



Ethnic Images in Film: Coming of Age in the Last Decade

Dr. Curtis Marez

Tu/Th 12:30-1:50

CSB 002

Winter Quarter, 2024

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:30-3pm (starting week 2)

<https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/95731869856>

Teaching Assistants:

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Course Description: Students in this course will experiment with film studies tools to understand movies by, for, and about Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC). We will combine a film studies focus on directors and film form, on the one hand, with an ethnic studies focus on filmmakers as activist artist-intellectuals engaged in struggles against exploitation, inequality, and domination on the other. Our movies were all made during the last decade or so and present “coming of age” narratives. We will test the hypothesis that the subgenre of BIPOC coming of age films present critical perspectives on the process of growing up with intersecting inequalities of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation.

Schedule of Meetings: This is a **HYBRID** class. Every **Tuesday starting week 2** there will be a non-synchronous video lecture that I will upload to the Media Gallery on Canvas. On Thursdays, class will be in person.

I will post slides and recordings of all lectures and upload them to Canvas in the event a health or other emergency prevents you from attending. If you cannot attend, you can write a substantial paragraph summarizing what you find most interesting in the video recording of in-person lectures.

Sections:

A1	Friday, 10:00-10:50pm
A2	Friday, 11:00-11:50pm
A3	Friday, 12:00-12:50pm
A4	Friday, 1:00-1:50pm

Discussion sections meet in person every week.

Health and Safety: Mask wearing is strongly encouraged in section and lecture. If you get sick, please let your TA know, and avoid lecture and section until you are well. No one's grade will suffer in such an event.

Course Films:

A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night (Ana Lily Amirpour, 2014), 1h 41 min
(Amazon/YouTube/[Geisel Library streaming](#))

Drunktown's Finest (Sydney Freeland, 2014), 1h 35 min (Amazon/YouTube)

Get Out (Jordan Peele, 2017), 1h 44 min (YouTube/Hulu/[Geisel Library streaming](#))

The Infiltrators (Christina Ibarra and Alex Rivera, 2019), 1h 35min
(Amazon/YouTube/[Geisel Library streaming](#))

Moonlight (Barry Jenkins, 2016), 1h 5min (Hulu/YouTube/[Geisel Library streaming](#))

Mosquita y Mari (Aurora Guerrero, 2012), 1h 25 min (Hulu/Amazon/[Geisel Library streaming](#))

Parasite (Bong Joon-ho, 2019), 2h 12min (Hulu/YouTube/[Geisel Library streaming](#))

Pariah (Dee Rees, 2011), 1h 26 min (HBO Max/YouTube/[Geisel Library streaming](#))

Readings are available online when a hyper link is listed below. All other readings are available as PDFs on Canvas under "Files." We will also treat the films screened in class like required texts, so be sure to watch them during the week they are assigned.

Requirements:



25% A five-page essay using film studies concepts from lecture on 1/12 to analyze either *Pariah* or *Mosquita y Mari*. **Due to Canvas by midnight on January 30.** Prompts will be uploaded to Canvas under “Files.”



25% Creative project. **Due to Canvas by midnight on February 27.** Choose **one** of these options (prompts will be provided):

Storyboard a brief film scene and write a 1–2-page, double-spaced statement explaining the significance of the storyboard.

Produce an alternative poster for an assigned film and write a 1–2-page, double-spaced statement explaining the significance of the poster.

Write an alternative ending to an assigned film and a brief statement explaining the significance of the alternative ending. Your ending should be 1-2 pages, double spaced.

Write a two-page essay comparing an assigned film to an episode of a TV show by the same director. The directors of all course films (except *The Infiltrators* and *Parasite*) also direct TV shows.



25% A take home final exam of 10 ID questions. Answers should be brief paragraphs (3-5 sentences). **Due to Canvas by midnight on March 19**



25% Discussion section participation.

Accommodations. If you need them, please inform me, and bring a notification letter outlining your approved accommodations. I will make all reasonable efforts to assist you. If you cannot accept the content or terms of this syllabus, you must notify me in writing within one week of receipt of the syllabus. You may also seek assistance or information from the Office for Students with Disabilities, 858/534/4382.

Plagiarism. The use of sources such as ideas, quotations, paraphrases, or anything written by someone else must be properly acknowledged and cited. If you have questions about the proper citation of sources, please ask me. Students who plagiarize are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with University policy. You should be familiar with UCSD’s [Policy on Integrity of Scholarship](#).

Discussion Ethics. This class is intended for students interested in challenging commonly held understandings of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation. Given the nature of the course there will likely be a wide range of opinions. Ideally the class will prompt you to think for yourself and to raise questions about conventional views and received wisdom. However, please engage one another in discussion with respect and consideration. Abusive and harsh language,

intimidation and personal attacks will not be tolerated. These norms are reflected in the UCSD [Principles of Community](#) that we are all expected to follow.

Forms of Address. If you prefer to be called by a different name or to be referred to by a different gender than what appears on your enrollment record, please feel free to notify me.

