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Political Science 475: Film and Politics
 Chaminade University Online
 Fall Quarter October 1-December 8
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This course will serve as an analysis of the politics of film as well as an examination of the film industry's role in the political process and the shape of the political landscape. This will enable us to understand how each component of the course affects the other. We will not limit ourselves to one type of media, but rather examine print, radio, the internet, and television media, as well as film.

We will use gender, race/ethnicity, and class as lenses through which to view various films. In order to do this we will not only read about the films to examine some authors' takes on films' role in the political process, but we will also immerse ourselves in different films to understand how they affect all of us. Therefore, as this is an online course, it will be your responsibility during this quarter to listen to the find and watch the assigned films on your own time and with analytical and critical eyes and ears. You will report back to the class with your observations each week. The exact requirements will be outlined below. I have made sure that the assigned movies are widely available at Blockbuster Entertainment so that you can check them out yourselves.

As stated above, there are two components to this course. However, instead of spending half the course focusing on movies' impacts on politics and the other half focusing on politics within films, we will instead play the two off of each other to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between the two. This link is what affects us daily and its examination deserves some worthy consideration.

This class should serve as a space to questions our assumptions about film's role in society as well as a new way of understanding film issues through a political perspective.

Some objectives of this course are:

- Students should understand key concepts and tensions in film studies;
- Students should be able to think critically about and through these concepts;
- Students should be able to re-examine some of their assumptions about film issues;
- Students should develop empathy for, and open-mindedness about, viewpoints different and sometimes opposite to their own.

Some of the strategies used to obtain these objectives are:

- Reaction journals used to facilitate inquiries into topics that are related to students' personal lives;
- Online discussions, projects and papers;
- Questions and responses to the reading;
- One midterm paper and a comprehensive final discussed below.

Course Requirements:

***Participation (10%):** The exchange of ideas is a vital element in a successful course. It is essential that you come to class prepared and ready to participate. This is a time intensive class. Since this is an online course and is based on discussions, your weekly participation is absolutely critical to your success in this class and to the success of your fellow students. If you don't attend online, you can't participate. You are expected to contribute your thoughts, reactions, questions and responses online.

***Questions and responses (10%):** One critical question from the day's reading should be posted on our class's website by Friday at midnight to be read by *all* students before the week is over. This question should be open ended and critical in nature, not "how many pages did we have to read last week?" or "What is the actor's name in the movie discussed by the author?" The responses should be a paragraph in length and your attempt at answering your classmates' questions. You will not get credit for "I agree" or "Good point" type of responses.

***Journal entries (10%):** These are your personal critical reactions to the films you are required to watch for the course. Use your own experiences to inform your reactions. They should be one page in length.

***One midterm paper (30%):** The midterm paper will be 4-5 pages in length. This is your opportunity to show me what you have learned thus far from our critical analyses of the films and readings. We will come up with the paper topic and format together as a class, (*but with my final approval*). Let's be creative and have some fun with it. This is your chance to impress me with your inventiveness during this project.

***Comprehensive final exam (40%):** This exam will be an in-person comprehensive exam given at Chaminade University on December 8, 2001. This will be the culmination of your course experience. If you are off-island, we will arrange a way for your exam to be proctored at your location.

Note: because the only ways to improve writing are to write a lot, read a lot, and both give and receive a lot of feedback on writing, this class will focus heavily on these three activities.

You will have an opportunity to rewrite your papers in a *timely* manner throughout the quarter (this means that you can't turn everything in on the last day). If you need assistance with your writing please come see me before the paper's due date.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Taking credit for someone else's work is a grave ethical offense. It is especially tempting to engage in this practice in an online setting, but *don't*. After reading your short journals and questions and responses throughout the quarter, I become quite proficient at discerning your writing from someone else's. If I do find that you are engaging in this practice, you will receive an "F" for that assignment and be placed on probation in my course, where I will keep a sharp eye on your further work. Therefore, please cite your sources in an appropriate way, (see the citation for the required text below as an example) and if you have any questions you can either ask me, refer to your library, or to any style manual you have available.

Required Reading:

Rosenbaum, Jonathan. 1997. *Movies As Politics*. University of California Press: Berekley, CA.

Class Films:

King Kong (Original 1933 Version)

Schindler's List

The Piano

Mississippi Masala

American History X

Wag the Dog

Charlie's Angels (film version)

Mulan

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Course Schedule:

This schedule is not set in stone. With class consensus, we can alter it to fit our needs.

Week 1: Images of Natives

Film: *King Kong (Original 1933 Version)*

Reading: p 1-33

Questions and Journals due by midnight on Friday, October 5.

Week 2: Hollywood's version of the Holocaust

Film: *Schindler's List*

Reading: p 35-65

Questions and Journals due by midnight on Friday, October 12

Week 3: Representation of sexuality

Film: *The Piano*

Reading: p 67-104

Questions and Journals due by midnight on Friday, October 19

Week 4: Portrayal of Race Relations

Film: *Mississippi Masala*

Reading: p 105-144

Questions and Journals due by midnight on Friday, October 26

POST MIDTERM QUESTIONS THIS WEEK

Week 5: Portrayal of Race Relations (con't)

Film: *American History X*

Reading: p 145-178

Questions and Journals due by midnight on Friday, November 2

MIDTERM PAPERS DUE

Week 6: War and the Hollywood machine

Film: *Wag the Dog*

Reading: p 179-219

Questions and Journals due by midnight on Friday, November 9

Week 7: Portrayal of Women in Film

Film: *Charlie's Angels (Film version)*

Reading: p 221-254

Questions and Journals due by midnight on Friday, November 16

Week 8: Portrayal of Women in Film (con't)

Film: *Mulan*

Reading: p 257-288

Questions and Journals due by midnight on Friday, November 23

Week 9: Third World Film

Film: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

Reading: p 291-343

Questions and Journals due by midnight on Friday, November 30

Week 10: Final Week

No Readings or films this week. Please use this time to review and study our course discussion archives so that you are ready for the final.

COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM - DECEMBER 8, 2001