

FILM and CULTURE

Tuesday & Thursday

FLM/THEA 1070-012 (FA) (DV)

Salt Lake Community College

INSTRUCTOR: Matt Whittaker

Preferred Email: mwhittak@bruinmail.slcc.edu

Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:30-9:20pm

(June 14th- August 6th)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores film as a critical social mirror. Students will view and discuss the socio-cultural and aesthetic factors that shape cinematic representations of race, class, gender, sexuality and physical ability, to name a few. American struggles with diversity and the forces and institutions of bias will be examined, promoting an ability to listen to the under-represented voices of varied perspectives.

REQUIRED TEXT: *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality at the Movies*

by Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin, 2nd Ed. (Wiley-Blackwell)

Available online. [Not available in college bookstore](#)

COURSE OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:

1. To demonstrate how to analyze a film and understand how a film's content relates to its form, by writing about, speaking to, and reading the "text" of film, particularly as it illustrates, illuminates

or distorts issues of diversity. The student will hone their interpretive skills and learn to become an active viewer.

2. To understand the history of film as a barometer of the social, economic and ideological atmosphere of American culture. Through film, as both an art form and an industry, students will be able to trace the cultural changes in attitude toward different groups and cultures in the U.S. society.

1. To explore the cinematic depiction of issues such as acculturation, stereotypes, bigotry, discrimination and privilege as they impact a range of groups, including (but not limited to) individual ethnic groups, classes, genders, sexual orientations and disabilities, in order to foster an understanding of:

a) how these structures as well as their impacts have been depicted through film

b) how these structures operate in our society and how film might participate in moving the society to one of greater social justice.

1. To demonstrate an awareness, sensitivity and respect for cultural and human differences in the United States, promoting tolerance, inclusion, and an ability to listen to the under-represented voices of varied perspectives.

PURPOSE:

Our purpose is to explore American and International cultures through their representations in contemporary cinema, and to apply critical/theoretical approaches to these representations, including but not limited to those of race, ethnicity, gender, class, urban and rural America, ability/disability, sexual orientation, and even issues specific to generations. We do this to develop an understanding of films in their socio-cultural, ideological and inter-textual functions, to examine the role of film in depicting and creating identities; to study the unique properties of film as an artistic and cultural product, and to investigate our roles as consumers of cinema. Our dialogue is intended to cultivate non-judgmental awareness in order to create a spirit of investigation and open inquiry into film, diversity and culture.

GRADING: Grading is based on a point system, as well as careful observance of your attendance. By the end of the semester your final grade will be based on your total points earned versus total points offered. This point amount is subject to change, and I reserve the right to change any grade based on my discretion. I have moved over to grading using Canvas. If you are ever concerned about where you stand please email me, or see me before or after class.

Incomplete work, essays, tests, etc. will NOT be accepted

EXTRA CREDIT: (25 points possible)

This opportunity will be determined as the semester progresses. Take advantage of it.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION: (100 total points possible)

Attendance and participation are critical. Students must participate actively to foster a learning environment in the classroom. Thus, classes will be conducted seminar-style, with active participation in our group discussions. I will take attendance 5 times throughout the summer semester. Each recorded attendance is worth 20 points. I will not tell you when I plan to do this. So, come to every class. Again, your final grade will reflect your attendance. Also note that attendance is *not* reflected on Canvas.

SCREENINGS:

Films will be screened in class. You are responsible for watching all films assigned. Since we are studying them, it is recommended that you take notes on them to assist you in doing well. Due to complaints, please leave computers, ipads, phones... etc. off during the viewing and discussions.

CONTENT ACCOMODATIONS:

There are no content accommodations. Please be advised that some films will carry an R-Rated designation, NR, or rated as containing "mature" subject matter. While I do respect your personal views, "diversity" through film cannot be explored when we limit content. However, I'm not a "shock you" professor. I show films that reflect our conversations. Also, all of the films I plan to show are listed below in the "Films/Notes Schedule".

Mid-Term: Film Formal Research and Analysis Essay Draft: (50 points)

Information regarding this essay will be available on Canvas as we move through the semester

Film Formal Research and Analysis Essay Final Submission: (100 points)

As a continuation of the assignment, each student will return to their draft back, make necessary edits, and polish out their thesis and overall paper. Resource and MLA Documentation of your sources is required. Topic will be provided by me. The final essay will be 10-11 pages in length. All other information regarding this essay will be available on Canvas.

Group Presentation: (200 points)

Over the course of the semester you will work in groups to deliver a presentation to your colleagues. More details regarding the final projects, including topic assignments, are available on Canvas.

