

*Office: R 230 I Tel.: 425 564-4186
(Hours: 11:30 to 12:20 Monday through Thursday; other
office hours by appointment)
American Studies web site:
www.bcc.ctc.edu/artshum/americanstudies*

SYLLABUS—AMERICAN STUDIES 115: AMERICAN FILM AS LITERATURE:

“REE(al)L RADICALS: HOLLYWOOD IN THE SEVENTIES” (5 cr.)

(Item 5630; TRA --12:30 to 2:40 p.m. Monday and Wednesday. R 204)

1. Catalog Description:

“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.”

Bellevue Community College Course Catalog, 2008-2009, p. 69.

--Recommended English 101 placement or higher

2. Course Focus and Introduction:

American film in the 20th century has become our primary cultural and sociological mirror. Films reflect and shape the attitudes of the American people, as well as their values, behaviors and identities. Hollywood is a major influence in portraying American society and popular culture. The images of film tell us who we are, what we should think, the products we should buy and the candidates for whom we vote. Yet at the same time, these images entertain and persuade us as citizens, consumers and individuals.

Certainly we can enjoy films for their entertainment and escapist aspects; this is the nature of the Hollywood film, to amuse us and provide us with a world that is not our own. However, we are going to be asked to think about what these films represent: their values, the attitudes presented in them, the picture of American society they show, the reality they depict, whether distorted or not, and the images of race and gender which they portray. In particular, we are going to examine how American cinema reveals something about American experience, identity, history and culture. We may find that this process will help us to learn something about ourselves as individuals, what we value and who we are. We may also find that American cinema is a mirror of our society as we become more aware of culture and the products of mass culture.

“Ree(al)l Radicals: Hollywood in the Seventies” will present an in-depth analysis of American cinema during the 70s, one of the most important periods in American film history. The diversity of aesthetic and ideological approaches to film in this decade reflected the social, cultural, political and historical changes in American society begun in the 1960s. Films and Hollywood took on new meaning and cultural significance in the 70s, while many films of the period became classical popular culture icons. As American society and culture evolved radically, films and directors became partially responsible for these changes as they gained cultural influence throughout the world. These films defined an American generation’s relationship to the troubled times of the 60s and 70s. A different film audience of youth became an agent for social activism and radical change; issues such as gender, the counterculture, sexuality, women’s liberation, race, ethnic identity, violence, Vietnam, Watergate, and radical student politics were the social and historical conflicts which became the new and daring themes of these important films.

Just as American society experienced radical change, so too did the Hollywood film industry during the 70s. There were major and influential changes in the film industry, its audiences and in the films produced. A new generation of actors, directors and producers responded to the political, social and historical changes during the period. As the Hollywood studio system declined, the new themes, ideas and experimental techniques made film into a medium which challenged American society. Films explored social change as well as the political and generational conflicts so prevalent during these times. The course will examine the evolution of the film industry in addition to the cultural icon films. The decade of the 70s—often called the “Me Decade”—bridges the Swinging 60s and the Decadent 80s; many of the 70s films continue to influence our society today.

2. Course Outcomes:

- a. To examine the culture, history, politics, and myths of American society as expressed in literature and film.
- b. To understand the place of Hollywood film in American popular culture and the particular evolution of the film industry in the 70s.
- c. To explore the political, historical, and cultural significance of selected films.
- d. To examine the decade of the 70s and its role in the development of American cinema.
- e. To analyze how films of the 70s reflected issues of the period.
- f. To analyze classic American films and study their effects on American culture.
- g. To develop cultural awareness and evaluate products of mass culture.
- h. To develop the ability to watch films actively and critically.
- i. To develop cultural awareness and the ability to evaluate American culture.
- j. To experience aspects of American culture, history, politics and society through the medium of popular film.

3. Course Materials: literature (fiction and nonfiction texts), films, documentaries, handout articles.

--Students are responsible for all the films and documentaries shown in class. If a student misses a class, it is the student's responsibility to view the film. Some materials may be unavailable outside of class. Some of the required films are available in the Library Media Center or through Netflix or Blockbuster.

