

culture and gender in film

Course #: FILM 110
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Office Hours: By email or appointment
Semester: Spring 2019
Day & time: Thursdays, 2:00p – 4:50p
Building: #100, Room #133

course description

The aim of this course is to introduce you to contemporary theories of American culture, through the lens of the popular medium of film. Throughout the semester we will study the roles of male and female spectators, as well as the peripheral viewing positions that emerge through queer studies, bisexual, gay, and lesbian films, and transgender cinema. We will also explore the diverse perspectives of films by, for, and about other marginalized identities such as Native Americans, African Americans, Latin and Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and “foreigners”.

student learning outcomes

- ~ Think critically about the significance of film as a reflection of popular culture.
- ~ Assess the perspectives and creative contributions of diverse cultural, ethnic, and gender groups to contemporary American life through the art of film.
- ~ Articulate the ways in which Hollywood has typically represented race, sex, gender, and class in popular cinema throughout its history.
- ~ Identify and explain the various formal and stylistic elements involved in cinematic representations of American culture.

course requirements

Class Lectures & Screenings: You are responsible for attending the class lecture every week. Please email me if you know you cannot make it to section on a given day. There is no talking/discussion during the films, audio recordings or clips. I will dismiss you from the course if you become a disruption during the lectures. Your enrollment in this class is your responsibility. It is incumbent upon you to double-check your enrollment status periodically throughout the semester, as I do not maintain my rosters after the census has been processed. If at any time you decide that you do not wish to continue with the course, it is your responsibility to drop, as I do not take it upon myself to drop anyone from the course at any time.

I encourage you to use your personal computer, iPad, or other learning tool during class time if you are using it appropriately (viewing class slides, taking notes), however, be sure to turn off any noisemaking functions on those and any other electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, etc. Please keep the brightness levels on all LED screens at low intensity. There is no food allowed in class at any time (drinks are okay). Copies of all the lectures are available on the course website for download and review. If you require any additional accommodations such as a note taker, testing services, captions, or special chairs/desks, please speak with me personally, or provide the proper authorization letter from the Disability Resources Department.

Readings: It is incumbent upon you to be prepared, and you should come to class each session having read the reading assignment posted on the schedule. We will be spending as much time discussing the readings as the films, and a firm understanding of them will benefit your overall understanding/interpretation of the film texts.

Discussion: You are encouraged to be actively involved in the class discussions, as your participation is key to your success in this course. My goal is to aid in the development of your analytical/critical skills, and I expect everyone to maintain an open mind, and take a creative approach to the material. Be respectful of your fellow classmates when addressing and critiquing conflicting viewpoints.

assessments and grading

There are **550** total points available in the course, and your overall grade will be determined by your performance on the following assessments:

Screenings and Participation (150 pts.)	A = 550 - 494
Film Notes (150 pts.)	B = 493 - 439
Short-answer Assignment (100 pts.)	C = 438 - 384
Sequence Analysis (50 pts.)	D = 383 - 329
Film Analysis Essay (100 pts.)	F = 328 - 0

Film Notes & Participation: Your attendance is expected at each of the film screenings, and missing or leaving the film screenings early will result in a lowered participation grade. To compliment any notes you may be taking on the lectures and discussions, you will be required to keep a separate notebook with your notes on each of the films (one page per each film). This is a good habit to practice when watching and analyzing films, as it will help you to remember important narrative and stylistic elements to be used as supportive examples in your writing. This notebook will be checked on the final session of the semester, and must be submitted in one of two ways:

- 1) as an electronic document (word, pdf, text, pages, etc.)
- 2) as a packet of individual sheets of paper, assembled and stapled together

Do not turn in any three-ring binders or spiral/binded notebooks with your notes in them, as they will not be accepted.

Short Answer, Sequence Analysis, and Final Essay Assignments: There are three writing assignments this semester, each due by the time class starts on the assigned date. Late assignments will be accepted for up to one week, and will incur a 10-point penalty. No late assignments will be accepted after one week. There will be no opportunity for re-writes after grading, as good writing skills are a must in this course. Please submit your work to me through the Turnitin.com application (discussed in further detail in the *Assignments* section on the course website). You are required to visit the course website to view the assignment questions and clips, as there are additional writing and formatting guidelines for you to review.

**** NOTE **** *Plagiarism and other issues concerning academic integrity will not be tolerated, and are grounds for an automatic failure in the course. Acknowledge all reading and research sources with appropriate footnotes and bibliography.* Keep all copies of your quizzes and notes until you have received a final grade for this class.

texts and materials

- 1) All course readings and materials can be accessed through Canvas.
- 2) All films screened in class, as well as any excerpt screened during the lectures.

