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Film Policy

Saint Mary's College of California

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Film Policy

Only films that have been rated G, PG, PG-13, NC-17 or R by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) may be rented with College funds and shown in a College facility. Any film unrated or rated X by the MPAA may not be secured with College funds or shown in a College facility. Use of films is restricted to those films rented through the appropriate distributor holding the necessary rights for public performance. Screening of any other films (for example, privately owned tapes/DVDs or those rented from a video store or owned by the library) for public viewing is a violation of copyright law, even when such screening is free, and is therefore prohibited on campus.

There are three exceptions under Copyright Law:

1. Educator's Performance Rights: There is a clause in the U.S. Copyright Law which gives exemption to the law through the Educator's Performance Rights. ALL six of the qualifications below must be met in order to show a film using the Educator's Performance Rights. a) Performances and displays of audiovisual works must be made from legitimate copies; b) Performances and displays must be part of a systematic course of instruction and not for the entertainment, recreation, or cultural value of any part of the audience; c) Performances and displays must be given by the instructors or pupils; d) Performances and displays must be given in classrooms or other places devoted to instruction; e) Performances and displays must be part of the teaching activities of non-profit educational institutions; and f) Attendance is limited to the instructors, pupils, and guest lecturers.
2. Public Domain: There are some films which fall under "public domain" and are not subject to licensing. You can find a complete listing of such films at www.fesfilms.com/masters.html. Most of these films are pre-1950.
3. Short Clips: Showing a short clip less than 15 seconds from any movie can be done without acquiring a license. Any clip longer than 15 seconds requires appropriate permission and licensing.

In short, students may show a lawfully obtained video (e.g. videos rented or purchased from a store or borrowed from a library) to a small group of friends in their own residence hall room. Faculty members may show a film for educational purposes when the six conditions cited above are met.