

Course Overview:

This course is designed for students develop their critical appreciation of both film as a narrative medium, and of Anglophone cultures as embodied or expressed through film. Students will develop their critical ability with respect to both "reading" films and Anglophone culture in the context of "film."

For the context of this course, we will use a very loose definition of the word "film," including narrative fiction "movies," television series, documentaries, animation, and more.

Teaching Method

Students will generally be expected to watch longer works (or series of works) outside of class prior to the discussion session for that week. There will also be some pre-class lectures recorded on video and uploaded to Youtube, for which students will be responsible to watch, in order to free up class time for discussion. We will occasionally watch something in class, but this will be the exception.

During classtime, we will use large and small group discussions, lectures, and presentations and/or panel discussions. Readings and other media, when assigned, will be provided online, or a hard copy will be distributed in class at least a week before it is supposed to be read.

Homework

In this course, self-motivation and an investigative spirit are strongly encouraged. That is to say, students should not conceive of homework assigned as a perfunctory duty to be carried out at a minimum. For example, students who research a subject independently to help them prepare for a more meaningful discussion of the week's subject video(s) will see their initiative rewarded in their grades.

Each student will select a specific aspect of culture, and research its representation in narrative video. For example, students might choose gender (femininity, masculinity, or alternate constructions of gender), sexuality, politics, power, economics, the family, or some other aspect of culture. The student will carefully analyze how this aspect of culture is represented in all the films we watch, and will prepare a midterm paper on the topic. The final essay, written about a different aspect of culture, will be written considering works from throughout the semester.

Besides the midterm and final exam, and their presentation(s) or panel discussion(s), students will receive occasional written assignments, and possibly an occasional critical video-editing assignment. There will be quizzes regularly to ensure students are doing the viewing required, and students will lead a portion of in-class activities, and groups will be responsible choosing topics and helping peers to understand and discuss those topics. Finally, there will be a mailing list that students will participate in, using email, to further discuss work, raise questions, or challenge one another beyond the scope of classroom discussion. Similarly, online polls will be used for determining class responses to presentations or panel discussions, to save time in class and to provide students with written feedback.

Textbook

There will be no textbook for the course, but readings and other media will be assigned from resources available online, or distributed in photocopied form in class.

Assessment

As you can see, this course has no final or midterm exam. Instead there are midterm and final papers, but the majority of your grade will be determined by in-class activities and homework:

Discussion/Participation – 20%

Homework/Quizzes/Preparation – 20%

Midterm Exam/Essay – 20%

Final Exam/Essay – 20%

Online Listserv Participation - 15%

Department Events Attendance: 5%

However, a 0% in any of the above marks will result in an incomplete grade. Students must at least *attempt* all areas of the course in order to receive a passing grade.

While attendance is not a graded component of this course, if you do not regularly attend, you cannot participate in class discussions, and will be at a disadvantage when it comes to other in-class activities; therefore, attendance is strongly recommended.

My contact information:

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Course Outline:

Week 1: Intro & Paperwork, Intro to Method & Groundwork (Example: *The Host*)

Week 2: *The Newsroom*: Season 1, Episodes 1- 4

Week 3: *The Newsroom*: Season 1, Episodes 1- 4

Week 4: Jim Henson as Revolutionary – *The Muppet Movie* and *The Dark Crystal*

Week 5: The Politics of Memory: *Rabbit-Proof Fence* and *The Great Debaters*

Week 6: *The Sopranos*: Agency, Outlaws, and American History

Week 7: *The Sopranos*: Agency, Outlaws, and American History

Week 8: MIDTERM ESSAYS DUE

Week 9: Passing the Bechdel Test: *Thelma and Louise*

Week 10: *The Crow* and *Lovely Bones*: Death and Love and Stuff

Week 11: Vampires that don't (Quite) Sparkle: Buffy the Vampire: Slayer (Selected Episodes)

Week 12: Vampires that don't (Quite) Sparkle: Buffy the Vampire: Slayer (Selected Episodes)

Week 13: Nature and Civilization: *Grizzly Man*

Week 14: *Code 41*: SF and Philosophy

Week 15: Brit Humor: Monty Python's *The Quest for the Holy Grail* & *The Office* (Selected Episodes)

Week 16: FINAL ESSAYS DUE