

ENGL 290: ETHNIC VOICES IN FILM

Citrus College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2022
Credits:	3
Total Contact Hours:	54
Lecture Hours :	54
Lab Hours:	0
Hours Arranged:	0
Outside of Class Hours:	108
Strongly Recommended:	ENGL 101.
District General Education:	C2. Humanities
Transferable to CSU:	Yes
Transferable to UC:	Yes - Approved
Grading Method:	Standard Letter

Catalog Course Description

An introduction to the study of films reflecting the concerns and attitudes of ethnic, racial, gender, and disability groups that historically have been under-represented, distorted, or marginalized in mainstream commercial cinema. This course examines cinematic depictions of African-Americans, Latinos, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, women, LGBTQ+, and the disabled. 54 lecture hours.

Course Objectives

- recognize the ideological assumptions at work within a particular motion picture
- understand that every nation has a characteristic way of looking at life, a set of values that are typical of a given culture, and that the movies of a particular country reflect those values
- explain the role of "The Other," a counter-tradition that is dialectically opposed to what might be considered the dominant strain in a culture
- discuss how culturally diverse countries like the United States contain many subcultures that coexist within the dominant ideology
- analyze the tensions between the dominant culture and the values of a minority community that are dramatized in films with an ethnic slant
- appreciate the unique concerns of the various subcultures that traditionally have been under-represented, distorted, or marginalized in mainstream American cinema

Major Course Content

1. Tolerance, Diversity, and Social Change
 - a. Immigration and assimilation
 - b. Film as a conveyor of ideology
 - c. Tension between the dominant culture and minority communities
 - d. Law, justice, and equality
 - e. Civil disobedience as a force for social change
 - f. SCREENING: *Gandhi* (1982)
2. African Americans

- a. Tension between African Americans and the white majority
- b. The traditional image of blacks in Hollywood films
- c. The contemporary "post-racist" Hollywood black
- d. The images created by African American filmmakers
- e. SCREENING: *Do the Right Thing* (1989)

3. Latinos

- a. Tension between Latinos and the Anglo majority
- b. The traditional image of Latinos in American films
- c. Anglo actors portraying Latino characters
- d. The images created by Latino filmmakers
- e. SCREENING: *Bronze Screen: 100 Years of the Latino Image in Hollywood Cinema* (2002)
- f. SCREENING: *El Norte* (1984)

4. Native Americans

- a. The traditional image of Native Americans in the movies
- b. Caucasian actors portraying Native American characters
- c. Contemporary films by Native American filmmakers
- d. SCREENING: *Reel Injuns* (2009)
- e. SCREENING: *Smoke Signals* (1998)

5. Asian Americans

- a. The "mysterious" Orient
- b. Stereotypes of Asian Americans
- c. Caucasian actors portraying Asian characters
- d. The lack of roles for Asian American actors
- e. Contemporary attempts at de-mystification
- f. SCREENING: *The Wedding Banquet* (1993)

6. Women

- a. Traditional roles and genres of women
- b. Women as "the other" in a male-dominated world
- c. Women as the object of the male gaze
- d. Women in the contemporary Hollywood film industry
- e. SCREENING: *Thelma and Louise* (1991)

7. LGBTQ+

- a. Traditional portrayals of sexuality and gender identity in the movies
- b. Gay sub-texts in ostensibly heterosexual films
- c. Closeted gay actors
- d. Contemporary films with themes dealing overtly with sexuality and gender identity
- e. SCREENING: *The Celluloid Closet* (1995)
- f. SCREENING: *High Art* (1998)

8. Americans and Disabilities

- a. The "hidden" minority
- b. Myths about the disabled
- c. Traditional images of the disabled in American films
- d. Contemporary films that employ actors with physical disabilities in roles that portray disabled individuals as ordinary human beings
- e. SCREENING: *Children of a Lesser God* (1986)

Suggested Reading Other Than Required Textbook

Giannetti - Understanding Movies Woll - Ethnic and Racial Images in American Film and Television Guerrero - Framing Blackness: The African

American Image in Film Bogle - Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films Pettit - Images of the Mexican American in Fiction and Film Bataille and Silet - The Pretend Indians: Images of Native Americans in the Movies Haskell - From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies Russo - The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies Weiss - Vampires and Violets: Lesbians in Film

Examples of Required Writing Assignments

Analyze the movie "Smoke Signals" to demonstrate how the lives of contemporary Native Americans are played out against a backdrop of mainstream Eurocentric America, which views Native Americans through the lens of the "Hollywood Indian."

Examples of Outside Assignments

Produce written critiques of films shown in class. For example, discuss the portrayal of Asian-Americans in "The Wedding Banquet."

Produce written critiques of current films in movie theaters. For example, discuss the portrayal of African-Americans in the latest Spike Lee movie.

Instruction Type(s)

Lecture, Online Education Lecture

IGETC Area 3: Arts and Humanities

3A. Fine Arts, 3B. Humanities