

ES 101 RACE AND FILM
T/TH 2:00-4:50pm WLH
TH 11:00-12:50 PCYNH

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Ethnic Studies 101/ Race and Film

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

Course Description

This course examines the ways which race is socially constructed and enacted in and through film. As a class we will look at films in order to understand how they construct race as they intersect with gender and class. We will discuss how film has used bodies of color as a source of entertainment that produces as well as justifies structural racism. Films will be viewed as social text to critically engage the representations of race, class and gender in order to understand how film operates in relation to the social world.

Each 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.

Course Objectives

This course will engage the complex role of film in the US. Consequently, in this course we will:

- 1) Learn of a variety of theoretical frameworks used to analyze film its audiences, producers, and effects.
- 2) Analyze the role of film in politics, consumption, and other aspects of culture.
- 3) Think critically about film and sharpen our visual and representation literacy skills.

Reading and Texts

All readings and texts will be posted on the class website and/or in the main library unless otherwise noted. Please have reading completed before coming to class. See schedule for weekly readings.

Grading Rubric

In this class' grading scheme, a "B," for example, is not a subtraction from an initial state of an "A," but rather recognition of good and thorough work.

A = Excellent. Writing demonstrates impressive understanding of readings, discussions, themes and ideas. Written work is clear, analytical, well organized and grammatically polished. Reasoning and logic are well grounded and examples precise.

B = Good. Work demonstrates a thorough and solid understanding of readings, discussions, themes and ideas. Written work is clear and competent, however it is somewhat general, vague, or lacking in precision. It is analytical however it relies more on description. Arguments are solid however they are not necessarily original or polished.

C = Fair. Paper demonstrates an understanding of readings but is fragmented and vague in the discussions, themes and ideas. Shows some acknowledgement of the reading and ideas but does not show intellectual engagement. Written work is choppy and argument is present although difficult to follow, examples are vague or irrelevant, and ideas are imprecise. Work veers toward underdeveloped ideas, off-topic sources or examples such as personal anecdotes, creative writing and/or memoir.

D = Unsatisfactory; F = Fail/Unacceptable

Media Criticism - Choose a film and apply some of the concepts and techniques we've learned in class. For example, you might apply what we've learned about interpretation, ideology, or gender/class/race.
Policy

Active learning

This is an active learning course meaning that you will be engaged with activities such as class and group discussion, participating in and designing class exercises, collaborative note-taking and small projects.

Academic Policies

Come to class on time and with the readings and assignments completed. There are no provisions for missed exams or late assignments. Please turn off phone before coming into the classroom. Distracting computer use will result in me asking you to turn off your computer. Such interruptions and deviations from classroom professionalism may result in dismissal from class and demerits against your grade.

Readings and Schedule

Please have all readings completed at the beginning of each week unless otherwise informed. All readings will be posted on the class website or accessible at library reserves.

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Class Reading and Viewing Schedule

Week 1 Introduction

Readings:

Frantz Fanon, "Fact of Blackness" Ch 5, Black Skin White Masks.

Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" Ch 22, Media & Cultural Studies Keywords (Douglas Kellner/

Antonio Gramsci, "(i) History of the Subaltern Classes (ii) The Concept of Ideology (iii) Cultural Themes: Ideological Material" MCS Keywords

Films:

Birth of a Nation/Gone With the Wind

Do the Right Thing (Spike Lee)

Week 2 Representation

Readings:

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception"

Ella Shohat and Robert Stam "Stereotype, Realism and the Burden of Representation"

Hernan Vera and Andrew Gordon, "Beautiful White Americans"

Films:

Crash

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner/To Kill a Mocking Bird

Week 3 Power

Readings:

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels "The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas" in Media
Robin D. G. Kelley "Looking for the 'Real' Nigga: Social Scientists Construct the Ghetto." from Yo Mama's Disfunktional!

bell hooks "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance"

Films :

Boyz N The Hood (John Singleton)

Fruitvale Station (Ryan Coogler)

Week 4 Ideology

Readings:

Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus"

Joseph Nevins. "Ideological Roots of the Illegal as Threat and Boundary as Protector"

Films:

The Sleep Dealer (Alex Rivera)

Born in the USA

Week 5

Presentations