

English/History 1600
American Cultures in Film
Fall 2008

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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 9 films that portray American cultures.

R-Rated Films Of the 9 films we will study, six are R-rated, one is PG, and two are PG-13. 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 Merrill-Cazier Library. Local video stores (The Book Table, 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 There will be a 10 point quiz covering each film. You will also have a 20 point Foodways project based on eating out in Cache Valley's authentic ethnic restaurants. If you miss a class, you will need to complete a 6 page Film Review Form.

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 statement and the Folklore Program, too!

Course Description

August 27	Course Introduction - Attendance Required		
Sept. 3	Art of Watching Ethnic Films		
Sept. 10	<u>My Big Fat Greek Wedding</u> (PG, 95 min) Greek Americans.	Practice Quiz	
Sept. 17	No Class	Foodways Fieldwork	
Sept. 24	No Class	Foodways Fieldwork	
Oct. 1	<u>My Family</u> (R, 128 min) Mexican-American	Quiz #1	
Oct. 8	<u>A Bronx Tale</u> (R, 122 min) Italian-American	Quiz #2	
Oct. 15	<u>Soul Food</u> (R , 114 min) African-American	Quiz #3	
Oct. 22	<u>Fried Green Tomatoes</u> (PG-13, 130 min) Southern-American	Quiz #4	
Oct. 29	<u>Joy Luck Club</u> (R, 135 min) Chinese-American	Quiz #5	
Nov. 5	<u>Woman on Top</u> (R, 93 min) Brazilian-American	Quiz #6	Food Projects Due
Nov. 12	<u>Tortilla Soup</u> (R, 103 min) Mexican-American	Quiz #7	
Nov. 19	<u>What's Cooking</u> (PG-13, 110 min) Multi-Cultural	Quiz #8	
Nov. 26	No Class		
Dec. 3	Last Class. Course Wrap-Up		