

Summer Session I 2014
ETHN 101
T/Th 5:00 – 7:50pm
HSS 1305

Professor: Jade Power Sotomayor
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 12-1:50pm
at Mandeville Coffee Cart

Ethnic Images in Film

Movies do not merely offer us the opportunity to reimagine the culture we most intimately know on screen, they make culture. -bell hooks

This course looks at the various ways in which race and ethnicity are socially constructed and enacted through filmic performance. The films we watch offer opportunities to understand how these constructs, especially as they intersect with gender, class and sexuality, are both engaged and contested by different marginalized subjects. In doing so, we will discuss how cinema has often used bodies of color as a source of entertainment that produces as well as justifies structural racism. Additionally, we will study films made, by, for, and about people of color that claim the filmic medium as a site for agency and resistance to these racial representations. We will explore film as a social text, something beyond “entertainment,” thus enabling us to ask questions about production and reception, or how film operates for those who make the films as well as for those who watch the films.

Each three-hour class meeting will consist of a lecture, a full-length film screening and/or extended clips of multiple movies, and class discussion. There will also be film viewings and assigned readings that you are expected to complete before class meets.

WARNING: Those sensitive to scenes of violence, offensive language, nudity, or other potentially upsetting material should proceed with caution. By remaining registered in this course, you consent to viewing the content of these films.

GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Class Attendance and Participation: 20%**
 - This includes attendance and participation in both lecture and at least one visit to the open office hours held on Tuesdays 12-1:45. Your attendance is mandatory and will be necessary to do well in the course, especially given the accelerated pace of the summer session.
- **Writing Assignments: 25%**
 - You will be required to complete **3 reflection papers (500 words)**.
 - The reflection papers will be due at the beginning of class on Thursdays (you can choose which of the five Thursday meetings but you must turn in a total of three). These will consist of your reflections on that week’s reading assignments, the films and the lecture. These should not summarize, nor consist simply of your opinion, but rather work towards raising questions and creating

connections between the materials, your own viewing experiences and current events.

- **Blog-Posting: 10%**
 - There will be a class blog where you are asked to post an image, clip, article etc on some topic relevant to the course. Each student will be required to post at least once, and to comment on other postings at least three times in order to satisfy this portion of the grade.
- **Final Project or Paper 25%**
 - To be turned in through TED by 5pm on Thursday, July 31. Choice of making a short film that critically engages the course topics (including short process paper) or to write a research paper on an assigned topic (8 pages). Specific instructions on making a film will be given in class.
- **Take-Home Final Exam: 20%**
 - Due by 10pm on Saturday, August 2 via TED. The questions will be posted on Saturday evening at 6pm. You will have four hours to complete the exam. (This is instead of the final exam meeting on that Saturday.)

Class Schedule

NOTE: All readings will be posted on TED as pdfs.

Class 1 – Tuesday, July 1

Course Introduction

- **Watch:**
 - In class: *Representation and the Media* (with Stuart Hall, Dir. Stuart Hall) and *Ethnic Notions* (Dir. Marlon Riggs)
- **Reading:**
 - “The Work of Representation” Stuart Hall from *Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*.
 - “A Short Guide to Writing About Film” Tim Corrigan.

Class 2 – Thursday, July 3

Whiteness, Masculinity and the In/visible Racial Other at the Movies

- **Watch:**
 - In class: *Gran Torino* (Dir. Clint Eastwood)
- **Reading:**
 - Selections from *White* by Richard Dyer
 - From *Screen Savors: Hollywood Fictions of Whiteness* by Hernán Vera and Andrew M. Gordon

Class 3 – Tuesday, July 8

- **Watch**
 - In-class: *Bamboozled* (Dir. Spike Lee)
 - Outside of class: *Do The Right Thing* (Dir. Spike Lee)
- **Reading:**
 - From *Reel to Reel: Race, Sex and Class at the Movies* by bell hooks

