

Topics in African American Film

Chris Johnson

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Web Site

<http://blackvistas.com/index.html>

password "culture"

This course considers the image of African Americans in film within a social historical context. We will discuss the themes of music and dance performance, the black romantic narrative, racial conflict, blaxploitation, black documentary, black diaspora film and independent film dramas.

All readings and film clips will be available via the course web site.

Participants are required to write two essays of approximately ten pages in length. The first essay will be due at mid semester and the second near the end of the term. Essay topics will be chosen from course readings and themes.

All writing assignments must be typed. Please double-space the lines and use one-inch margins on all sides of the page.

Final grades will depend 60% on submitted written work and 40% on class participation.

Please inform me of any medical issues that may influence your attendance and performance in class.

More than four class absences result in automatic failure of the course. Recurring tardiness will be reflected in the final grade.

Plagiarism occurs when one writer copies the words of another writer without attributing the words to the source. Unattributed copying will result in course failure.

Course Calendar (subject to change)**Week**

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six

Seven

First Essay

Eight

Nine

Advising

Ten

Eleven

Twelve

Thirteen

Second Essay

Fourteen

Fifteen

Themes**Minnie the Moocher** (1932)**The Emperor Jones** (1933)**Stormy Weather** (1943)**Carmen Jones** (1954)**Black Orpheus** (Orfeu Negro) (1959)**The Color Purple** (1985)**Malcolm X** (1992)**Pulp Fiction** (1994)**Ceddo** (1977) by Ousmane Sembene**Daughters of the Dust** (1991) by Julie Dash**Amistad** (1997)**Mansfield Park** (1999)**City of God** (Cidade de Deus) (2002)**Untitled (How does it Feel)** (2000) by D'Angelo

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Minnie the Moocher (1932)

Race, Faith and the Prophetic Image of Barack Obama. Chris Johnson. Manuscript. 2010.

Classic Jazz on the Internet: Performance and Meaning. Chris Johnson. Manuscript. 2010.

The Emperor Jones (1933)

Melancholy Bodies: Racial Subjectivity and Whiteness in O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*. Steen, Shannon. *Theatre Journal*, Volume 52, Number 3, October 2000, pp. 339-359.

Le Tumulte Noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz-Age Paris, 1900-1930. Jody Blake. 1999.

Stormy Weather (1943)

Performing "Stormy Weather": Ethel Waters, Lena Horne, and Katherine Dunham. Vogel, Shane. *South Central Review*, Volume 25, Number 1, Spring 2008, pp. 93-113.

The Crisis Cover Girl: Lena Horne, the NAACP, and Representations of African American Femininity, 1941-1945. Williams, Megan E. *American Periodicals: A Journal of History, Criticism, and Bibliography*, Volume 16, Number 2, 2006, pp. 200-218.

Carmen Jones (1954)

Black Faces, White Voices: The Politics of Dubbing in *Carmen Jones*. Smith, Jeff. *The Velvet Light Trap*, Number 51, Spring 2003, pp. 29-42.

"Enough Force to Shatter the Tale to Fragments": Ethics and Textual Analysis in James Baldwin's Film Theory. Ryan Jay Friedman. *ELH*, Volume 77, Number 2, Summer 2010, pp. 385-412.

Black Orpheus (Orfeu Negro) (1959)

The Myth of Personal Security: Criminal Gangs, Dispute Resolution, and Identity in Rio de Janeiro's Favelas. Arias, Enrique Desmond. Rodrigues, Corinne Davis. *Latin American Politics & Society*, Volume 48, Number 4, Winter 2006, pp. 53-81.

Women-Space, Power, and the Sacred in Afro-Brazilian Culture. Cheryl Sterling. *The Global South*, Volume 4, Number 1, Spring 2010, pp. 71-93.

The Color Purple (1985)

Celie in the Looking Glass: The Desire for Selfhood in *The Color Purple*. Daniel W. Ross. MFS Modern Fiction Studies, Volume 34, Number 1, Spring 1988, pp. 69-84.

Queering Black Patriarchy: The Salvific Wish and Masculine Possibility in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. Jenkins, Candice Marie, MFS Modern Fiction Studies, Volume 48, Number 4, Winter 2002, pp. 969-1000.

Malcolm X (1992)

Malcolm X: In Print, on Screen. Thomas Doherty. Biography, Volume 23, Number 1, Winter 2000, pp. 29-48.

Spike Lee's Malcolm X as Transformational Object. Lee, Jonathan Scott. American Imago, Volume 52, Number 2, Summer 1995, pp. 155-167.

Pulp Fiction (1994)

Marxism, Postmodernism, Zizek. Donahue, Brian. Postmodern Culture, Volume 12, Number 2, January 2002.

The Color of Shame: Reading Kathryn Bond Stockton's Beautiful Bottom, Beautiful Shame in Context. Amy Abugo Ongiri. Postmodern Culture, Volume 18, Number 3, May 2008.

Ceddo (1977) by Ousmane Sembene

Film and Trauma: Africa Speaks to Itself through Truth and Reconciliation Films. Martin Mhando. Keyan G. Tomaselli. Black Camera, Volume 1, Number 1, Winter 2009 (The New Series), pp. 30-50.

Ousmane Sembene's Hall of Men: (En)Gendering Everyday Heroism. Karen Lindo. Research in African Literatures, Volume 41, Number 4, Winter 2010, pp. 109-124.

Daughters of the Dust (1991) by Julie Dash

Was Your Mama Mulatto? Notes Toward a Theory of Racialized Sexuality in Gayl Jones's "Corregidora" and Julie Dash's "Daughters of the Dust." Streeter, Caroline. Callaloo, Volume 27, Number 3, Summer 2004, pp. 768-787

Souls at the Crossroads, Africans on the Water: The Politics of Diasporic Melancholia. Kaplan, Sara. Callaloo, Volume 30, Number 2, Spring 2007, pp. 511-526.

Amistad (1997)

The Slumbering Volcano. American Slave Ship Revolts and the Production of Violent Masculinities. Maggie Montesinos Sale. 1997.

The Global Phallus: On the Digital and Allegorical Economy of the Hispanic Subaltern in Hollywood Film. Gabilondo, Joseba. Discourse, 23.1, Winter 2001, pp. 4-24.

Mansfield Park (1999)

Mournful Histories: Narratives of Postimperial Melancholy. Baucom, Ian, 1967- MFS Modern Fiction Studies, Volume 42, Number 2, Summer 1996, pp. 259-288.

Who Says She's a Bourgeois Writer? Reconsidering the Social and Political Contexts of Jane Austen's Novels. Downie, J. A. (James Alan), Eighteenth-Century Studies, Volume 40, Number 1, Fall 2006, pp. 69-84.

City of God (Cidade de Deus) (2002)

Music, Citizenship, and Violence in Postdictatorship Brazil. Moehn, Frederick. Latin American Music Review, Volume 28, Number 2, Fall/Winter 2007, pp. 181-219.

Bandidos de Cristo : Representations of the Power of Criminal Factions in Rio's Proibidão Funk. Sneed, Paul.. Latin American Music Review, Volume 28, Number 2, Fall/Winter 2007, pp. 220-241.

Untitled (How does it Feel) (2000) D'Angelo

"Untitled": D'Angelo and the Visualization of the Black Male Body. Harris, Keith M. Wide Angle, Volume 21, Number 4, October 1999, pp. 62-83.
