

**FILM S247/AMST S483/ HIST S187 • TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS, 9:00AM-12:15PM • HQ TBD**

# **FILM, VIDEO, & AMERICAN HISTORY**

**M. STANG • MELINDA.STANG@YALE.EDU • ZOOM OFFICE HOURS**

Screens large and small have projected, reimagined, and made U.S. history. This course will examine axes of social difference with a media archaeology methodology. With this approach, students will consider 20th and 21st-century U.S. history through comparisons, juxtapositions, and continuities between mediated representations of America's racially, ethnically, and economically marginalized. In this seminar, students will learn to use film, television, and other mass entertainments as historical documentation that can illuminate the social and cultural history of American domesticity, youth (sub)cultures, racial formations, migration, indigeneity, and activist movements.

## **PROJECTED WORKLOAD**

For each class session, you can expect about three to four hours of preparation time (reading, watching the assigned screenings, gathering notes and questions for discussions and attending to other bits of course business). Plan to allocate an additional three to four hours per week to work on assignments before deadlines. Our time together in class will be broken into lecture, small discussion groups, and skill workshops or group work. Furthermore, there will be a handful of extra credit opportunities across the term that may fit into your workload.

## **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. There is a small handful of films you may wish to rent via YouTube or Amazon for convenience.

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.

## **ASSIGNMENTS & 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 in week 3 either over email or in office hours.

### **SYLLABUS ANNOTATION • 5% • DUE BY END OF CLASS ONE**

You will carefully read and annotate the course syllabus. Your annotations should highlight key information, such as important dates, course policies, grading criteria, and major assignments. Additionally, you should add comments or questions that reflect your understanding of the syllabus and any clarifications you may need. You can expect follow-up to your annotations during class two. Graded credit/no credit.

### **PRIMARY SOURCE GROUP PROJECT • 20% • UNIQUE DUE DATES FOR DOSSIER & PRESENTATION**

In groups of three, students will be assigned one of our assigned films. They will watch together and then explore its reception by audiences and/or critics at the time of its release. To build a primary source dossier, groups will find at least six primary sources per group. Each individual will annotate two sources and write a one-page analysis that discusses what their two sources tells us about the film's historical context. Groups will then present their findings to the class in a 10-15 minute presentation. You can expect grades and feedback on the full group project within one week.

### **ORAL HISTORY PROJECT • 25% • SCRIPT (5%) DUE WEEK 2 & FINAL (20%) DUE WEEK 4**

Each student will conduct 15-minute oral history interviews with three people. 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. You can expect grades and feedback within 72 hours on your script and feedback on your completed project within one week.

## QUIZZES • 15% • COMPLETED EACH CLASS SESSION

To support your engagement with the course materials, there will be a reading quiz at the beginning of each class session, with the exception of the first and last days of the term. These quizzes are designed to assess your comprehension of the assigned readings and/or screenings due for that day. Each quiz will consist of 3 to 6 questions, which may include multiple choice and short answer formats. The quizzes are intended to be brief and focused, taking no more than 15 minutes of class time. To account for occasional absences or off days, only your top five quiz scores will be counted toward your final grade. Additionally, some quizzes will offer extra credit opportunities, allowing you to potentially boost your overall score. In sum: Keeping up with the readings and screenings will not only help you succeed on the quizzes, but will also prepare you for deeper in-class discussions and assignments.

## FINAL EXAM • 25% • LAST CLASS SESSION

The final exam will take place during the last 90 minutes of our final class session. This cumulative assessment is designed to evaluate your understanding and critical engagement with the key themes, concepts, and materials we've explored throughout the course. The exam will include three components: 1. Key Term Identifications: You'll define and explain the significance of key terms or concepts from the course. 2. Short Answer Questions: These will require concise, thoughtful responses that demonstrate your comprehension of major ideas or texts. 3. Essay Questions: You will choose from a set of prompts and write a longer response that synthesizes course materials and presents a clear argument. To support your success on the final, we'll engage in a collaborative process to produce a class study guide, and there will be opportunities for additional study sessions leading up to the exam.

## BASIC SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions must be proofread for grammatical and spelling errors—I suggest you both get a work partner, read your own work out loud to yourself, and make use of the writing center's resources. 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 if in doubt). Please upload all written work in PDF format.

## LATE SUBMISSIONS

In the summer session, we are on an extremely tight schedule. Given the accelerated nature of the course, extensions with a grade penalty will not exceed 72 hours. 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.

## 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

## 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.

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## EMAILS

Email is the preferred method to contact me, but I only check and respond to email at certain hours of the day. For instance, an email sent at 2:00 AM will not necessarily receive a response first thing in the morning. It will often take 24 hours to respond to emails. If you do not receive a response within 48 hours, then please resend your email. Email is best for administrative and procedural queries whereas office hours is best for refining written assignments or discussing course content.

## CHOSEN NAMES & PREFERRED PRONOUNS

Some members of the Yale community—myself included—are known by names and/or are referred to by pronouns that are different from their assigned or legal identity. Students who wish to be identified by a chosen name can inform me in person or via email about their chosen names and preferred pronouns. When interacting in class, please use chosen names and preferred pronouns when interacting with me and your peers.

## ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMMODATIONS

Because we all learn differently, we each have unique needs to work within a university's institutionalized structure. While there are requirements for this course that cannot be negotiated (such as the final exam), there are ways to accommodate a range of needs in how we approach those requirements. If you have established accommodations with the Resource Office on Disabilities, and have a letter from that office confirming accommodations, please send this letter to me as soon as possible. Formalized accommodations are an essential tool in offering flexibility within inflexible situations, but I also know they are not a solution in everyone's case. I invite open, individualized conversations that do not require making disclosures about your personal health in order to address any structural inequities within the class's learning mode. These conversations can ensure both the course and its assignments offer as many opportunities for accessible learning experiences as possible.

## DEVELOPING VOCABULARIES

We are all coming into this class with different experiences, identities, and privileges. Since we will be spending our time discussing contemporary media, you can expect that we will be working through challenging depictions and concepts related to race, gender, class, sexuality, and other categories of social difference. I am dedicated to anti-racist, feminist pedagogy. What does my pedagogical approach mean for you as a student in my class? In short: 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.

## DIFFICULT DEPICTIONS

This class will rely on contemporary media examples in order to make its topics relevant to our shared experiences. Given the immediacy of our materials, we may encounter images and topics to which you may have an unexpected and/or negative reaction in the course of our discussion. Because I cannot anticipate how each student may or may not be affected, content warnings will only be used when we may encounter depictions of extreme graphic violence—which will be few and far between. You are always welcome to look away or take a step out of the room. We will have a sustained conversation about content warnings and our engagement with them in our second class meeting. Should you have questions before, during, or after this conversation, please do not hesitate to speak with me.

## 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.

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## COURSE FORMAT

We will use the same approximate schedule each session, but everything is subject to 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 12:15p and there will be two breaks per session.

**9:00AM** · Announcements

**9:10-10:10AM** · Lecture

**10:10-10:20AM** · Group Presentations

**10:20-10:30AM** · Break

**10:30-11:20AM** · Discussion Groups

**11:20-11:30AM** · Break

**11:30AM-12:15PM** · Flex time for projects

## DISCUSSION GROUPS & TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Our course may have enough enrollment that we are joined by teaching assistant. For the purposes of more conducive discussions, you will be assigned to smaller groups that will either meet with myself or a TA each class. TAs and I will be evenly splitting grading responsibilities. If you have any questions about how your work has been evaluated, please confer with the person who graded your work (which may not be me)!

## ATTENDANCE

Please limit yourself to only one formally 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. For each unexcused absence, your participation will be lowered by 1/3 of a letter grade.

## DEFINING GOOD PARTICIPATION

Active and meaningful participation is a crucial part of our course. Participation is not an "easy A." I expect you to engage in classroom discussions in a way that contributes to a collective learning experience. This participation can take various forms, and I recognize that speaking up in class may not always be the most comfortable or effective everyone. Participation can include: (1) Adding to discussions by sharing thoughtful questions or responses when appropriate; (2) Actively listening and taking notes during class, free from the distraction of personal tech devices; (3) Preparing for class by taking notes on the assigned readings and being ready to discuss them; and (4) Engaging with the material through other means, such as keeping a reflection journal or visiting me during office hours to further explore ideas discussed in class. In sum, *exceptional participation* is marked by consistent preparation, insightful contributions, and active listening in every class meeting.

## SCREENINGS

Films must be viewed independently, before the class for which they are assigned. The course schedule indicates the streaming services where you can find the screenings. Links to most of the assigned films are available on Canvas. You will need to use a Yale login or use VPN to access most of our films. Find more information about the Yale VPN [here](#). In some rare cases, you may have to use a trial subscription or rent a film for convenience (rental costs do not exceed a total of \$20 if you choose this route). All assigned screenings are held on course reserve in the film library and available to you at no additional cost. Contact me if you have difficulty accessing any of the films.

## TUTORING & ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

The Poorvu Center is offering summer tutoring and writing help. Because there are so many of you and only a limited number of teaching staff for this course, you will get the most hands-on guidance from Poorvu about outlines, revisions, and other tasks. 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](#).

# THE COURSE SCHEDULE

## READINGS • SCREENINGS • DUE DATES

### CLASS 1 • MAY 27

#### THIS IS AMERICA: WHERE SILENCE IS GOLDEN

##### READ

- Gunning, Tom. "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)Credulous Spectator" (1989), pp. 115-133
- Fukuyama, Francis. "The End of History?" (1989), pp. 3-18

##### WATCH

- All clips and films will be screened in class

##### DO

- Submit syllabus annotation by the end of the day on Canvas.
- Review assignment expectations for the Primary Source Group Project and Oral History Project. Prepare questions to ask in the next class.

### CLASS 2 • MAY 29

#### THE GREAT DEPRESSION: FORGOTTEN MEN & FALLEN WOMEN

##### READ

- Jacobs, Lea. "Glamour and Gold Diggers" in *The Wages of Sin* (1997).
- TBD

##### WATCH

- *My Man Godfrey* (dir. Gregory La Cava, 1936) Canvas
- *Carnivale*, Season 1, Episode 1 (HBO, 2003) HBOMax

##### DO

- Sign up for group presentations.
- Clarify any points of confusion about upcoming assignments.
- Start working on Oral History project script.