Schedule of Assignments: You should complete course readings and screenings during the week they are assigned and before your discussion section meeting.

Week 1 Introduction: Tools for Interpreting Films

Tu 1/9 Introduction creativeTh 1/11 IN-PERSON LECTURE: An Ethnic Studies/Film Studies Toolbox

Alan Rowe, “Film Form and Narrative,” in *Introduction to Film Studies*, ed. by Jill Neldes. A pdf of this essay is available on Canvas but the book can be checked out online [here](#). (This version is clearer and with color illustrations).

View film clips that illustrate film form concepts [here](#).

Week 2 *Pariah*, Intersectionality, and Respectability Politics

Tu 1/16 VIDEO LECTURE: Respectability Politics and *Pariah*

Brandon Harris and Dee Rees, “[Out in the Neighborhood](#),” *Filmmaker Magazine*, November 8, 2011.

Th 1/18 IN-PERSON LECTURE: Intersectionality and *Pariah*

Priya Kandaswamy, “Gendering Racial Formation,” *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*.

Week 3 *Mosquita y Mari* and the Representation of College Bound BIPOC Students

Tu 1/23 VIDEO LECTURE: *Mosquita y Mari* & the History of Students in Film

Ellise Fuchs, “[Most of Us Don’t Need to Put Labels on It: An Interview with Aurora Guerrero](#),” *Popmatters*, December 5, 2012.

Th 1/25 IN-PERSON LECTURE: Imagining the Future in *Mosquita y Mari*

Marez, “Looking at Student Debt in Films by People of Color,” *University Babylon: Film and Race Politics on Campus*, pages 159-79.

Week 4 *Drunktown’s Finest*, Indigeneity and the Politics of Gender and Sexual Difference

Tu 1/30 VIDEO LECTURE: Film, Settler Colonialism, and Property: *Drunktown's Finest* in Historical Context

Sydney Freeland and David Graver, "['Drunktown's Finest' Director Sydney Freeland on Growing Up Navajo and Trans](#)," *Vice Magazine*, February 26, 2017.

5-page essay due by midnight to Canvas.

Th 2/1 IN-PERSON LECTURE: Native American Films That Oppose Settler Colonial Property

Sophia Mayer, "[Pocahontas No More: Indigenous Women Standing Up for Each Other in 21st Century Cinema](#)," *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media*, Issue 10 (Winter, 2015).

Week 5 *Moonlight*: Class, Masculinity and Sexuality

Tu 2/6 VIDEO LECTURE: *Moonlight*'s Miami

Morgan Jenkins, "[An Interview with Barry Jenkins](#)," *Believer Magazine*, Nov. 30, 2018.

Th 2/8 IN-PERSON LECTURE: Intersections of Race/Class/Gender/Sexuality in Historical Context

Menak Kannan, Rhys Hall, and Matthew W. Hughey, "Watching *Moonlight* in the Twilight of Obama," *Humanity and Society* 40.3 (2017).

Week 6 *The Infiltrators* and Genres of Activist Media

Tu 2/13 VIDEO LECTURE: *The Infiltrators* as a Hybrid Documentary

Dana Kendall, "['The Infiltrators' Directors on Releasing Their Immigration Thriller amid ICE Retaliation](#)," *Sundance Institute*, 7/3/20.

Th 2/15 IN-PERSON LECTURE: *The Infiltrators* as Activism

Rebecca M. Schreiber, "The Undocumented Everyday: Migrant Rights and Visual Strategies in the Work of Alex Rivera," *Journal of American Studies* 50:2 (May 2016).

Week 7 *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*: Diaspora and the Horrors of Climate Change

Tu 2/20 VIDEO LECTURE: Diaspora and the Politics of Costume

Julie L. Gittinger, "Hijabi Cosplay: Performances of Culture, Religion, and Fandom," *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 30.2 (Summer 2018).

Th 2/22 VIDEO LECTURE: Oil Culture and Climate Change

Joe Mathews, "[Farsi-Speaking Vampire Sees Virtues of Proudly Bad Kern County](#)," *SF Gate*, Dec. 5, 2014.

Week 8 *Get Out* and the Tropes of Social Death

Tu 2/27 VIDEO LECTURE: Histories of Trauma Reframed as Horror

No readings for this class.

Creative Project due by midnight to Canvas

Th 2/29 VIDEO LECTURE: Social Death

Rizvana Bradley, "Vestiges of Motherhood: The Maternal Function in Recent Black Cinema," *Film Quarterly*, Winter 2017.

Week 9 *Parasite* and Precarity

Tu 3/5 VIDEO LECTURE: Signs of Class Inequality

"Parasite Press Notes"

Th 3/7 VIDEO LECTURE: Visions of Neoliberalism

Max Balhorn, "[Parasite, a Window into South Korean Neoliberalism](#)," *Jacobin Magazine*, Nov 29, 2019.

Week 10 Final Review

Tu 3/12 VIDEO LECTURE: Greatest Hits

Th 3/14 IN-PERSON LECTURE: Final Exam Review

Take home final exam due to Canvas by midnight on March 19.