggestions for improvements.

For all of those who have not asked me, yet: Yes, Tracy is on vacation today. She will be back next week. All those important tasks - like running the Department ☺ - will have to wait until next week. Enjoy the holiday week-end. I plan to spend Monday with something on the barbecue and a glass of wine in my hand. I hope that you also find your favorite way to unwind.

-- Lou

Department News

BlendKit 2012

BlendKit2012 is an open online course focused on blended learning. It is a 5-week course, Monday, September 24 - Monday, October 29, 2012. During last summer's BlendKit2011, approximately 200 faculty/designers from seven countries registered to participate as part of the cohort engaging with the BlendKit Course materials and with each other. BlendKit2012 will build on the successes of last year's open, online course by adding to the existing course:

- an LMS-based communications hub for registered participants
- two participant roles for registrants: 1) participant and 2) auditor
- online badges for completion of course activities
- certificates for successful completers of BlendKit2012
- new guest faculty for weekly webinars
- additional faculty case study audio interviews

For more information on BlendKit2012 and the underlying BlendKit Course materials, please visit: <http://bit.ly/blendkit2012> If you are interested in either auditing or participating actively in BlendKit2012, please complete the registration form at: http://bit.ly/blendkit2012_registration

Preview Day, 29 September

Announcing the September 29th Preview Day. The browse session will be in Stephenson Gym from 9:30 - 12:00. Bottled water will be provided at your table but refreshments will not be available. Please let Joe Morgan know if you are willing to help.

Staff Performance Management Administrators Review Form

JSU started the first phase of the staff performance evaluation process with a review of all administrators. For this process, administrators are the provost, vice presidents, associate vice presidents, academic deans, department heads and directors. All administrators will be reviewed anonymously by their direct reports. Please click on the link below to access your administrator's review form. You must enter your supervisor's name, position title and department. You should also enter the review period, which is September 1, 2011 - August 31, 2012. Your name is not required on the form. You will also be asked to check the box that corresponds to your working relationship to the person being reviewed. Please click submit upon completion of the form. You will have until September 14, 2012 to submit this form.

<http://www.jsu.edu/hr/review/>

Please contact the Office of Human Resources should you have questions regarding the process.

University News**American Red Cross Blood Drive on September 7**

There will be an American Red Cross Blood Drive on September 7 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. in front of the Merrill Building. Please call Amy Vaughn at ext. 5501 to set up an appointment.

Mock Grant Proposal Development Training Session Will Be September 18

Please join The Institute for Research and Collaboration staff for the first monthly Mock Grant Proposal Development Training session. The first session is scheduled for September 18, 2012 from 2:00-4:30 in the Gold Room. The IRC staff will guide faculty through the pre-award, award, and post award phases of a grant. Attendees will participate in developing a response to a Request for Proposal and following the necessary steps to complete the process within JSU. Also, participants will receive instruction in the award and post award grant processes to include budget assignment and development, reporting and forms. At the end of the training, the participants will be able to successfully start developing a grant using the resources available within the Institute for Research and Collaboration. Please email irc@jsu.edu or call extension 8159 to reserve your seat.

2012-2013 Vehicle Registration is now Open

Vehicle registration for 2012-2013 opened on August 7. All vehicles that will be parked on the JSU campus during the 2012-2013 academic year must be registered in this manner and assigned decals must be displayed appropriately. For more information please visit <http://www.jsu.edu/police/parkingregistration.html>

Student Opportunities

Student Travel Grants

We have funding from Sam Kinsaul to support student travel to present research work at conferences. Applications are due by 30 September 2012. See **Lou** or **Tracy** if you need an application. Requests up to \$500 can be made.

Top Ten List

Top 10 Labor Day Movies List

Source: Forbes magazine, on-line, Mark Hughes, contributor

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/markhughes/2012/08/30/top-10-labor-day-movies-list/>

Labor Day weekend is upon us, dear readers, and that means it's time for me to supply you with a handy list of the *top 10 movies to watch in celebration of this holiday for working people everywhere*. I'll admit up front that the list is mostly comprised of movies from the U.S., because I'm sad to say I've not seen all that many foreign films about labor movements and workers.

