

University of Georgia Department of Theatre and Film Studies  
DRAM 2131H: American Ethnic Cinema  
Syllabus, Spring 2006

Class meetings: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00-3:15 P.M., FA 350.

F. Scott Giles, instructor. Office hours: Tu/Th 11:00 A.M.-12:15 P.M., W 1:25-2:15 P.M. and by appointment; FA 368. Phone: 542-2102. Email: [fsgiles@uga.edu](mailto:fsgiles@uga.edu).

Text: Benschoff and Griffen. America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality at the Movies.

The assigned films are also texts. Since we do not have a screening period, you may either view the films in the library (or rent them). You should also download a review of each film from IMDb or other reliable data base.

Course objective: to identify and examine, through analysis of selected narrative films, techniques that selected filmmakers use in order to depict, represent, and possibly reinscribe, experiences that foreground issues of race and ethnicity in the United States.

Calendar

T 1/10	Introduction to course. Film form, content, and film form as content.
R 1/12	Lecture: "Black Looks." Assn: Benschoff, ch. 1, 2, 3, 4.
T 1/17	Discussion: Benschoff assn. And representations of African Americans in Hollywood ("Small Steps, Big Strides"). Notes on Sidney Poitier.
R 1/19	Visitor: Mr. Cedric Scott. Assn: Spike Lee, "Bamboozled."
T 1/24	Discussion: "Bamboozled." Assn: John Singleton, "Rosewood."
R 1/26	Discussion: "Rosewood." Assn: Spike Lee, "Do the Right Thing."
T 1/31	Discussion: "Do the Right Thing." Assn: Benschoff, ch. 5.
R 2/2	Discussion: Representations of Native Americans. Assn: Chris Eyre, "Smoke Signals."
T 2/7	Discussion: "Smoke Signals." Assn: Jonathan Wach, "Powwow Highway."
R 2/9	Discussion: "Powwow Highway." Assn: Benschoff, ch. 6.
T 2/14	Discussion: Representations of Asian Americans. Assn: Wayne Wang, "Chan is Missing."
R 2/16	Discussion: "Chan is Missing." Assn: Wayne Wang, "The Joy Luck Club."
T 2/21	Discussion: "The Joy Luck Club." Assn: Benschoff, ch. 7.
R 2/23	Discussion: Representations of Latino Americans. Assn: Gregory Nava, "MiFamilia" ("My Family").

T 2/28 Discussion: "Mi Familia." Assn: Luis Valdez, "Zoot Suit."  
R 3/2 Discussion: "Zoot Suit."

T 3/7 Catch up; review.  
R 3/9 Mid-term exam. Assn: Binshoff, ch. 8 and 9.

Spring Break, March 13-18.

T 3/21 Discussion: Intersections of race and class. Assn: Binshoff, ch. 10 and 11.

R 3/23 Discussion: Intersections of race, class, and gender. Assn: Mira Nair, "Mississippi Masala."

T 3/28 Discussion: "Mississippi Masala." Assn: Binshoff, ch. 12 and 13.

R 3/30 Discussion: Intersections of race, class, masculinity, and femininity.

T 4/4 Presentations.

R 4/6 Presentations.

T 4/11 Presentations.

R 4/13 Discussion of presentations. Assn: Binshoff, ch. Ch14 and 15.

T 4/18 Discussion: Intersections: race and sexuality. Assn: Ang Lee, "The Wedding Banquet."

R 4/20 Discussion: "The Wedding Banquet."

T 4/25 Discussion: Changing representations ("Crash," "Lone Star," "Grand Canyon," and others)

R 4/27 Last class. Summation.

Final exam

### Summary of assignments

Paper #1 (15 pts.): Book report. Select a book from the attached list or get the approval of the instructor for an alternate selection. Write a five-page paper (all papers must be typed; MLA formatting preferred) BRIEFLY summarizing the content of the book, while analyzing its significance in relation to what we are learning in class.

