Course Description

Motion pictures have captured, reimagined, and made American history. Films, videos, and television programs are historical documents that help construct cultures, identities, places, beliefs, fears, and power.

Working against a teleological approach to history, this course takes up and teaches a media archaeology methodology. With this method students are invited consider some of the most potent themes in 20th and 21st century American history through comparisons, juxtapositions, and continuities.

In this seminar, students will learn to analyze fiction and nonfiction moving pictures in the context of American social and cultural history. Prominent themes include, but are not limited to, the nuclear family, youth culture, queer politics, international conflict, domestic terrorism, and contemporary activist movements.

Expected Workload

For each class, you can expect three to four hours of preparation time (reading, watching the assigned screenings, getting notes and questions together, and attending to various pieces of course business). Allocating an additional two to three hours per week to work on assignments before deadlines is highly encouraged. Our time together in class will usually be broken into lecture, discussion, and group/classwork. There will also be weeks when we have skill workshops to review, revise, or practice different academic skills (such as writing, presenting, and interviewing) with each other.

Required Texts & Instructional Tools

There are no texts you are required to purchase for this course. All readings will be posted to Canvas and must be completed by the date they are listed on the syllabus.

We will use Canvas and Google Drive for storing class materials, uploading assignments, and posting grades. We will use Zoom for office hours and, as needed, for class meetings.
**Assignment & Grade Breakdown**

**Participation & Class Work**  
15%  
This area of assessment will be ongoing and is reflective of active engagement in course materials and your personal growth. You will receive informal feedback on your performance in this area via email in week 3.

**Primary Source Group Project**  
25%  
Annotated Dossier • 10% • July 18 @12p on Google Drive  
Presentation • 15% • July 18 in Class  
In groups of three, students will explore the reception of a film by audiences and/or critics at the time of its release. Using Yale’s online resources, which we will go over in class, students are expected to find three primary sources per group (we will devote class time to group work). Each individual or group (based on your working preferences) will write a 3-4 page (double-spaced) analysis that discusses what these sources tell us about the historical period during which the film was released. Primary sources should be submitted alongside your reflection. Examples will be given in class. A full assignment and rubric can be found on Canvas.

**Oral History Project**  
25%  
Research Question & Script • 5% • July 14 @9p on Canvas  
Interviews & Findings • 20% • July 28 @9p on Google Drive  
Each student will conduct 15-minute oral history interviews with three people. An interview can take place in person or over Zoom. Best standards and practices in addition to assignment expectations will be presented in lecture. The primary research question and script must receive approval before proceeding with interviews. Final deliverables will include audio recordings and a short reflection paper on research findings. A full assignment description and rubric can be found on Canvas.

**Final Research Paper**  
35%  
Research Proposal • 5% July 15 @9p on Canvas  
Identify a media text or phenomenon (an episode of television, a video game, a fan convention, you name it) you would like to research for the purposes of historical analysis. In no more than 1 double-spaced page, describe this text/experience and offer reasoning for why it warrants our consideration. Try to answer the following questions with a proposal: (1) What makes this media text interesting? (2) What does this text suggest about the context in which it was produced? (3) What does it tell us about the people who made it?  
Completed First Draft • 5% July 24 @9p on Canvas  
A first draft of the paper, totaling 1500-2000 words, will be graded on a credit/no credit basis and will receive thorough feedback for the student to consider and incorporate in the

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**Academic Integrity**

A University, by its nature, strives to foster and recognize originality of thought. Originality can only be recognized, however, when people acknowledge the sources of ideas or works that are not their own. Therefore, students must maintain the highest standards with regards to honesty, effort and performance. In the pursuit of knowledge and personal development, it is imperative that students present their own ideas and insights for evaluation, critique and eventual reformulation. As part of this process, each student must acknowledge the intellectual contribution of others... Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, falsification, unapproved collaboration, and destruction of library materials.

In short: when uncertain, ask; when in doubt, cite.

**Accessibility & Accommodations**

Yale values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, accurate assessment, or achievement, please notify me as soon as possible. Student requiring accommodations are also welcome to contact Student Accessibility Services to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in the course.
Grading Philosophy

When it comes to grading coursework, I value a student’s individual improvement most. As such, I hope you consider formal evaluation as preparation for the next assignment instead of a number that is up for negotiation or a firm indicator of what you bring to our experience as a group. If you have any questions or concerns about how your work has been assessed, please wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before contacting me about it. If you would like to receive feedback before submission, I can review outlines and thesis statements in office hours or by appointment.

Difficult Conversations with Developing Vocabularies

We are all coming into this class with different experiences, identities, and privileges. Since we will be spending our time discussing film and media, you can expect that we will be working through challenging depictions and concepts related to categories of social difference. I expect we will act as teachers for each other and I will consistently push us to consider the language we use to express our ideas while performing such labor. Should you encounter a moment when you feel you would like to redress the way an idea has been expressed, please do so with the respect you would like for yourself. Meanwhile, I am open to direct feedback on how I can help us build equitable, accessible, and inclusive conversations. Please feel free to offer that feedback in class, through email, or in office hours.

Assignment Guidelines

- Submissions must be proofread for grammatical and spelling errors—I suggest you both get a work partner and read your own work out loud to yourself.
- Submissions must be typed, double-spaced in 12-point serif font (Times, Georgia, Garamond, and Alegreya are all fine) with one-inch margins and page numbers.
- Submissions must meet the minimum word/page requirement and not exceed the limit by more than 25%.
- Submissions must be titled (a title page is not necessary).
- All papers must have a Works Cited page in either MLA or Chicago format. Refer to the OWL Purdue Writing Lab for guidance.

