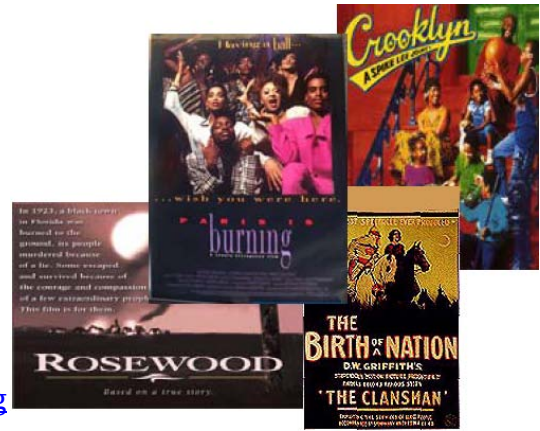


Blacks In Films: Ethnographic Views
 AFA 3930 Section 0317
 Tuesdays (Periods 8-9) 3 PM – 4:55 PM
 Thursday (Period 9) 4:05-4:55 PM
 Final Exam Day: (12C) Monday, Dec. 12th 12:30 – 2:30 PM
 Classroom: Fine Arts C Room 0127
 Instructor: m.m. thomas-houston, ph.d.
 Office Hours: M 4 – 5PM T & Th 1 – 2PM
 & By Appointment
 Office: Turlington Hall B137 Phone: 392-2253 x251
 Emails: marilyn@ufl.edu thomas-houston@fmpp-inc.org
 Class Listserv: FALL-0317-L@lists.ufl.edu



Description: Film historically has operated as means of entertainment, documentation, a channel of communication, a shaper of opinion, a determiner of taste, an investment, and an artistic object. This seminar course is designed to explore the impact of film on audience’s perceptions of African Americans and the Black experience. By treating film as ethnographic texts, it focuses on such issues as representation, construction of identity, and the economic and political significance of Black images in popular culture cinematic productions. In addition, it investigates how specific representations are influenced by political, social, economic, and popular culture trends. Finally, the course analyzes the impact of the past on the present. In what ways does history repeat itself and what are the lessons to be learned? How can we account for the popularity or lack thereof of the various themes found in these contemporary representations?

Requirements: There are **no quizzes or exams** for this class. Students are required to 1) attend each class, 2) identify 5 key issues/questions addressed in each set of assigned readings and films viewed out of class (keep a film log and notes for your final paper). These issues are to be turned in through email by 8 am each class day, 3) participate in classroom discussions, and 4) write one five-page critical essay. 5) Write a 10 to 15 page **interdisciplinary research paper** focusing on cultural and social meanings attached to images in cinema and their significance for social policies and practices related to the Black experience in US society in general. This paper is to be the base of an in-class presentation on final exam day.

SCHEDULED FILMS	GRADING SYSTEM	
8/23 – Course Introduction & Film (Ethnic Notions)	Assignments	Points
8/29 – <i>Madea’s Class Reunion</i>	Research Presentation	15
9/4 – <i>I Can Do Bad All By Myself</i>	Research Paper	30
9/11 – <i>Diary of a Mad Black Woman</i>	Key Issues	20
9/18 – <i>Precious</i>	Essay #1	25
9/25 – <i>Do the Right Thing</i>	Attendance	10
10/2 – <i>Jungle Fever</i>	Total	100
10/9 – <i>Crooklyn: A Spike Lee Joint</i>	Grade Scale	
10/16 – <i>Malcolm X</i>	A = 90 or above	C = 70-73
10/23 – <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i>	A- = 87-89	C- = 67-69
10/30 – <i>The Birth of a Nation</i>	B+ = 84-86	D+ = 64-66
11/6 – <i>Midnight Ramble</i>	B = 80-83	D = 60-63
11/15 – <i>Imitation of Life</i>	B- = 77-79	D- = 57-59
11/20 – <i>Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner</i>	C+ = 74-76	
11/27 – <i>Superfly</i>		
12/6 – <i>Rosewood</i>		

REQUIRED READINGS

I. Introduction to Blacks in Film

Week 1 -

Th 8/23 - Introduction

<http://aal.ucsd.edu/reserves/dmr/public/films/ethnicnotions.html>

Week 2 – Tylor Perry: Representing the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender

T – 8/29

Shanklin, Eugenia

1994. Race as a Social Category, Not a Biological Fact. IN *Anthropology and Race*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company. Pp 1-22.