Paper #2 (15 pts.): Film analysis. Select a film from the attached list or get the approval of the instructor for an alternate selection. Write a five-page analysis of the film, focusing on one salient point or issue. Use at least five reviews of the film to support your ideas (Include notes and an additional works cited page).

Midterm exam (20 pts.). Objective questions and possible essay question based on the assigned readings and viewings.

Presentation/discussion (20 pts.) Students will divide into groups of two or three and prepare one long clip or compare two shorter clips for class discussion. Each group will prepare a handout and discussion questions for the class. The presentation will last 15 or 20 minutes.

Final exam (20 pts.). Cumulative. Essay questions.

Additional notes

The university's policy on academic honesty is of utmost importance. We will follow this policy; please familiarize yourself with it.

Class attendance and participation are extremely important (10 pts.) You may be absent from class two times without excuse or penalty. After that, 2 points will be deducted from your point total for each absence.

Incomplete grades are not assigned automatically. There is a departmental procedure that must be followed, so prior notification must be given.

This syllabus is subject to adjustment at the discretion of the instructor.

DRAM 2131H: American Ethnic Cinema  
Recommended Books for Additional Reading

- Aleiss, Angela. Making the White Man's Indian: Native Americans and Hollywood Movies. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2005.
- Berg, Charles Ramirez. Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, and Resistance. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.
- Bogle, Donald. Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: an Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films. New York: Continuum, 2001.
- Feng, Peter X. Identities in Motion: Asian American Film and Video. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Screening Asian Americans. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002.
- Gabard, Krin. Black Magic: White Hollywood and African American Culture. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004.
- Hamamoto, Darrell and Sandra Liu. Countervisions: Asian American Film Criticism. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000.
- Kirkpatrick, Jacquelyn. Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- Prats, Armado Jose. Invisible Natives: Myth and Identity in the American Western. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2002.
- Reid, Mark A. Black Lenses, Black Voices: African American Film Now. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005.
- Rodriguez, Clara E. Heroes, Lovers, and Others: the Story of Latinos in Hollywood. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2004.
- Rollins, Peter C. and John E. O'Connor. Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003.

Singer, Beverly R. Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens: Native American Film and Video. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Vera, Hernan and Andrew Gordon. Screen Saviors: Hollywood Fictions of Whiteness. Lanham, MD. Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.

Xing, Jun. Asian America Through the Lens: History, Representations, and Identity. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 1998.

Yearwood, Gladstone. Black Film as a Signifying Practice: Cinema, Narration, and the African American Aesthetic Tradition. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2000.

DRAM 2131H: American Ethnic Cinema  
Recommended Films for Additional Viewing

Allison Anders

Mi Vida Loca

Charles Burnett

Killer of Sheep

My Brother's Wedding

The Glass Shield

To Sleep With Anger

Warming by the Devil's

Fire

Patricia Cardoso

Real Women Have

Curves

Julie Dash

Daughters of the Dust

Cheryl Dunye

Watermelon Woman

Chris Eyre

Skins

Paul Haggis

Crash

Tony Kaye

American History X

Ang Lee

Brokeback Mountain

Tortilla Soup

Spike Lee

4 Little Girls

(documentary)

Crooklyn

Get on the Bus

Girl 6

He Got Game

Jungle Fever

Malcolm X

Mo' Better Blues

School Daze

She Hate Me

She's Gotta Have It

Kasi Lemmons

Eve's Bayou

Darnell Martin

I Like It Like That

Prison Song

Ramon Menendez

Stand and Deliver

Mira Nair

The Perez Family

Gregory Nava

El Norte

Selena

Edward James Olmos

American Me

John Sayles

City of Hope

Lone Star

Matewan

Passion Fish

Sunshine State

The Brother from

Another Planet

John Singleton

Baby Boy

Boyz N the Hood

Higher Learning

Poetic Justice

Robert Townsend

Hollywood Shuffle

Luis Valdez

La Bamba

Wayne Wang

Dim Sum

Eat a Bowl of Tea