ETHN 101: Ethnic Images In Film
Los Angeles Film and Urban Crisis Since 1965

Instructor: Aundrey M. Jones
Time and Location: MW 11:00am-2:50pm at HSS 1315
Office Hours and Location: by appointment at Mandeville Coffee Cart (Art of Espresso)
Contact: amj005@ucsd.edu

Course Description:
The Watts Riots of 1965, at the time, was regarded as the largest, full-scale urban uprising that the nation has seen in recent history. The years following Watts were met with much conflict, mainly concerning the rise of neoliberalism, full-scale militarized forms of policing and surveillance, and the violent neutralization of Black youth. This course will broadly examine the larger trends in political shifts that have occurred since the late 1960s, an era that marks the rise and end of the Black Power Movement and into what's called the War on Drugs. The city of Los Angeles has been seen as the epicenter of both ethnic/racial utopia and conflict geographically situated in the entertainment hub of the nation. Taking these factors into consideration, we will ask: how do we read social conflict through the lens of film? What are the stakes that Hollywood has served, and continues to serve, in creating, maintaining, and restructuring Los Angeles as a multicultural haven despite widening racial conflict and political crisis? How has film been used as both a cultural and political medium for the reimagining of Los Angeles’ past, present, and future?

List of Films (in order of viewing):
Los Angeles Plays Itself
Made in America
Bush Mama
Bless Their Little Hearts
Colors
Menace II Society
Boyz N The Hood
Higher Learning
Crash
Training Day

Course Structure:
- In-class film screening (approx. 1 ½ hours)
- 10-15 minute break
- Lecture and discuss as class

Grade Breakdown:
- Attendance & Participation: 25%
- Weekly Critical Responses: 40%
- Final Essay: 35%
Attendance and Participation – 25%
Attendance and participation are crucial for your success in this course. I cannot stress that enough. If you need any accommodations, please do not hesitate to discuss them with me during office hours. Part of your course grade will be based on your efforts to do the assigned readings and to think critically about them; your willingness to interact with other students; and your ability to thoughtfully engage with course texts and topics. All weekly readings must be completed before each class. Please come to class prepared to take careful notes, listen to each other, discuss ideas, and participate in a constructive and collaborative place of learning. Students will be allowed one unexcused absence; more than 2 unexcused absence will result in a substantially lower grade. Excused absences require proper documentation and notification. It is each student’s responsibility to provide me with this information and arrange for make-up assignments when necessary.

Critical Response Papers – 40%
Each student is responsible for producing four critical response essays ranging from 500-600 words. The purpose of critical response papers are to reflect on the week’s readings and films. Consider the following guidelines:
1) Briefly describe the main argument(s) and key points of the text.
2) Detail your own understanding of the main argument.
3) Briefly discuss how the readings relate to one another.
4) Relate to the film.

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. I expect a hard copy to be turned in by hand due the following Monday. Please do not email me your response unless I specifically tell you to do so.

Final Paper – 35%
Your final paper will be an analysis of a research topic relevant to the course (5-7 typed pages) and must engage with course material. It must also include a bibliography and properly follow conventions of citation and formatting according to MLA, Chicago, or APA style. More details will follow throughout the quarter. There will be no in-class final exam.

ADA Statement:
If you have a disability or condition that compromises your ability to complete the requirements of this course, you should inform me as soon as possible of your needs. I will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate you.

Week 1: Visualizing the City and its History of Conflict
Films: Los Angeles Plays Itself and Crips and Bloods – Made in America
- Murch, Donna. “Crack in Los Angeles: Crisis, Militarization, and Black Response to the Late Twentieth-Century War on Drugs,” pp. 162-173.

Week 2: L.A. Rebellion, Black Filmmaking, and Neoliberalism in Los Angeles
Films: Bush Mama and Bless Their Little Hearts
**Week 3: Class Politics and Urban Crisis in Los Angeles**
Films: *Colors* and *Menace II Society*
- Widener, Daniel. “How to Survive in South Central: Black Film as Class Critique” from *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles* pp. 250-282.

**Week 4: The Legacy of John Singleton (1968-2019)**
Films: *Boyz N The Hood* and *Higher Learning*

**Week 5: Multiethnic Relations in the 21st Century Metropolis**
Films: *Crash* and *Training Day*