Film (Outside Viewing): *Madea's Class Reunion*

Th – 8/30

Frost, Jennifer

2008. Hedda Hopper, Hollywood Gossip, and the Politics of Racial Representation in Film, 1946-1948. *The Journal of African American History*. Vol. 93, No. 1 (Winter, 2008), pp. 36-63.

Week 3 - Tylor Perry: Representing the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender-Continued

T – 9/4

Gianos, Phillip L.

1996. Making Movies. IN *Politics and Politicians in American Film*. Westport, CT: Praeger. Pp.1-9

Film (Outside Viewing): *I Can Do Bad All By Myself*

Th – 9/6

Combs, James

1993. Introduction: Understanding the Politics of Movies. IN *Movies and Politics: The Dynamic Relationship*. James Combs, ed. Pp 3-25.

Week 4 - Tylor Perry: Representing the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender-Continued

T – 9/11

TBA

Film (Outside Viewing): *Diary of a Mad Black Women*

Th – 9/13

Barnett, Lisa and Michael Patrick Allen

2000. Social Class, Cultural Repertoires, and Popular Culture: The Case of Film. *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Mar., 2000), pp. 145-163.

Week 5 - Tylor Perry: Representing the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender-Continued

Essay Due

T – 9/18

TBA

Film (Outside Viewing): *Precious*

Th – 9/20

Cawelti, John G.

1993. Who's Running This Show? Ideology, Formula, and Hegemony in American Film and Television IN Movies and Politics: The Dynamic Relationship. James Combs, ed. Pp. 31-53.

Week 6 – Spike Lee: Capturing Urban Black Life, Community, and Culture

T – 9/25

Lubiano, Wahneema

1991. But Compared to what?: Reading Realism, Representation, and Essentialism in School Daze, do the Right Thing, and the Spike Lee Discourse. *Black American Literature Forum*, Vol. 25. No. 2, Black Film Issue (Summer, 1991), pp. 253-282.

Film (Outside Viewing): *Do the Right Thing*

Th – 9/27 (No Formal Class Meeting)

Feldstein, Ruth

2005. "I Don't Trust You Anymore": Nina Simone, Culture, and Black Activism in the 1960s. *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (Mar., 2005), pp. 1349-1379.

Week 7 - Spike Lee: Capturing Urban Black Life, Community, and Culture-Continued

T – 10/2

Marsh, Kris, William A. Darity, Jr., Philip N. Cohen, Lynne M. Casper and Danielle Salters.

2007. The Emerging Black Middle Class: Single and Living Alone, *Social Forces*, Vol. 86, No. 2 (Dec., 2007), pp. 735-762.

Film (Outside Viewing): *Jungle Fever*

Th – 10/4

Assigned Reading: TBA

Week 8 - Spike Lee: Capturing Urban Black Life, Community, and Culture-Continued

T – 10/9

Assigned Reading:

Gilliam, Jr., Franklin D., Nicholas A. Valentino and Matthew N. Beckmann

2002. Where you Live and What You Watch: The Impact of Racial Proximity and Local Television News on Attitudes about Race and Crime. *Political Research Quarterly*. Vol. 55. No. 4 (Dec., 2002), pp. 755-780.

Film (Outside Viewing): *Crooklyn: A Spike Lee Joint*

Th – 10/11

Assigned Reading: TBA

Week 9 - Spike Lee: Capturing Urban Black Life, Community, and Culture-Continued

T – 10/16

Assigned Reading:

Smallwood, Andrew P.

2005. The Intellectual Creativity and Public Discourse of Malcolm X: A Precursor to the Modern Black Studies Movement. *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 36, No.2 (Nov., 2005), pp. 248-263. **Continued ...**

Film (Outside Viewing): *Malcolm X*

Th – 10/18

Assigned Reading: TBA

Week 10 - Eurocentric Representations of and Responses to Black Identities

T – 10/23

Mapp, Edward

1972. Chapter 2. Silent Films and Chapter 3. Talkies Between the Wars. IN *Blacks In American Films: Today and Yesterday*. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. pp. 16-28

Film (Outside Viewing): *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Th – 10/25

Hansberry, Lorraine

1992. The Case of the Invisible Force: Images of the Negro In Hollywood Films. IN *Celluloid Power: Social Film Criticism from The Birth of a Nation to Judgment at Nuremberg*. . Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. pp. 72-89.