- “Stereotype, Realism and the Burden of Representation” from Ella Shohat and Robert Stam’s *Unthinking Eurocentrism*

Class 4 – Thursday, July 10

Cowboys, Indians and Narratives of “America”

- **Watch:**
 - In class: *Smoke Signals* (Dir. Chris Eyre)
 - Outside of class: *Pocahontas* (Disney)
- **Reading**
 - “Formations of Colonialist Discourse” from Ella Shohat and Robert Stam’s *Unthinking Eurocentrism*
 - “John Wayne’s Teeth: Speech Sound and Representation in *Smoke Signals* and *Imagining Indians*” by Joanna Hearne

Class 5 – Tuesday, July 15

- **Watch:**
 - In class: *Paradise Now* (Dir. Hany Abu-Assad)
- **Reading:**
 - “Introduction,” *Orientalism* by Edward Said
 - “Reel Violence: Paradise Now and the Collapse of the Spectacle” by Nouri Gana

Class 6 – Thursday, July 17

Suburbia and Action Films: “Mainstreaming” the Asian Other

- **Watch:**
 - In class: *Better Luck Tomorrow* (Dir. Justin Lin)
- **Reading:**
 - “Of Myths and Men: *Better Luck Tomorrow* and the Mainstreaming of Asian America Cinema” by Margaret Hillenbrand

Class 7 – Tuesday, July 22

Liberalism at the Movies: Why Can't We All Just Get Along?”

- **Watch:**
 - In class: *Crash* (Dir. Paul Haggis)
- **Reading:**
 - “Racial Privacy, The LA Ensemble and Paul Haggis’ *Crash*” by Hsuan L. Hsu

Class 8 – Thursday, July 24

Representing Black Women’s Sexuality

- **Watch:**
 - In class: *Watermelon Woman* (Dir. Cheryl Dunye)
 - Outside of class: *Precious* (Dir. Lee Daniels)
- **Reading:**
 - “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” by Laury Mulvey
 - “Selling Hot Pussy” by bell hooks
 - “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” by Audre Lorde

Class 9 – Tuesday, July 29

Latina Bodies: Booty-shaking to Stardom

- **Watch:**
 - In class: *Walkout* (Dir. Edward James Olmos)
 - Outside of class: *Selena* (Dir. Gregory Nava)
- **Reading:**
 - “Embodying Latinidad” by Mayra Mendible from *From Bananas to Buttocks: The Latina Body in Popular Film and Culture*
 - “A Crash course on Hollywood’s Latino Imagery” by Charles Ramírez Berg from *Latino Images on Film*

Class 10 – Thursday, July 31

FINAL PROJECTS/PAPERS DUE

Mixed Race Hollywood and Futuristic Fantasies

- **Watch:** In-class: *Sleep Dealer* (Dir. Alex Rivera)
Outside of Class: *Children of Men* (Dir. Alfonso Cuarón)
- **Reading:**
 - “Ethnic Ambiguity in the Era of *Dark Angels*: Jessica Alba and Mixed Latina/o Trends” by Mary C. Beltrán from *Latina/o Stars in U.S. Eyes: The Making and Meanings of Film and TV Stardom*
 - “A Few Rules for Predicting the Future” by Octavia Butler
 - “The Politics of Multiculturalism in the Postmodern Age” from Ella Shohat and Robert Stam’s *Unthinking Eurocentrism*

TAKE NOTE: Please turn off cell-phones during class. You will have a break where you can check your messages. Otherwise, please refrain from using your phones during the lectures and film screenings.

A Note about Reading Assignments:

Reading assignments must be completed before the lecture on the day they are assigned. Concepts covered in the reading will be expanded upon in class, however, it will be necessary to have completed the reading in order to keep up with the lecture. The weekly quizzes will also reflect the reading assignments.

Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UCSD

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of interest yet do not realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, education, medicine, public health, social work, counseling, journalism, government and politics, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor, please contact: Daisy Rodríguez, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor, 858-534-3277 or d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu or www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu