

Department of English & Writing Studies
Film Studies Program

DISNEY DREAM FACTORY
FILM 2159B (002) Winter 2023

Tuesdays | 1030AM-1230PM | WL-258 | Asynchronous Screenings

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*"We keep moving forward, opening
new doors, and doing new things
because we're curious, and
curiosity keeps leading us down
new paths..."*

~ Walt Disney

COURSE DESCRIPTION

For decades, the name 'Disney' has been associated with popular aspects of Americana, especially those that pertain to spectacular, escapist approaches to culture that idealize traditional values as they apply to human life and relationships. Given the tremendous Disney mass market output that goes well beyond film production, Benjamin Barber's argument—that "whether Disney knows it or not, it is buying much more than our leisure time. It has a purchase on our values, on how we feel and think, and what we think about"—speaks to the Disney empire's profound and premeditated influence on our most important cultural narratives.

Through an examination of diverse media sources (animated shorts, lobby cards, press books, advertisements, full-length animated and live action feature films, etc.) and their treatment of topics such as childhood, family, relationships, race, class, sexuality, and gender, this course casts a critical look at Disney as one of America's most long-standing "dream factories" that shape the fabric of our collective consciousness through its innovative technological industry and strategic use of discourse. Finally, this course also encourages the centrality of critical self-reflection in the various ways that we as audiences are potentially instrumentalized within these transnational ideological networks, not only as their consumers but also as their re-producers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. synthesize concepts from a number of theoretical perspectives in order to read and think critically about the potential biases, prejudices, and motivations that inform Disney productions;
2. analyze literary, artistic, social, and cultural artifacts that are informed by—or that demonstrate—the tensions, anxieties, and aspirations embedded in Disney narratives;
3. reflect on their experiences as informed audiences whose personal dealings with reception, fandom, and marketing may offer points of potential intervention;
4. enhance their ability to express themselves both orally (through in-class participation) and in writing (through quizzes, essays, and examinations).

COURSE MATERIALS

1. Wasko, Janet. *Understanding Disney: The Manufacture of Fantasy*. Polity, 2001. (UD)
2. Additional required readings will be posted on OWL.

A NOTE ON “SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS”: You will find some readings listed as “Supplementary Readings” in the course calendar. These are just that: supplementary, meaning they may be helpful to read if you have interest or time. These may also be used as material for deepening your own knowledge in preparation for the Oral Exam or Critical Essay. They will NOT be included in any tests, quizzes, or examinations.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

1. A stable internet connection for weekly asynchronous viewing
2. OWL and UWO library access for screening links
3. Disney+ is helpful but not required

ANTIREQUISITES: Film Studies 2196A/B, if taken in 2016-2017

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation and Attendance:	10% (8% + 2%)
Oral Exam:	15%
Reading Group Briefs:	15% (3 x 750 words; group work)
Critical Annotation / Essay:	25% (max 2000 words; pair work)
<u>Final Exam:</u>	<u>35% (TBA)</u>
TOTAL:	100%

A. Class Participation and Attendance

All students are expected to (1) complete all reading assignments and (2) participate in class discussions. Being a critical reader, manifested in the ability to dialogue with assigned texts and formulate informed questions or opinions, is a skill that this class will try to foster.

Regular attendance is critical in getting the most out of the course. As such, attendance will be checked every class, both during screening and lecture days. University policy on absences and accommodations for legitimate reasons will be observed.

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

B. Oral Exam

The Oral Exam will be a brief dialogue (30 minutes, give or take) between a small group of students and the instructor on predetermined topics. While the format is a roundtable conversation, each student will be marked individually. The topics will vary from week to week, and may come in the form of defining terms, synthesizing concepts, contextualizing an image, explaining a quote or statement, elaborating on a discussion point, etc. The Oral Exam will take place on time slots that students will sign up for at their convenience and will be ongoing throughout the term.

C. Reading Group Briefs

Students will be placed in small groups where they would be able to discuss some of the readings and/or analyze some of the clips and images in a more interactive way. At the end of each reading group session, students must fill out a form (to be provided) with their insights and group responses. While there may be a number of times that the class will break out into their small groups, there will only be 3 Reading Group Briefs graded.

D. Critical Annotation (Semiotic Analysis)

In pairs, students are expected to pick a visual text (movie poster, advertisement, playbill, etc.) for a Disney product and explain how its signifiers construct/enforce/problematicize an identified discourse or narrative. The essay will be no more than 2000 words.

E. Final Exam

The final exams comprise identification, short answer, and essay-type questions. Key terms and concepts will be provided in advance to help students prepare for the exams.

GENERAL COURSE GUIDELINES

Students are expected to be both physically/virtually and mentally present in class; participation is integral to the learning experience. Use of electronic devices in-class should be for academic purposes only.

A. Email

Email correspondences will be sent often and the OWL site will be updated regularly. Please use your UWO email account for official inquiries and correspondences, and please allow up to 24 hours for a response (up to 48 hours over the weekend). Standard email etiquette is expected. NO ESSAYS SUBMITTED BY EMAIL WILL BE ACCEPTED.

NO EMAILS EXPLAINING ABSENCES PLEASE. If you are unable to be present in class, you CANNOT receive attendance or participation marks. If your absence merits reasonable accommodation (for example, for observing religious obligations, representing the University in an official capacity, medical emergencies, compassionate

grounds, etc.), please get in touch with your academic counsellor.

B. Plagiarism and Academic Offenses

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage of a text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate, and by proper referencing such as footnotes and citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). The University of Western Ontario uses plagiarism checking software. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between the University and Turnitin.com.

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

C. Accommodation, Absenteeism, and Deadlines

All requirements must be submitted in a timely fashion, unless there are serious mitigating circumstances with official, university-approved documentation. Late submissions will incur a 5% Not Following Directions (NFD) penalty if submitted within three days of the deadline, but this may only be allowed ONCE throughout the term. No late submissions will be accepted thereafter.

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below:

Assessments worth less than 10% of the overall course grade (e.g., Oral Exam): Please email me within 24 hours of an expected deadline to let me know if you will be unable to complete it. I may be able to accommodate rescheduling an Oral Exam to a different date or time slot.

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade: For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, you must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to the Academic Counselling Office of your

Faculty of Registration as soon as possible. For further information, please consult the University's medical illness policy at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

In general, students seeking academic accommodation for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. The same is true for accommodation requests pertaining to known disabilities or medical conditions. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Please find UWO's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness here: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The full policy is set out here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Religious Accommodation:

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

D. Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **NOT** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

E. Support Services

OWL and Technology Support: Western Technology Services (WTS) 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800

Registrarial Services: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services: <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support & Engagement: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

F. Recognition of First Nations Territory

Disney Dream Factory - Film 2159B (002)

The department would like to recognize that we are located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples, and acknowledge the longstanding relationships of the three local First Nations groups of this land and place in Southwestern Ontario.