

## Course Syllabus

**Cultural and Ethnic Studies 115 – American Film as Literature**

**Spike Lee: An American Director**

**FALL QUARTER 2015**

**Kimberly Pollock** e-mail:  
**kpollock@bellevuecollege.edu**

**Class Time: M W 12.30-  
2.40**

**Class Place: R 101**

**Office: A 200 D** **Office Hour:**  
**11.30-12.20 Daily, by appointment and online meetings**

**Phone: 425.564-3082**

**Texts: These are Not required, but are Suggested:**

***The Spike Lee Reader, Massood***

***Black Film/White Money, Rhines***

***How to Analyze the Films of Spike Lee, Reynolds***

## **Course Description**

This course introduces the critical study of the motion picture as an expressive medium comparable to literary art. Students review the history and cultural traditions of American film, with focus on the feature-length film as a novelistic form. Students analyze film adaptations of American literary texts. Also includes documentaries and other genres. Previously this course was listed as (American Studies) AMST 115.

## **Instructor's Philosophy:**

I strongly believe that each of us is responsible for what happens in this classroom. Students are just as capable of making a class great as the instructor. We are studying communities and cultures, and in the process we are also creating a new community in our own classroom. We are all still striving, still learning. The key to a successful class is mutual responsibility. We all have a myriad of valuable insights to offer. I will expect each of you to be committed to the course, just as you will expect commitment from me. I am excited to learn with you. It is my hope that we can

have a fun, enriching quarter. Therefore, expect to do a good bit of work, and plan on participating fully in class.

## **COURSE OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of their own previously-held perspectives on the theme and explain how those perspectives may have changed.
- Demonstrate an understanding of trends in American thought and attitude regarding the theme.
- Discuss, orally or in writing, the theme showing the interrelation of historical events, literary works and social changes.
- Demonstrate the ability to synthesize information from various sources/media and communicate that insight effectively.

### **Policies in support of the Course Objectives:**

1. Be Here! I expect each student to be in class, on time, each day, for the full time allotted for the class. Absences will affect the final grade in the following way: **MORE THAN 4 ABSENCES FOR ANY REASON WILL RESULT IN THE STUDENT NOT BEING ALLOWED TO TAKE THE FINAL, AND THE STUDENT WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF "F" FOR THE COURSE. MISSING MORE THAN 15 MINUTES OF EACH HALF OF THE TWO HOUR CLASS, COUNTS AS AN ABSENCE.**

2. Work must be turned in on time and presented in a professional manner.

3. We must listen to each other. This one will be difficult for all of us. We have to give respect, and create an atmosphere in the classroom where we can all feel comfortable enough to make mistakes. We must also be able to express our opinions even if what we have to say is not popular, or easily received. True learning can only take place in an atmosphere which is safe enough to examine any ideas which arise. It is the responsibility of each of us to keep this classroom safe.

4. In a similar vein as #3, I expect to hear from you. Part of the thought process is verbalization. Both speaking and writing help to clarify our thoughts. Participation counts. Therefore, I expect all students to be prepared for each class, and to contribute.

### **Tests, Projects and Papers:**

- Each student will write 1, 3-5 page analytic essay. This will be assigned several weeks into the quarter and will be worth a total of 50 points.
- Each student will also turn in 1-2 page reflection paper to the readings, films and discussions on the week every Friday. There will be a total of 10 weekly papers. Each paper will be worth a total of 10 points.
- Each student will complete the class final. The final exam will be worth 100 points.

My office hours are for your use. Come and see me any time you have a question of a problem with the course or your work.

I am looking forward to this quarter, and hope that we can do good things together.

### **Disclaimer:**

This is a heavily dialogue-based class and you will be graded upon your participation. There will be few if any lectures and you will not be required to memorize things as much as to analyze the many aspects of the issues discussed. Many of these issues will be controversial and do not have one correct answer. Often class dialogues will begin with open-ended questions meant to get at a deeper understanding of the content being discussed. Don't be discouraged if a classmate or even the professor raises another question or theory that may point out the flaws of your own argument, this is all part of the process. The more we question ourselves the more we can understand. In order to be successful in this class you must complete all assigned readings and be willing to participate respectfully. If you cannot come to class regularly, or are simply looking to "coast" this is not the class for you.

### **Dialogue vs. Discussion/Debate**

Dialogues require the use of logical arguments and concrete facts instead of personal opinions or experiences. Valid arguments are based on premises

(much like the scientific “if-then” method of reasoning). For Example: If the secession of the southern states in 1860 was intended to protect those states from the economic oppression of the northern states, then it follows that the issue of slavery during the American civil war was not one of morals but one of economics. And if the economic backbone of the southern states was the system of slavery and, in many the southern states were the economic backbone of the country as a whole, it makes sense to say that our nations earliest economic system was based on the oppression of people based on the color of their skin.

**During class dialogues you will be expected to:**

- Be prepared. This is not a bull session. If you aren't prepared, please don't participate.
- Articulate the concepts and principles of the issue(s) in question
- Refer to the text when needed during the dialogue
- Ask for clarification when confused
- Stick to the point under discussion. You can make notes about ideas you want to bring up later.
- Speak clearly and loud enough for everyone to hear
- Listen carefully and respectfully
- Engage your classmates in the dialogue, not just the teacher

Remember, class dialogues are not a test of memory and you are not simply “learning a subject.” Here your goal

should be to broaden your understanding of social issues we all face.

Want to check on your success in this class? Here's a cheat-sheet of things to consider during class dialogues:

### **Did I...**

- Come to class?
- Prepare?
- Speak clearly and loudly?
- Cite reasons and evidence for my statements?
- Listen respectfully?
- Stay on point?
- Talk to my classmates and not just the professor?
- Paraphrase accurately?
- Ask questions to clear up confusion?
- Support my classmates?
- Avoid hostile exchanges?
- Raise questions in a civil manner?