Final Exam: (100 points)

There will be one comprehensive (open book) final exam at the end of the semester. It will be based on class discussion, readings, films... etc. I will provide a final review in class one week prior to the exam.

Quizzes: (10 points each)

These Short Answer quizzes will be taken through Canvas *only* and are based on subjects related to your textbook. They will be timed (1 hour) and are open book. These are generally extremely easy. *Quizzes are ALWAYS due on the Wednesday before class by 11:59 pm.*

GRADING SCALE:

100-94	A	82-80	B-	69-66	D+
93-90	A-	79-76	C+	65-63	D
89-86	B+	75-73	C	62-60	D-
85-83	B	72-70	C-	59-0	E

The topics covered in this course will include the following issues (not necessarily in this order); Racism, Physical ability Issues, Class, Gender Issues, Women's Issues, Gay/Bi-Sexual/Lesbian/ Transgendered Issues, Religious, and Political/Ideological Issues. Other topics may be added as the semester continues.

Weekly Films/Notes Schedule

Please be advised that the weekly course-viewing schedule is highly subject to change.

This course will attempt to both objectively and subjectively synthesize cultural, historical, political, and societal considerations using the power of film as its central tool.

UNIT 1: Hollywood, Race, Class, and American Ideology (Chapters 1-9)

Meeting One (June 14th)

Film: ***Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*** (USA)

Discussion: Introductions, Syllabus, Class Expectations, **Get your book... like NOW!** What is a film? Why do you (we) watch film? The Power of Film, Empathy through shared experience, What is expectation?

Meeting Two (June 16th)

Film: ***The Story of Film: An Odyssey- Part 1 and 2*** (UK)

CLIPS

History of Film/Hollywood, Encoding and Decoding message, Dominant, Oppositional, and Negotiated Reading of film, Active and Inactive Viewing, Blurred lines in the Visual Text, *Explicit* and *Implicit* meaning, Film Form v. Content, Applying "Lenses" to our viewing experience.

Reading: *Chapters 1 and 2*

Meeting Three (June 21st)

Film: ***American Beauty*** (USA)

What is culture? What is Ideology? What is theme? What is expectation in the context of film viewing? the FORMULA: Theme+ Expectation= Genre, Formula= Ideology... Ideology fosters "hegemony," *American Dream* vs. *American Experience*, How do we connect movies to our own American Experience? And how do movies shape the American Dream?

QUIZ 1 Due on Canvas (June 20th 11:59pm)

QUIZ 2 Due on Canvas (June 20th 11:59pm)

Meeting Four (June 23rd)

Film: **White Like Me** (USA)

CLIPS

Discussion: Breaking down race and ethnicity in American films past and present, “Whiteness” in American Film WASP, Consumerism, Introduction to Class and the social mirror reinforced in film, Tokenism, Minorities on Film (past and present), Underrepresented Populations, Stereotyping and Typecasting, Hegemony, Distinctions of “White” throughout the history of film, White Savior Complex, Cultural ambiguity, American film genres reinforce this hegemony, Xenophobia, Good Neighbor Policy

Reading: *Chapters 3-9*

Group Projects Assigned

QUIZ 3 Due on Canvas (June 22nd 11:59pm)

QUIZ 4 Due on Canvas (June 22nd 11:59pm)

Meeting Five (June 28th) **NO FORMAL CLASS HELD--- Groups to meet outside of class**

Film: None

Discussion: None

Meeting Six (June 30th)

Film: **Dear White People** (USA)

CLIPS

Discussion: Breaking down race and ethnicity in American films past and present, “Whiteness” in American Film WASP, Consumerism, Introduction to Class and the social mirror reinforced in film, Tokenism, Minorities on Film (past and present), Underrepresented Populations, Stereotyping and Typecasting, Hegemony, Distinctions of “White” throughout the history of film, White Savior Complex, Cultural ambiguity, American film genres reinforce this hegemony, Xenophobia, Good Neighbor Policy

Reading: *Chapters 3-9*

QUIZ 5 Due on Canvas (June 29th 11:59pm)

Meeting Seven (July 5th)

Film: **Finish Dear White People** (USA) **Crips and Bloods: Made in America** (USA)

Discussion: History of African Americans in cinema: from Mammy to Black Buck; Blackface, Blaxploitation Films, The glass ceiling, Where do things stand today?