Please remember that if you have any questions about the readings, assignments, or any of the course materials that I am readily available to help answer them. I can be reached through the email address above, the course website, or by placing a note for me in my box in the department office.

~ Sex & Gender in Hollywood ~

week #1 ~ (Jan. 17th) ~ what is “normal”?

Lecture: Intro to Course | Syllabus | Questions

Screening: *Middle Sexes: Redefining He and She*, dir. Antony Thomas (2005)

week #2 ~ (Jan. 24th) ~ ideology and the classical Hollywood style

Reading: “Understanding Patriarchy,” by bell hooks

“Narrative Structure: Television Stories,” by Jeremy G. Butler

Screening: *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, dir. Steven Spielberg (1981)

week #3 ~ (Jan. 31st) ~ men and masculinity in film

Reading: “Ch. 10 - Gender and Masculinity, pgs. 359-371” by Bill Nichols

Screening: *The Maltese Falcon*, dir. John Huston (1941)

week #4 ~ (Feb. 7th) ~ women and femininity in film

Reading: “The Woman’s Film,” by Molly Haskell

Screening: *Stella Dallas*, dir. King Vidor (1937)

week #5 ~ (Feb. 14th) ~ no class

** *President’s day recess* **

week #6 ~ (Feb. 21st) ~ the male gaze

Reading: “Ch. 11 – Exploring the Visual Parameters of Women in Film,” by Benshoff & Griffin

Screening: *Rear Window*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock (1954)

week #7 ~ (Feb. 28th) ~ representing otherness

Reading: “An Introduction to the American Horror Film,” by Robin Wood

Screening: *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, dir. Robert Zemeckis (1988)

week #8 ~ (Mar. 7th) ~ no class

** *Instructor conference* **

~ “Other” Genders & Sexualities ~

week #9 ~ (Mar. 14th) ~ re-imagining women in film

Reading: “The Image of Women in Film: Suggestions for Future Research,” by Sharon Smith

“Women’s Cinema as Counter-Cinema,” by Claire Johnston

Screening: *Winter’s Bone*, dir. Debra Granik (2010)

** *Short-answer assignment due* **

week #10 ~ (Mar. 21st) ~ gays and lesbians in film

Reading: "Gay and Lesbian Criticism," by Anneke Smelik
Screening: *Moonlight*, dir. Barry Jenkins (2016)

week #11 ~ (Mar. 28th) ~ transgender cinema

Reading: "Gender Terror, Gender Rage," by Kate Bornstein
Screening: *Tangerine*, dir. Sean Baker (2015)

week #12 ~ (Apr. 4th) ~ new queer cinema

Reading: "There's Something Queer Here," & "Queer Theory," by Alexander Doty
Screening: *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, dir. John Cameron Mitchell (2001)

~ *Representing Race & Culture* ~

week #13 ~ (Apr. 11th) ~ Native Americans in American film

Reading: "Genesis of the Stereotypes," by Jacquelyn Kilpatrick
"My Heroes Have Never Been Cowboys" & "Reservation Drive-In," by Sherman Alexie
Screening: *Smoke Signals*, dir. Chris Eyre (1998)

** *Sequence analysis due* **

week #14 ~ (Apr. 18th) ~ no class

** *Spring break* **

week #15 ~ (Apr. 25th) ~ African Americans in American film

Reading: "Black Beginnings: From *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to *The Birth of A Nation*," by Donald Bogle
Screening: *13th*, dir. Ava DuVernay (2016)

week #16 ~ (May 2nd) ~ Hispanics and Latinos in American film

Reading: "Stereotyping in Films in General and of the Hispanic in Particular," by Charles Ramirez Berg
Screening: *Stand and Deliver*, dir. Ramon Menendez (1988)

week #17 ~ (May 9th) ~ Asians in American film

Reading: "Asian Americans in Film and Television Entertainment," by Stephanie Greco Larson
Screening: *Chan is Missing*, dir. Wayne Wang (1982)

week #18 ~ (May 16th) ~ foreignness in American film

Reading: "They Have No Reason to Notice A Man Like Me," by Adam Wadenius
Screening: *The Terminal*, dir. Steven Spielberg (2004)

week #19 ~ (May 23rd) ~ final class session

** *Essay assignment due* **

** *Film notebooks due for review* **