Week 11 - Eurocentric Representations of and Responses to Black Identities-Continued

T – 10/30

Simcovitch, Maxim

1992. The Impact of Griffith's Birth of A Nation on the Modern Ku Klux Klan. IN *Celluloid Power: Social Film Criticism from The Birth of a Nation to Judgment at Nuremberg*. . Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. pp. 72-89.

Film (Outside Viewing): *The Birth of a Nation*

Th – 11/1

Assigned Reading: TBA

Week 12 - "Race Movies" as a Response to Eurocentric Representations –Working Bibliography & Thesis Due

T – 11/6

Bowser, Pearl and Louise Spence

1996. Identity and Betrayal: The Symbol of the Unconquered and Oscar Micheaux's "Biographical Legend." IN *The Birth of Whiteness: Race and the Emergence of U.S. Cinema*. Daniel Bernardi, ed. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. Pp. 56-80.

Film (Outside Viewing): *Midnight Ramble*

Th - 11/8

Bowser, Pearl and Louise Spence

2000. Oscar Micheaux's *Body and Soul* and the Burden of Representation. *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Spring, 2000), pp. 3-29.

Week 13 – Liberal Representations of Race and Race Relations

T – 11/13

Thaggert, Miriam

1998. Divided images: black female spectatorship and John Stahl's "Imitation of Life." African American Review, Fall 1998. V32. N3. Pp. (11)

Film (Outside Viewing): *Imitation of Life*

Th – 11/15

Donalson, Melvin Burke

1982. Introduction. IN The Representation of Afro-American Women in the Hollywood Feature Film, 1915-1949. Dissertation. Brown University.

Week 14 – Liberal Representations of Race and Race Relations

T – 11/20

Assigned Reading: TBA

Film (Outside Viewing): *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*

Th – 11/22 NO CLASS THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 15 – A Search for Black Heroes and Heroines

Film (Outside Viewing): *Superfly*

Th – 11/29

Greene, Dennis

1994. Tragically Hip: Hollywood and African American Cinema. *Cineaste* v20, n4. October.

Rhines, Jesse Algeron 1995. The Political Economy of Black Film. *Cineaste* v21, n3. Summer

Week 16 – "Revisionism" & Film Reviews

T – 12/6

Sheridan, Earl

2006. Conservative Implications of the Irrelevance of Racism in Contemporary African American Cinema. *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 30, No.32 (Nov., 2006), pp. 177-192.

Film (Outside Viewing): *Rosewood*

Special Note: All assignments must be typed in MS Word, double-spaced, 12 pt Courier or Times font, include a cover page with your name, date and the name of the assignment, include a works cited page when necessary. The assignment must be emailed by 9 AM on Due Dates. All documents turned in through email must be named in the following manner:

YourLastName_YourFirstInitial-NameOfAssignment#1.doc

Ex.: Thomas-Houston_Essay#1.doc Ex.#2: Thomas-Houston_ThesisStatementRevision#3.doc

CLASSROOM RULES & DECORUM

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. No emailing, texting, cell phone calls, or Internet games in the classroom. Absence and tardiness due to medical reasons require appropriate medical excuses.

Academic Honesty

Unless it is specifically connected to assigned collaborative work, all work should be individual. Evidence of collusion (working with someone not connected to the class or assignment), plagiarism (use of someone else's published or unpublished words or design without acknowledgment) or multiple submissions (submitting the same work for different

courses) will lead to the Department's and the University's procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty. All students are expected to honor their commitment to the [University's Honor Code](#) and the student conduct code. If you are unsure whether your activities are legitimate regarding paper writing and exam taking, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. **Please make any requests by the second week of class.**

UF Counseling Services

Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals that interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

1. [University Counseling and Wellness Center](#), 3190 Radio Road, 392-1575, personal and career counseling
2. [Sexual Assault Recovery Services \(SARS\)](#), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling
3. [Career Resource Center](#), Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling
4. [Reading & Writing Center](#), Broward Hall, 392-0791, writing assistance, study skills, test preparation

IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES REGARDING THE CLASS PLEASE SEE THE PROFESSOR DURING OFFICE HOURS.

Students are encouraged to take advantage of office hours, interact during classroom hours, and ask questions whenever you do not understand an assignment. While the syllabus is designed to be a guideline to the course, some assignments are subject to change given the dynamics of the class.