Grade Scale

A = Excellent (95-100%); A- (90-94.9%); B+ (87-89.9%); B = Good (83-86.9%); B- (80-82.9%); C+ (77-79.9%); C = Adequate (73-76.9%); C- (70-72.9%); D+ (67-69.9%); D = Unsatisfactory (63-66.9%); D- (60-62.9%); F = Failed

Late Submissions

Strive to maintain an open line of communication. The sooner I know you are having difficulties meeting deadlines, the easier it will be to make sure late submissions do not affect your grade. Send me an email so we can keep a written record of extension requests. Late submissions without a pre-approved extension will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for each day after the deadline.

Feedback Meetings • 5% July 29 over Zoom

Each student will meet with the instructor for a one-on-one meeting to discuss draft feedback and determine priorities for revisions ahead of final submission. This meeting should last about 10 minutes.

Final Submission • 20% • August 4 @9p on Canvas

The final research paper should be 1750-2250 words. It can and should make use of the information provided in previous project deliverables, but, ultimately, must offer a synthesis of research materials and provide further insight into the chosen media text/experience. Successful papers will have both a strong set of clearly defined research questions and a unique thesis statement. It is also highly encouraged to make use of relevant assigned readings from across the course. A full assignment description and rubric can be found on Canvas.
Class Format

This is an approximate schedule and will change slightly session-to-session based on what we have to cover. I value your time and am mindful of seminar fatigue, so we will never go past 4:15p and there will be two breaks per session.

1:00p Reminders, announcements, questions about assignments
1:10-2:10p Introduction to the day's screenings, main theme, and historical context
2:10-2:20p BREAK
2:20-3:20p EDT: Discussion
3:15-3:30p BREAK
3:30-4:15p Flex time that will be used differently each session. In the beginning of the semester, we will use it to go over library resources and to meet with small groups to work on the primary source project. In the last two weeks, we will use it to discuss the final projects, for peer-editing, and to give you independent time to work on your assignments.

Screenings

Films must be viewed independently, before the class for which they are assigned. Links to all of the assigned films are available on Canvas. You will need to use a Yale login or use VPN to access most of these films. Find more information about the Yale VPN here. Contact me if you have difficulty accessing any of the films.

Attendance

Please limit yourself to only one excused absence during the summer session. The bulk of our meetings is composed of class discussion and group work, so it is important that a) you are punctual and in attendance, b) you have read/written/watched what you were assigned to read/write/view, and c) you participate in class conversation and activities. In the event that you do miss a class, be sure to check with your classmates and review the syllabus to find out what you missed and what is due.

Academic Tutoring & Support

The Poorvu Center is offering summer tutoring and writing help. I strongly suggest setting up an appointment if you think you would benefit from extra help with any assignments for this course. You may schedule an appointment here.
Silence is Golden

Class 1 • 07.04

 Lecture
Introduction to Film and/as History

 Screenings
Clips and films to be screened in class

 Reading

Let’s Stick Together & Let’s Fall Apart

Class 2 • 07.06

 Lecture
Love & (Re)marriage: Looking Back to a Golden Age

 Screenings
*His Girl Friday* (dir. Howard Hawks, 1940)
*The One I Love* (dir. Charlie McDowell, 2014)

 Reading

Nuclear Bombs, Nuclear Families

Class 3 • 07.11

 Lecture
Defining Family in Nuclear (Age) Fallout

 Screenings
Twilight Zone, “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street” (1960)
*The Iron Giant* (dir. Brad Bird, 1999)

 Reading
Selections from Paul Boyer, *Bomb’s Early Light* (1985)
Selections from Lynn Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse* (2001)
Fight for Your Rights

Class 4 • 07.13

Lecture
Calling for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Screenings
Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill! (dir. Russ Meyer, 1965)
Do the Right Thing (dir. Spike Lee, 1989)

Reading
Selections from Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)

Movies after Midnight

Class 5 • 07.18

Group Presentations
For the Love of Midnight Movies

Screening
*Rocky Horror Picture Show* (dir. Jim Sharman, 1975)

Reading
Sconce, Jeffrey. “Movies: A Century of Failure” in *Sleaze Artists*

Hard Bodies, Hard Times

Class 6 • 07.20

Lecture
Living in Reagan’s Wake

Screenings
The *U* (dir. Billy Corben & Alfred Spellman, 2009)

Reading
We’re the Kids in America

Class 7 • 07.25

Lecture
Growing Up Suburban

Screenings
*The Breakfast Club* (dir. John Hughes, 1985)
The Real World, S1 E1, “This is the True Story…” (1992)
*Euphoria*, S1 E1 (2019)

Reading

Masculinity & Its Discontents

Class 8 • 07.27

Lecture
Boys at Home, Guys at Work, Men Online

Screenings
*Fight Club* (dir. David Fincher, 1999)
*FBoy Island*, S1 E1 (2021)

Reading
Selections from Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1990)
Selections from Jack Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (1998)

Queer Lives for Straight Eyes

Class 9 • 08.01

Lecture
Coming Out of America’s Closet

Screenings
*SOAP*, S1 E1 & E2 (1977)
*Queer as Folk*, S2 E3 (2002)
*Queer Eye*, S2 E1, “God Bless Gay” (2018)

Reading
Sontag, Susan. “Notes on Camp” (1965), pp. 1-13
Returning to Our Long Now

Class 10 • 08.03

Final Paper due Aug 4

Lecture
TBD

Screenings
Listening to Kenny G (dir. Penny Lane, 2021)

Reading
TBD