Reading: *Chapters 3-9*

Research paper assigned in class

UNIT 2: Gender, Sexual/Cultural Identity, American Sexuality, and Ability

(Chapters 10-16)

Meeting Eight (July 7th)

Film: **None**

Discussion: Gender roles in American Film, Female Equality, Female Dominance, Examples of Role Reversal, Virgin-Whore Complex, Gender v Sex. Masculinity and Femininity as stereotypes, Heterosexism, Heteronormativity, Homosexuality, Historical Context

Reading: *Chapters 10-16*

QUIZ 6 Due on Canvas (July 6th 11:59pm)

QUIZ 7 Due on Canvas (July 6th 11:59pm)

QUIZ 8 Due on Canvas (July 6th 11:59pm)

Meeting Nine (July 12th)

Film: **All About my Mother** (Spain)

Discussion: Taboo and Censorship: the great debate; Business vs. Values; Why do we censor? Politics of Censorship

QUIZ 9 Due on Canvas (July 11th 11:59pm)

Meeting Ten (July 14th)

CLASS CANCELLED--- Instructor Emergency

UNIT 3: Special Topics-

Film: ***Ghostbusters*** (USA, 2016)

Meeting Eleven (July 19th)

- Field Trip #1 to see first run film at the Cinemark@ Jordan Landing

Research Paper Draft Due (HARD COPY)

Reading: TBA

Meeting Twelve (July 21st)

Film: ***Tickled*** (USA, New Zealand)

- Field Trip #2 to see first run film at the Salt Lake Film Society

Discussion: The mighty Independent Film! What is an independent film? Where does this come from? Can film truly remain "independent?" Is this independence a reactive response to our dominant ideological structure?

Meeting Thirteen (July 26th)

Film: ***Good Night, and Good Luck*** (USA)

Discussion: HUAC, Americanism

Reading: None

GROUP PRESENTATIONS 1-3:

Research Paper Final Draft Due (**CANVAS UPLOADS ONLY!**)

Meeting Fourteen (July 28th)

Film: ***Where to Invade Next*** (USA)

Discussion: America abroad, connectivity, influence, and the ties that bind

Reading: *TBA*

In-Class Review for Final Exam

GROUP PRESENTATIONS 4-6:

Meeting Fifteen (August 2nd)

QUIZ 10 Due on Canvas (August 1st 11:59pm)

Film: ***Beasts of the Southern Wild*** (USA)

Discussion: Lessons Learned, Active viewing, Final Thoughts.

FINAL EXAM (Last 90 minutes of class)

This course is part of the General Education Program at Salt Lake Community College. It is designed not only to teach the information and skills required by the discipline, but also to develop vital workplace skills and to teach strategies and skills that can be used for life-long learning.

While the subject of each course is important and useful, we become truly educated through making connections of such varied information with the different methods of organizing human experience that are practiced by different disciplines. Therefore, this course, when combined with other General Education courses, will enable you to develop broader perspectives and deeper understandings of your community and the world, as well as challenge previously held assumptions about the world and its inhabitants. You will also explore a wide variety of topics with an eye toward discovering new interests and uncovering new talents. General Education courses teach basic skills as well as broaden a student's knowledge of a wide range of subjects. Education is much more than the acquisition of facts; it is being able to use information in meaningful ways in order to enrich one's life. General Education courses focus on communication, creativity, and critical thinking skills and along with the substance of the course's information, an appreciation of the esthetics of the area of study and its connection to the larger social web. This course fulfills the **Fine Arts (FA) and Diversity (DV)** requirement for General Education.

SLCC is committed to fostering and assessing the following student learning outcomes in its programs and courses

General Education Statement:

- * Acquiring substantive knowledge in the field of their choice
- * Developing quantitative literacies
- * Developing the knowledge and skills to be civically engaged
- * Thinking critically
- * Communicating effectively.

Assignments Summary:

Date	Details
Mon Jun 20, 2016	Quiz 1
	Quiz 2
Wed Jun 22, 2016	Quiz 3
	Quiz 4
Thu Jun 23, 2016	Attendance 1
Tue Jun 28, 2016	Attendance 2
Wed Jun 29, 2016	Quiz 5
	Quiz 6
Wed Jul 6, 2016	Quiz 7
	Quiz 8
Mon Jul 11, 2016	Quiz 9
Thu Jul 14, 2016	Research Paper Draft
Thu Jul 21, 2016	Attendance 3
Tue Jul 26, 2016	Extra Credit

Date**Details**

	<u>Final Research Paper</u>
	<u>Attendance 4</u>
Thu Jul 28, 2016	<u>Attendance 5</u>
	<u>Group Presentations</u>
Mon Aug 1, 2016	<u>Quiz 10</u>
Thu Aug 4, 2016	<u>Final Exam</u>
