

History on Film

Course:

History on Film
01:512:335:01
Tues 5:35-8:35pm
Spring 2008
RAB 206

Instructor:

Alex Warner
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732-213-3284
Office hours:
Weds 6:00-7:30 VD 222

Overview:

USAmerican history is full of stories, from many different perspectives and time periods. Beginning with English settlers' first arrival and contacts with Native Peoples and moving through 400 years of history to the present day, we will uncover the stories that have been told about USAmerican history through film, including a myriad of genres from documentary to historical fiction and so on. Students will investigate some of the major issues and problems when dealing with film as a historical source, while also gaining a deep knowledge of a number of important historical eras.

Requirements:

Being an upper level History course, there will be a significant amount of reading and in-class work for this course, as well as several written assignments. Students are expected to both attend and participate in all class meetings, arriving prepared by having completed the readings and any written assignments.

Required Reading:

Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki & James D., Farewell to Manzanar
(Dell Publishing; ISBN : 0553272586)

Kovic, Ron, Born on the Fourth of July (Pocket; ISBN : 067173914X)

Townsend, Camilla, Pocahontas & the Powhatan Dilemma
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; ISBN : 0809077388)

X, Malcolm, Autobiography of Malcolm X
(Ballantine Books; ISBN : 0345350685)

4 selections from Bedford History and Culture Series: Douglass, Riis, Movements of the New Left, 9/11 Commission (Bedford St. Martins; ISBN : 0312478771)

All other articles and chapters will either be available online or copied for you for a nominal fee and distributed in class.

Grading:

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Attendance & CP:	20
Reaction Papers:	20
Quizzes:	20
Research Project:	20
Final Paper:	20

Attendance & Class Participation: Beginning 1/29, attendance will be taken at each class meeting. Because there are only 13 class meetings, students who have more than four unexcused absences will automatically fail the course. Since this is an upper-level class, it will involve a fair amount of reading as well as in class discussion. Students will receive points per each class meeting based on their individual contribution to the academic environment as well as involvement in group work.

Group Work: At various points throughout the semester, you will work with your group to complete assignments. Two specific projects will include providing appropriately historically themed refreshments for one class meeting and presenting on the course material for another.

Quizzes: For almost every class meeting (11 out of 13) there will be an in-class quiz. These open-notebook quizzes will generally cover the readings assigned for that day, though sometimes may include material covered in the previous class session. Quizzes will be graded on a scale of 0-2, with the lowest grade being dropped, resulting in a possible total of 20 points.

Reaction Papers: Over the course of the semester, you will write THREE four page reaction papers covering one or two readings/film pairs. These papers should include your observations, thoughts and ponderings on the material you read, connecting them to the ideas and themes of the course. These papers are due the class meeting immediately following the week we discussed the works you have chosen and you may not write reaction papers on the weeks that you are responsible for group assignments. In order to be able to give you useful feedback, you must complete at least one of these assignments by February 26th.

Research Project: Either individually or in small groups, each student will research a topic NOT covered by the syllabus and investigate the written and visual materials available for that topic. During the class meeting of April 22nd, you will present your findings in a science fair style presentation. At that time, you will also pass in a two page overview of the sources you chose to highlight. More details will be handed out in class on February 12th.

Final Paper: Students will write a 10 to 12 page paper in which they weave together both theoretical and factual material they have learned throughout the course. The final assignment will be handed out in class on April 22nd and the paper will require the use of both secondary and primary sources along with the students' analysis. This assignment is due at noon on May 5th.

Day/Date Topic	Readings Due	In-Class Screening	In-class Assignment
1/22 Introduction Contact	NONE	Selections from Disney's Pocahontas	Compare/contrast Disney and Townsend
1/29 Contact, cont.	Townsend **Bring Picture for Info Card**	Selections from New World (2h30m)	Smith & Powhatan
2/5 Colonial America	C. 3 of "The Way We Lived"	The Crucible (2h4m)	
2/12 Revolution & the Market Economy	C. 7 & 8 of "The Way We Lived"	Episodes 2 & 6 of Liberty! (2h0m)	
2/19 Slavery & the Civil War	Douglass & "Introduction: Defending Slavery"	Glory (2h2m)	
2/26 Industry & Labor	Riis	Matewan (2h12m)	
March 4 th World War II at Home	C. 11 of "The Way We Lived" and Houston	Children of the Camps & Rosie the Riveter	
3/11 The 50s: Focus on McCarthyism	Select chapters from "Age of McCarthyism" & Doc 2 New Left	Goodnight and Good Luck (1h33m)	
3/25 Civil Rights Movement	<i>The Autobiography of Malcolm X as told to Alex Haley</i>	"X"	
4/1 Civil Rights Movement, cont.	NL Docs 3,4,7,10,13, 14, 15,17,19,22,24,39 & C. 13 & 14 from TWWL	Eyes on The Prize	
4/8 New Left & VietNam	Kovic & NL Docs 20, 26, 27, 28, 41 & 43	Chicago '68 & excerpts from Born on the 4 th of July	
4/15 Second Wave Feminism and the Culture Wars	C. 15, TWWL; C. 7 & 10, Roads to Dominion; New Left Docs: 1,12, 21, 23, 30, 35, 38, 40 & 45	Half the People (60m) & We Are Family (63m)	
4/22 Research Project	Whatever You Read	In class Presentations	
4/29 9/11 and beyond	9/11 Commission Report	Fahrenheit 9/11 (2h2m)	

Course Policies and Suggestions:

- Arrive on time, prepared for the class meeting.
- Turn off your cell phone—no calls, texts, web searching, etc. during class.
- Attendance in this course is both mandatory and important. Excused absences include documented medical or legal appointments, serious personal emergencies or religious observances. Students who miss class for any of these reasons should notify me via email ahead of time (or if not possible, shortly thereafter and no later than 48 hours after class) of the reason for their absence. That said, please do not come to class when you are ill or have been exposed to someone else who is sick. You will be delaying your recovery and infecting your classmates and me.
- Print out all written assignments ahead of time. Late assignments will be graded down one half a grade per business day. Unless otherwise specifically indicated, emailed assignments will not be accepted.
- Please, don't cheat. If you do, you will be turned into the Department and your Dean and you will fail this class.