

SPAN CODE TBA

THE AMERICAN DREAM – EL SUEÑO AMERICANO

Time: TBA



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and by apt.

Course Description:

From Saussure to Derrida, from Foucault to Butler, Marx to Žižek, Freud to Kristeva, Fanon to Hall and Muñoz, this course aims to introduce graduate students to the rich field of interdisciplinary cultural studies. Students will not only become familiar with relevant schools of thought, but also practice and develop interdisciplinary strategies to analyze

social/literary issues. Facilitating our ambitious project will be a number of cultural artifacts informing a conversation around the possible meanings around the concept of the “American dream,” its vices, virtues, its concomitant politics of inclusion/exclusion. Along the way, we will also be mindful of how this “dream,” or “dreams,” play a role in the framing discourses of empire, intervention, migration, gender, sex, class and ethnicity/race. We will be in great company, fighting wars overseas with Chicanos; road tripping with Thelma and Louise, Tenoch and Julio Zapata. From a postwar touch of evil to the easy riding of the late 1960s, from stories of migration to the dream-dealers of the dystopian future, this course will wrestle with that ever-elusive concept of the American dream, the nightmare, the sham, the saving graces.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- 1) The student will engage with and identify the major trends and representative creators/thinkers from the various critical thinking schools from the field of cultural studies.
- 2) The student will recognize and apply varied theoretical approaches to cultural studies analysis.
- 3) Both in class discussion and in written assignments, the student will examine the filmic, historical, and social contexts as well as the form (or aesthetic structure) of the cultural artifacts studied in class.
- 4) The student will hone reading skills by acquiring and developing a working/critical vocabulary in order to analyze and evaluate cultural artefacts pertaining to different disciplines and genres—from personal essays, poetry, academic articles, film, film reviews, art catalogs—and effectively apply their main ideas/points of contention/examples as a component of your arguments.
- 5) The student will refine skills by using different genres, from expressive, artistic, and more informal writing, to academic and more “professional” writing, in order to give form and extend your critical thinking and deepen your understanding of the class materials.
- 6) The student will enhance their ability to do research at the graduate level by composing a final research paper built over the course of several stages and assignments; and by doing a final formal oral presentation, both based on a particular research topic/theme/question related to the themes and authors covered during the semester.

Texts

- The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory (TRCTCT). Ed. Simon Malpas and Paul Wake. Routledge. New York (2006)
- A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader I (ACACTR). Ed. Antony and Kate McGowan. Second ed. University of Toronto Press. Toronto. (2004)
- Critical Theory Today (CTT). Ed. Lois Tyson. Second ed. Routledge. Toronto. (2004)
- Beginning Theory (BT). Ed. Peter Barry. Third ed. Manchester University Press. New York. (2009)

Selected readings from this texts will be made available electronically through OWL.

Grading Policy

Class participation	10%
Song analysis	10%
Film analysis	10%
2 memes	5%
Paper proposal and annot. bib.	10%
Final Paper	30%
4 min conference pres	10%
Creative Project	15%

Total:	100%

***Note for MER students**

MER students are required to focus their song analysis, final paper and presentations on a topic related to migration and/or ethnic relations.

Assignments

Students must complete all assignments by the designated date. **No late homework will be accepted.** In case of absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact a classmate or the instructor and obtain the necessary information.

Class Participation

As in any literature/theater course, class participation is crucial. The class participation grade (15%) will be based on both the quantity and quality of student contribution. Students are expected to **come prepared to class.**

4-minute conference presentation

During the last of classes, each student will be in charge of giving a short oral presentation on the topic of their final paper. More info on this class component will be

sent your way throughout the semester. Essentially, you are required to bring it! Come ready to do a sick 4 min presentation with a max of 5 slides, and look sharp/professional for this day.

Paper proposal and annotated bibliography

In collaboration with the professor, students will choose a topic from a list of options in order to eventually write a 4000 word final essay (excluding bibliography). Before embarking on writing this essay, however, every student must submit a paper proposal and annotated bibliography (due on Feb 11th). The proposal should be between 2 and 3 pages long (MLA style format) and it must provide an introduction to the topic and texts as well as a well crafted thesis statement and essay outline. The annotated bibliography, in turn, must properly cite and comment on the relevance of at least 10 sources, 7 of which must be scholarly sources not listed on the syllabus.

Final paper

The 4000 word final essay must show coherence, a good thesis, organization in the arguments that are being presented, critical thinking skills, a rational conclusion and no spelling mistakes. It must include 12 bibliography entries as a minimum requirement. Of these 8 must be academic secondary sources not listed on the syllabus. Due last day of classes.

Final Creative Project

Based on one of the literary or filmic texts seen in class, the students will form (3-4 person) groups in order to put together a (2-3 min) filmic dramatic interpretation. You may make use of as many resources as you see fit (cell phones, camcorders, DSLRs, animation, puppets, photographs, voice over narration, interpretative dance etc.). Each group must also provide a two page (double-spaced, times new roman, 12 font size) justification and discussion of the development of the project, the form, the content and relevance of the interpretation to the original text.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is **mandatory**. Regular class attendance is essential for successful completion of the course. Students are allowed **one (1)** absence per semester. For any absences beyond this, a student's FINAL GRADE will be lowered by 2%.

Every **three (3)** tardies will be counted as **one (1)** absence. In order to receive full credit for daily attendance, students must stay in class for the entire duration of the class period.

Absences will only be EXCUSED by showing proof of EMERGENCY MEDICAL ATTENTION or by presenting a letter from the Dean. There are no exceptions.