--You may find that certain books, films, or other materials assigned in the course may, in whole or in part, offend you. These materials are equivalent to required texts and are essential to the course content. If you decline to view or read material you consider offensive, you are still responsible for its content, and you may not be able to participate fully in required assignments, class discussions, or exams. Essential to a liberal arts education is an open-minded tolerance for ideas and modes of expression which might conflict with one's personal values.

4. Texts: Students need the editions indicated:

- *Peter Lev, *American Films of the 70s* (ISBN 9780292747166)
- *Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (ISBN 9780393312836)
- *Mario Puzo, *The Godfather* (Essential Ed.) (ISBN 9780451217400)
- *Hunter Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (ISBN 9780679785897)
- *Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (ISBN 9780345404473)
- *Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, 6th Edition (ISBN 9780205668946)

These books are the required texts for the course, but you should also have access to a good hardbound college dictionary, e.g., *The American Heritage Dictionary* or *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*. You should also have access to a college handbook of English, such as Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*.

5. Grading and Instructional Methods:

The final grade will be based on:

- Film Analysis Essay 50% (1 graded essay throughout the quarter)
- Mid-Term Essay Examination: 25% (In-Class)
- Reading Quizzes (10%), Homework Assignments (10%), Attendance (5%)

Writing Level: Writing skills are essential for student success in most college courses. While English 101 is not a prerequisite for the course, this writing level is recommended for the class. Students will be required to analyze and develop an argument using examples from the text and films in required essays. Homework essays will be assigned to prepare students for the type of analytical writing required for the course.

--Course assignments are explained in detail at each class meeting. A Course Calendar is not provided in advance in order to allow for more flexibility in class. Students will be given ample time to complete all assignments, both reading and written.

***Film Analysis Essay:**

- Responds to readings, film and/or documentaries.
- Analyzes aspects of American society and history as depicted in the films and novels studied.
- Analyzes an issue or idea presented in film or in class.
- Examines novel to film adaptations.
- Standards for the essays will be discussed in class.

***Mid-Term Examination:**

- All essay questions.
- Exam will cover materials presented in class, films and literature.
- Materials from documentaries will be included on the exam.
- Students may use notes from class but no books or handouts.

***Reading Quizzes:**

- Announced quizzes for each of the literary texts chosen.
- Announced or unannounced quizzes for reading assignments.
- No quizzes may be made up unless agreed upon prior to missing the class. If this is the case, a longer paper may be substituted for the quiz.
- Quizzes are meant to determine only if students have read the material.
- For some quizzes, you may use notes from your reading assignments in the form of note cards or loose leaf note paper. No books or computers allowed.

5. Attendance, Assignments and Grading Policies:

--STUDENT CODE;

“Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one’s own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive 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 cellphones/pagers to ring in class and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Vice President of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in

the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Vice President of Student Services.” The Student Code, Policy 2050, in its entirety is located at:

Cofer 5

[http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050 Student Code.asp](http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050%20Student%20Code.asp)

- All course work must be word-processed or typed.
- All assignments and essays must be turned in to pass the course.
- Graded essays must be submitted in person to the instructor. No email assignments will be accepted.
- One half grade per day late will be detracted from the graded essay.
- If you miss a class, please try to get the assignment from me or from another student. Students are responsible for all assignments and materials distributed in class, as well as films and documentaries viewed in class.
- Attendance will be taken at all classes.
- A final grade may be lowered by at least 1/2 letter grade (3-5 absences) or one whole grade (6-8 absences). Too many absences may result in a final grade of “F”.
- Lateness will count as one absence. Students should be sure to be marked late instead of absent if arriving late to class.
- For two-hour classes, one absence will be recorded if students do not return to class after the break for any reason.
- Please do not allow electronic communication devices to disrupt the class; they should be put away when the class begins.
Please turn off phones before class begins; please do not manipulate cell phones, I Phones, or pagers during the class.
- Please do not eat in class.

6. Bellevue Community College Policy Statement:

“If you require accommodation based on a documented disability, have emergency medical information to share, or need special arrangements in case of emergency evacuation, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

If you would like to inquire about becoming a DSS student, you may call 564-2498 or go in person to the DSS (Disability Support Services) program office in C 210, the student union building.”

--Program Coordinator,
BCC Disability Support Services