

English/History 1600
American Cultures in Film
Fall 2007

Jay Anderson
Office: Main 323-I
History Department

Wednesday 4:30-7:00
Classroom: Main 115
Office Hours: W, R, 3:00-4:00

Course Description. Since motion pictures were invented in the 1890's, both feature films and documentaries have been an excellent way of interpreting, or exploring and explaining, cultures. In this course we will study 10 films that portray American cultures and their foodways.

R-Rated Films. Of the 10 films we will study, six are R-rated, three are PG-13, and one PG. If you have personal problems watching and discussing R-rated films, THIS IS NOT THE COURSE FOR YOU. Sorry.

Watching Films Outside of Class. You are responsible to view each film BEFORE it is discussed in class. Copies of these films are on reserve in the Sci-Tech Library. Local video stores (The Book Table, Sommers, Hastings, Hollywood Video, etc.) also have copies. If you rent the videos, please return them promptly so that other class members will also have rental access.

Assignments and Grading. You will be asked to write a 2-page Film Review Form for 10 of our films and we will have a quiz on each of them in class.

Ten film analysis forms	10 x 5% = 50%
Ten quizzes	10 x 3% = <u>30%</u>
	80%

You will also have a 20 point Foodways project based on eating out and reviewing four authentic ethnic restaurants. If you miss a class, you will need to complete the Film Review Form and Quiz.

Assessment. Utah State asks all professors to assess their success or failure in achieving stated course goals. In this course I have three primary goals: 1) Help students better understand the United States as a pluralistic, multi cultural nation; 2) Demonstrate that films can be educational as well as entertaining and that we can learn valuable humanistic lessons from watching good movies (i.e., visual literacy); and 3) Create opportunities to practice critical thinking and group communication skills in class.

Mission Statement. This course meets the requirements of the English and History Departments' mission statements and the Folklore Program, too!

Course Description

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August 29	Course Introduction. Attendance Required
September 5	Workshop: Understanding Ethnic Films
September 12	<u>My Big Fat Greek Wedding</u> (PG, 95 min) Greek Americans. Quiz and Film Review #1
September 19	<u>Smoke Signals</u> (PG-13, 90 min) Native-Americans. Quiz and Film Review #2
September 26	<u>My Family</u> (R, 128 min) Mexican-American. Quiz and Film Review #3
October 3	<u>A Bronx Tale</u> (R, 120 min) Italian-American. Quiz and Film Review #4 In-Class Film <u>Italian Americans</u> .
October 10	<u>Witness</u> (R, 112 min) Amish and Swiss-German Americans. Quiz and Film Review #5
October 17	<u>Come See the Paradise</u> (R, 135 min) Japanese and Irish Americans. Quiz and Film Review #6
October 24	<u>Joy Luck Club</u> (R, 135 min) Chinese-Americans. Quiz and Film Review #7
October 31	<u>Soul Food</u> (R, 114 min) African Americans. Quiz and Film Review #8
November 7	<u>Fried Green Tomatoes</u> (PG, 130 min) Southern-Americans. Quiz and Film Review #9
November 14	<u>What's Cooking</u> (PG-13, 110 min) Multi-Cultural. Quiz and Film Review #10 <u>Food Projects Due</u>
November 28	Course Wrap-Up.
December 6	"Oscars"