Topics in American Studies: Motion Pictures in American Pop Culture

From Silent Films to the Silver Screen

01.050.300.B6 – Summer 2010
Department of American Studies – Rutgers University
Monday/Wednesday 6:00PM-9:45PM – June 2 – July 7 2010
Western Monmouth Higher Education Center - Room 209
(Brookdale Community College Campus - Freehold, NJ)

Instructor
Matthew Ferguson, M.C.R.P.
E-mail: ruferg@echo.rutgers.edu
(Subject Line: Motion Pictures)

Office Hours
Mondays/Wednesdays – Before or After Class (By Arrangement)
Quick Questions Are Always Welcome – Please E-mail Me 24 Hours In Advance If You Need Extended Time So I Can Schedule Accordingly...
Office Hours Location: Our Classroom – Room 209

Required Texts
American Cinema/American Culture, 3rd Edition by John Belton (Print ISBN: 9780073386157) - $82.00

NOTE: In an effort to save you money and “go green,” you have the option to purchase this text as an “e-textbook.” You have access to the book online for 180 days for approximately $32.00.
To purchase the e-book, visit:
http://www.coursesmart.com/givecoursesmartatry?xmlid=0077285212&__instructor=2781260

Course Overview
This course aims to explore the historical and social context of the motion picture industry in American Popular culture from its very beginnings in the late 19th century to the modern blockbusters of today. In addition to studying a variety of genres and the progression of film technology, this course will explore how American Popular Culture in the form of motion pictures has over time helped to form, followed and even challenged our societal values and norms. Additionally, we will also examine how notions of race, gender, class and American identity have been formed through this particular niche of the entertainment industry.

Course Outline

Wednesday June 2 – Course Introduction
Course Requirements
Introduction to Popular Culture

ASSIGNMENT: GET TEXTBOOK!

Monday June 7 – The Studio Era
Feature Film & Various Film Clips
READING DUE: Belton Chapters 1-3 (pp. 3-63)
READING DUE: Belton Chapter 4 (pp. 64-85)

** Written Assignment One Distributed **
MINI QUIZ ON READING

Wednesday June 9 – Silents & Musicals
Feature Film & Various Film Clips
READING DUE: Belton Chapters 5-7 (pp. 87-163)
Monday June 14 – Comedies
Feature Film & Various Film Clips
READING DUE: Belton Chapter 8 (pp. 164-194)
**Written Assignment One Due In Class**
**Written Assignment Two Distributed**
MINI QUIZ ON READING

Wednesday June 16 – Filming War & The Wild Wild West
Feature Film & Various Film Clips
READING DUE: Belton Chapters 9-11 (pp. 195-269)
LARGE QUIZ ON READING

Monday June 21 – Horror & Sci-Fi
Feature Film & Various Film Clips
READING DUE: Belton Chapter 12 (pp. 271-295)
**Written Assignment/Presentation Three Distributed**
MINI QUIZ ON READING

Wednesday June 23 – Film Goes Hollywood
Feature Film & Various Film Clips
READING DUE: Belton Chapters 13-15 (pp. 297-361)
**Written Assignment Two Due In Class**
LARGE QUIZ ON READING

Monday June 28 – The Modern Director
Feature Film & Various Film Clips
READING DUE: Belton Chapter 16 (pp. 362-384)
MINI QUIZ ON READING

Wednesday June 30 – Film in the 21st Century
Feature Film & Various Film Clips
READING DUE: Belton Chapter 17 (pp. 385-419)
MINI QUIZ ON READING

Monday July 5 – No Class! Happy 4th!

Wednesday July 7 – The Future of Films & Final Presentation/Discussion
Various Film Clips
**Written Assignment/Presentation Three Due In Class**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Components</th>
<th>Grading Cut-Offs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation 10 Pts.</td>
<td>90.0+ Points = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignment One 20 Pts.</td>
<td>85.0+ Points = B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignment Two 20 Pts.</td>
<td>80.0+ Points = B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written Assignment/ Present Three 30 Pts.</td>
<td>75.0+ Points = C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini Quizzes (2 Pts. Each) 10 Pts.</td>
<td>70.0+ Points = C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Quizzes (5 Pts. Each) 20 Pts.</td>
<td>60.0+ Points = D</td>
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<td>59.9 Points or Below = F</td>
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**Attendance**
In accordance with Rutgers Summer Session policy, attendance is mandatory and will be recorded. You are all allowed one unexcused absence without penalty. More than one unexcused absence will result in a 10% deduction off of your final grade per additional absence. Four or more unexcused absences will result in an automatic failure of the course.

If you have a legitimate reason for missing class, please provide me with documentation. At times, I will verify this information and reserve the right to ask you to obtain a Dean’s Excuse note. If you must miss class for an extended period of time, please communicate with me ASAP so that we can figure out how to handle your particular situation.

**Class Participation**
Regular participation in class discussions is crucial to the course material and will also be factored into your participation grade.