## **Affirmation of Inclusion**

Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination.

We value our different backgrounds at Bellevue College, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

## **Religious Holidays**

Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or any other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance should be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent, preferably at the beginning of the term. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments should be offered an opportunity to make up the work without penalty (if they have previously arranged to be absent), unless it can be demonstrated that a makeup opportunity would constitute an unreasonable burden on a member of the faculty. Should disagreement arise over what constitutes an unreasonable burden or any element of this policy, parties involved should consult the department chair, or Dean.

## **College Anti-Discrimination Statement (Title IX)**

Bellevue College does not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity; color; creed; national origin; sex; marital status; sexual orientation; age; religion; genetic



information; the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability; gender identity or veteran status in educational programs and activities which it operates.

For further information and contacts, please consult [College Anti-Discrimination Statements \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

## **Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity**

Any act of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source), and fabrication and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to, talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Dean of Student Success for investigation. Specific student rights, responsibilities, and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct at: [Student Code \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

***[If you plan to use a plagiarism checking service, you should indicate so in your syllabus. Please make sure your penalty for plagiarism does not contradict official***

*college policy. You may find it simplest to not specify a penalty and simply refer all cases to the Dean for investigation. Incident reports can be filed at <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/reportconcerns/> ([Links to an external site.](#)) ]*

## **Important Links ▪ Bellevue College E-mail and access to MyBC**

All students registered for classes at Bellevue College are entitled to a network and e-mail account. Your student network account can be used to access your student e-mail, log in to computers in labs and classrooms, connect to the BC wireless network and log in to *MyBC*. To create your account, go to: [Create Email \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

BC offers a wide variety of computer and learning labs to enhance learning and student success. Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting the [Technology Help Desk \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

### **▪ Disability Resource Center (DRC)**

The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations

in order to be successful in college, please contact us as soon as possible.

If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter.

If you are a student with a documented autism spectrum disorder, there is an additional access program available to you. Contact [Autism Spectrum Navigators \(Links to an external site.\)](#) Email and phone number is on the web page. ASN is located in the Library Media Center in D125.

The DRC office is located in B132 or you can call our reception desk at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach us by Skype: the address is **DRCatBC** (NOTE: There is no @ sign...it is actually **DRCatBC**). Please visit our website at [Disability Resource Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#) for application information into our program and other helpful links.

## **Accessibility**

The online elements of this course are designed to be welcoming to, accessible to, and usable by everyone, including students who are English-language learners, have a variety of learning styles, have disabilities, or are

new to online learning. Be sure to let me know immediately if you encounter a required element or resource in the course that is not accessible to you. Also, let me know of changes I can make to the course so that it is more welcoming to, accessible to, or usable by students who take this course in the future.

## ▪ **Public Safety**

### **Public Safety and Emergencies**

Public Safety is located in the K building and can be reached at **425-564-2400** (easy to remember because it's the only office on campus open 24 hours a day—2400). Among other things, Public Safety serves as our Parking Permits, Lost and Found, and Emergency Notification center. Please ensure you are signed up to receive alerts through our campus alerting system by registering at [RAVE Alert Registration \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

If you work late and are uneasy about going to your car, Public Safety will escort you to your vehicle. To coordinate this, please phone ahead and let Public Safety know when and where you will need an escort.

Please familiarize yourself with the emergency postings by the door of every classroom and know where to go in the event of an evacuation. Your instructor will be asked if anyone might still be in the building, so check in before you do anything else. Emergency responders will search for anyone unaccounted for.

**If a major emergency occurs, please follow these three rules:**

- 1) Take directions from those in charge of the response** -We all need to be working together.
- 2) Do not get in your car and leave campus (unless directed to)** - Doing so will clog streets and prevent emergency vehicles from entering the scene. Instead, follow directions from those in charge.
- 3) In an emergency, call 911 first, then Public Safety.**

Please do not hesitate to call Public Safety if you have safety questions or concerns at any time. You may also visit the [Public Safety \(Links to an external site.\)](#) web page for answers to your questions.

▪ **Final Exam Schedule**

## **[Final Exam Schedule \(Links to an external site.\)](#)**

### **Academic Calendar**

The Bellevue College Academic Calendar is separated into two calendars. They provide information about holidays, closures and important enrollment dates such as the finals schedule.

- [Enrollment Calendar \(Links to an external site.\)](#) On this calendar you will find admissions and registration dates and important dates for withdrawing and receiving tuition refunds.
- [College Calendar \(Links to an external site.\)](#) This calendar gives you the year at a glance and includes college holidays, scheduled closures, quarter end and start dates, and final exam dates.

-

### **Course Outline and Schedule (Subject to Change)**

**Assignments are always due by midnight**

**Do not work ahead more than one week**

**One last thing:**

There are going to be times in this class when you feel uncomfortable. That's okay; a certain amount of discomfort can be conducive to learning. However, if you ever feel unsafe or threatened please let me know so we

can try to work it out. The classroom should be a safe place for everybody.

### **Useful Websites:**

Library Media Center:

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/> (Links to an external site.)

Research Help:

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/research.html> (Links to an external site.)

Reading/Writing Lab:

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/writinglab/> (Links to an external site.)

Counseling Center: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/hdc/> (Links to an external site.)

Academic Tutoring:

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/tutoring/> (Links to an external site.)

The following link will connect you to the Student Handbook, which will give you vital information about being a student at BCC:

[http://bellevuecollege.edu/stupro/handbook\\_cd2008/default.html](http://bellevuecollege.edu/stupro/handbook_cd2008/default.html) (Links