So let's get started counting down movie tributes to the labor movement...

10. [*Gung Ho!*](#) — Let's start things off with a comedy about a union struggling to deal with their auto plant's takeover by a Japanese company. Always funny, and often unexpectedly sweet or serious, this is one of actor [Michael Keaton's](#) best comedic performance.

9. [*The Take*](#) — The first documentary on the list is a surprising tale about Argentinian workers who take over the closed down factories of their former employers and set to work producing again, in the midst of economic turmoil in their nation. Inspiring while not glossing over the difficulties such organizing requires.

8. [*9 to 5*](#) - The other comedy on the list is a tour de force of righteous comeuppance for a terrible boss at the hands of the female employees he's long exploited. The pitch-perfect cast and a particularly hilarious series of dream sequences make this one a must-see.

7. [*Roger & Me*](#) — The second documentary on the list will probably be a controversial choice to some, but it's an undeniably powerful and hard look at the realities faced when the GM auto plants shut down in [Flint](#), Michigan, sending 30,000 employees to the unemployment lines and leading to rampant poverty, collapse, and crime in the city.

6. [*Silkwood*](#) — A powerful and important true story about a union worker in a plutonium pellet plant who discovers unsafe work conditions, becomes contaminated with radiation, and then turns up dead from a car crash the day she's supposed to meet a [New York Times](#) reporter to hand over purported documented evidence of her allegations.

5. [*The Grapes of Wrath*](#) — The classic [John Steinbeck](#) novel is done great justice in [John Ford's](#) dramatic adaptation of the Great Depression tale of migrant Oklahoma farmers who set out for California in hopes of finding jobs and some kind of future. The bleakness of the

farmer's lives and travels, plus the terrible conditions at work camps, are combined with a steadfast determination to survive and fight against injustice. It's one of Steinbeck's best works, and one of Ford's as well.

4. [Harlan County, USA](#) — The final documentary on the list is a stunning examination of a coal miners' strike in 1970's Kentucky. The film exposed the reality of the horrible conditions the miners' endured, the tragic toll of their work on their bodies, the commitment of the workers and their families to fight for better compensation and safer work conditions, and the violence (including shooting deaths) they faced in their struggles. It's one of the most important films about the labor movement ever made.

3. [Matewan](#) — A great film depicting the true story of the 1920 coal miners' strike in West Virginia and the attempts to unionize the workers in the face of brutal violence at the hands of the mining company. Filled with excellent performances, beautiful cinematography, and a gripping story made all the more intense because of its historical background, the film maintains a level of authenticity that few other films about the period or subject ever manage to achieve.

2. [Norma Rae](#) — Another true story entry on the list and our penultimate labor movement film, with a lead performance that earned [Sally Field](#) her first Oscar in a role as a tough textile worker who fights to unionize her factory despite intense pressure and harassment from the company. Field is splendid as the title character, and she has one of the most emotionally satisfying moments in any labor film in the famous scene in which she holds up the sign reading "UNION" in the middle of the factory until the other workers at last demonstrate their support for her cause. You'll get a lump in your throat, and just might applaud!

1. [Germinal](#) — Not just the top film on this list, but also one of the finest movies I've ever seen on any subject, this adaptation of French author [Émile Zola's](#) famed novel depicts the life and struggles of French coal miners during the 1860's, leading to a workers' strike and eventually a violent confrontation between the workers and armed troops. It's a brilliant film, long but absolutely well worth every minute, featuring incredible performances and directing in a story that will draw you into the day to day realities of life for the impoverished worker. It's very hard to find a copy of this movie that will play in North American DVD/Blu-ray players, unfortunately, and it's particularly difficult to find copies that have English subtitles, but [it's available on iTunes \(click here for a direct link to the get the film\)](#), if you are interested in seeing it and need help finding a copy for the weekend.

Contact Details

If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Physical and Earth Sciences newsletter, then contact **Tracy Casey** before noon on Thursdays at: tscasey@jsu.edu or phone (256) 782-5232.