**Written Assignments**
Written assignments will vary in length but minimum/maximum page requirements do not include any diagrams/pictures. All written assignments should be submitted IN CLASS on the dates listed in the syllabus. Late assignments will be penalized half a letter grade for each day late. Written assignments will not be accepted more than 7 days after the original due date. All written assignments should be double-spaced with one-inch margins using 12 pt. Times New Roman font. Please include a standard single-spaced heading on the first page of each assignment and your last name in the header of each page. Proper spelling and grammar are a reflection of your commitment to the assignment and are therefore factored into your grade for the assignment.

**Mini/Large Quizzes**
Quizzes will be conducted to test your comprehension of the primary textbook assigned in class. Since there are extra quizzes built-in to the course, make-up quizzes will not be permitted. Also, quizzes will not be given early/late. All Students must be able to produce a Rutgers/Photo ID when taking quizzes or exams.

**Keys To Success**
When reviewing student grades from previous semesters, students who ACTIVELY attended class did significantly better than those who did not.

You are responsible for all material and media presented in class, as well as all assigned readings. You will need information from class for your written assignments so if you miss a class meeting, get the notes from someone in class.
**Class Conduct**
All students are expected to be on time to class. If for some reason, you need to arrive late or leave early, please do so with minimum disruption. Please place all cell phones on silent and refrain from text messaging. Since this course involves discussion, it is inevitable that differing opinions will be presented. The University as a whole supports the free and open exchange of ideas and this course will be no different. All students are expected to be respectful of any and all opinions shared in class.

**Emergencies**
In case of emergency, please check the University status page to see if the University is still operating. (http://wmhec.rutgers.edu) If for some reason I need to cancel class, I will e-mail you all (from SAKAI) by 2:00PM on the day of class to let you know.

**Academic Integrity**
Academic freedom is a fundamental right in any institution of higher learning. Honesty and integrity are necessary preconditions of this freedom. Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals. Joint efforts are legitimate only when the assistance of others is explicitly acknowledged. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the University community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses.

Maintenance of the standards of academic honesty and the successful administration of this policy depend on the mutual cooperation of faculty and students. Dissemination of the Academic Integrity Policy to all faculty, staff, and students will ensure that all members of the community are informed about academic integrity.

Faculty cooperation is essential for successful application of the procedures defined by the Academic Integrity Policy. Faculty members can help promote academic integrity by making clear on their syllabi their expectations concerning homework assignments, collaborative student efforts, research papers, examinations, and the like. Efforts should be made to detect and to prevent cheating and plagiarism in all academic assignments. If faculty members have evidence of academic dishonesty, they are expected to report such evidence promptly.

Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit.

This policy seeks to demonstrate the University's concern with academic dishonesty and to guarantee a fair procedure for resolving complaints of academic dishonesty.

**WHEN IN DOUBT…**
**ASK YOUR INSTRUCTOR!**

*Personal Note: I've worked very hard to create assignments, tests and quizzes that are both interactive and challenging for you as a student. In addition to being insulting to me, when you cheat…you are cheating yourself out of a learning experience. Be forewarned that I will not hesitate to report you for any violation of academic integrity.*
Violations of Academic Integrity
The various ways in which academic honesty can be violated are discussed below. The comments and examples within each section provide explanations and illustrative material, but do not necessarily exhaust the scope of these violations.

A. Cheating
Cheating is the use of inappropriate and unacknowledged materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The use of books, notes, calculators and conversation with others is restricted or forbidden in certain academic exercises. Their use in these cases constitutes cheating. Similarly, students must not request others (including commercial term paper companies) to conduct research or prepare any work for them, nor may they submit identical work or portions thereof for credit or honors more than once without prior approval of the instructor.

B. Fabrication
Fabrication is the falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. "Invented" information may not be used in any laboratory experiment or other academic exercise without authorization from the instructor. It is improper, for example, to analyze one sample in an experiment and covertly "invent" data based on that single experiment for several more required analyses. The student must also acknowledge reliance upon the actual source from which cited information was obtained. A writer should not, for example, reproduce a quotation from a book review and indicate that the quotation was obtained from the book itself.

C. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty
Students who knowingly or negligently allow their work to be used by other students or who otherwise aid others in academic dishonesty are violating academic integrity. Such students are as guilty of intellectual dishonesty as the student who receives the material even though they may not themselves benefit academically from that dishonesty.

D. Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "to paraphrase Plato's comment..." and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc, need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged.

In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

E. Denying others access to information or material
It is a violation of academic integrity to deny others access to scholarly resources, or to deliberately impede the progress of another student or scholar. Examples of offenses of this type include: giving other students false or misleading information; making library material unavailable to others by stealing or defacing books or journals, or by deliberately misplacing or destroying reserve materials; or altering computer files that belong to another.

The Full Policy on Academic Integrity and additional information can be found on the Office of Student Judicial Affairs Website (http://judicialaffairs.rutgers.edu)