This class requires that the student invest a great deal of time and energy preparing the readings and materials. You are expected to attend all weekly classes.

Statement on Use Of Laptops/Mobile Device In The Classroom

Laptops or mobile devices can support your learning in this class, but they can also be a source of distraction for you and other students around you. Please turn off all sound notifications before you enter the classroom. You are welcome to use your devices for course-related activities such as taking notes, researching lecture topics, collaborating on group projects, viewing documents in OWL, and communicating with other students about

the course material. You are not permitted to use these devices for any non-course-related activities. Students who wish to use laptops or mobile devices are asked to sit in the laptop-designated area of the class. During activities that do not require these devices, such as group discussions, you will be asked to close or put them away. If you have concerns or comments about how the use of laptops or mobile devices is affecting your learning during the course, please make an appointment to talk with the instructor.

OWL

OWL will be used to send out group messages, post announcements, and make **class documents** easily available to everybody. Students are responsible for checking their e-mail and UWO regularly, and **print out the necessary documents on time**.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to maintain high standards at UWO. Cheating is not tolerated on either exams or homework. Anyone caught cheating, copying from others, or allowing others to copy their work is subject to receiving an "F".

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated

Plagiarism is the presentation as one's own, the ideas and writing of another. Plagiarism is academically dishonest and subjects the offending student to penalties up to and including expulsion. Students must make appropriate acknowledgements of the original source where material written or compiled by another is used.

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 for such checking 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 Western University and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). 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/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf A student guilty of a scholastic offence may be subject to the imposition of one or more penalties, ranging from reprimand to expulsion from the university.

Support Services

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 ext. 82147 if you have questions regarding accommodation.

The policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found here:

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_disabilities.pdf

The policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

The following scale will be used to determine grades in the course:

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A+	90-100%
A	80-89%
B	70-79%
C	60-69%
D	50-59%
F	Below 50% or assigned when course is dropped with academic penalty.

Winter 2021: CALENDAR

Week 1		
Day	Themes	Assignment
Jan 7	INTRO	Intro to class. -Reading of syllabus -About MLA format -On the seminar format -Presentation tips -Research Methods Screen before class: <i>Little Miss Sunshine</i> . (2006)
Week 2		
Jan 14	Intro to literary studies	Culler. <i>Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction</i> (1-69) -Axtell and Aragon. <i>A Little But if Wisdom</i> . Conversations with a Nez Perce Elder. Screening. <i>Smoke signals</i>
Week 3		
Jan 21	Intro to literary studies	Culler. <i>Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction</i> (83-134) <i>Alexie. The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian.</i>
Week 4		

Jan 28	Road tripping	<p>Screening: <i>Easy Rider</i>. Dir. Hopper (1969) <i>Thelma and Louise</i>. Dir. Scott (1999)</p> <p>TRCTCT: (3-27) CCT: 83-129</p> <p>Meme 1 due</p>
Week 5		
Fed 4	Ideology	<p>Screening: <i>Starship Troopers</i>. Dir. Verhoeven. (1997) Zarate. <i>Introducing Marxism: A Graphic Guide</i></p> <p>Final essay proposal due printed and at beginning of class.</p>
Week 6		
Feb 11	Ideology II	<p>Screening: <i>Latino</i>. Dir. Wexler. (1985) ACACTR: 33-72 CTT: 53-78 Trujillo. <i>Dogs from Illusion</i>.</p> <p>Come to class ready to do a brief 2 min presentation on your chosen song.</p> <p>Song analysis due.</p>
Week 7		
Feb 25	Subjectivity (and more road tripping)	<p>TRCTCT: (66-80) ACACTR: 73-112 CCT: 11-48</p> <p><i>Y tu mamá también</i>. Dir. Alfonso Cuarón (2001)</p> <p>Suggested reading: Zarate. <i>Freud for Beginners</i>.</p>
Week 8 - Reading Week		
Week 9		

March 3	<i>Différence</i>	<p>Screening: <i>A Touch of Evil</i>. Welles (1958)</p> <p>TRCTCT: (81-90) ACACTR: 113-1422 CCT: 249-266</p> <p>Guest Lecture: Prof. William A. Nericcio</p>
Week 10		
March 8	Gender and Sexuality	<p>TRCTCT: 102-114 ACACTR: 143-176, 191-196 CTT: 317-352</p> <p><i>Quinceañera</i>. Dir. Glatzer and Westmoreland. 2000</p> <p>Meme 2 due</p>
Week 11		
March 17	Race/Ethnicity	<p>TRCTCT: 127-140 ACACTR: 197-202</p> <p>Screening:</p> <p><i>Zoot Suit</i>. Dir. Valdez (1981) <i>Bamboozled</i>. Dir. Spike Lee. (2000)</p>
Week 12		
March 24	Migration	<p>Zamora. <i>Unaccompanied</i>.</p> <p>Robinson & Santos. “Global Capitalism, Immigrant Labor, and the Struggle for Justice”</p> <p>Film analysis assignments due</p> <p>Recommended screening: <i>El Norte</i>. Dir. Gregory Nava (1983)</p>
Week 13		
March 31	Migration II	<p>Screening:</p> <p><i>El Contrato</i>. Dir. Sook Lee (2003)</p>

		<i>Maquilapolis</i> . Dir. Funari & De la Torre. (2006) <i>Dream Dealer</i> . Dir. Rivera (2012)
Week 14 Presentations week		
April 5	Presentation day.	Dress to impress and bring snacks.

April 1st last day of classes

***Professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus during the semester.**