### CLASS 3 • JUNE 3

#### RE-DEFINING FAMILY IN NUCLEAR (AGE) FALLOUT

##### READ

- Boyer, Paul. "Introduction" and "Psychological Fallout" in *By Bomb's Early Light* (1985), pp. xv-xx; 275-287
- Spigel, Lynn. "Suburban Home Companion" in *Welcome to the Dreamhouse* (2001), pp. 31-44; 52-55

##### WATCH

- *The Iron Giant* (dir. Brad Bird, 1999), HBOMax
- *Doomsday Preppers*, Season 2, Episode 4 (NatGeo, 2012), Linked on Canvas

##### DO

- Submit oral history project script.
- Expect feedback, and schedule an office hours appointment for additional support.

## CLASS 4 • JUNE 5

### ON THE MODEL MINORITY: POST-WAR ASIAN AMERICAN ASSIMILATION

#### READ

- Cho, Esther Yoona. "A Double Bind—'Model Minority' and 'Illegal Alien'" (2017)
- TBD

#### WATCH

- *The Joy Luck Club* (dir. Wayne Wang, 1993), Canvas or Amazon Rental
- *All-American Girl*, Season 1, Episode 1 (ABC, 1994), YouTube link on Canvas

#### DO

- Begin conducting oral history interviews after script approval.
- Prepare an outline or rough draft of the reflection paper over the weekend in the event you would like to get advanced feedback.

## CLASS 5 • JUNE 10

### THE LONG CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

#### READ

- Didion, Joan. "The Women's Movement" (1972)
- Wickham, Kathleen. "The Magnifying Effect of Television News: Civil Rights Coverage and Eyes on the Prize."
- bell, hooks. "Eating the Other: Desire & Resistance" (1992)

#### WATCH

- *The World, The Flesh, and The Devil* (dir. Ronald MacDougall, 1959), Canvas
- Selections from *The Dick Cavett Show (1968-1986)*, YouTube Links on Canvas

#### DO

- Keep working on your oral history project to prepare for final submission.
- Ask for help if you need help.
- Stay on top of regular expectations despite the assignment
- Respond to feedback from your mid-term participation evaluation.

## CLASS 6 • JUNE 12

### THE VIETNAM WAR: NEW JOURNALISM, NEW HOLLYWOOD, COUNTERCULTURE

#### READ

- Wood, Robin. "Normality and Monsters" (1986); Richard Dyer, "White" (1988)
- Selections from Joan Didion, *The White Album* (1979)
- TBD from *Easy Rider*, *Raging Bulls*

#### WATCH

- *Dawn of the Dead* (dir. George Romero, 1978), Canvas
- TBD from *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*

#### DO

- Submit oral history project materials by 5p on June 16.
- Take a deep breath.
- Turn your sights on the final paper.
- Start researching potential final paper topics over the weekend.

## CLASS 7 • JUNE 17

### BEYOND RESERVATIONS: THE LONG FIGHT FOR NATIVE SOVEREIGNTY

#### READ

- selections from Daniel M. Cobb, *Say We Are Nations* (2015).
- TBD

#### WATCH

- F\*ckin' Rez Dogs," *Reservation Dogs* (2021)
- "Native American Activists Occupy Alcatraz," Drunk History (2019, YouTube)

#### DO

- Submit final paper proposal by 5p on June 18
- Sign up for feedback meeting slots
- Continue working on your project so you have deeper thoughts to bring to the meeting.

## CLASS 8 • JUNE 19

### HARD BODIES, HARD TIMES IN REAGAN'S WAKE

#### READ

- Gray, Herman. "Reaganism and the Sign of Blackness" (1995)
- Fear, David. "Make My Day: J. Hoberman on Regan, Rambo, and '80s Movies" (2019)

#### WATCH

- *The U* (dir. Billy Corben & Alfred Spellman, 2009), ESPN or Amazon
- *The Americans*, Season 1, Episode 1 (2013, FX), Netflix

#### DO

- Complete your feedback meeting by 5p on June 20.
- Use the weekend to conduct research and start outlining your paper.

## CLASS 9 • JUNE 24

### CHRISTIANITY & ITS DISCONTENTS

#### READ

- Jason Bivins, "Scary Jesus" in *Religion of Fear* (2008), pp. 3-22
- Selections from Kathryn Lofton, *Consuming Religion* (2016)

#### WATCH

- *First Reformed* (dir. Paul Schrader, 2017) - Library/Rental!
- *God is the Bigger Elvis* (dir. Rebecca Camisa, 2012) - HBOMax

#### DO

- Bring any questions or concerns about your final exam to class.
- Schedule office hours to address lingering concerns.
- Start building a collaborative study guide.

## CLASS 10 • JUNE 26

### BEING HEARD: THE AMERICAN COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

#### READ

- Selections from Lauren Berlant's *Cruel Optimism*
- David Foster Wallace's Commencement Speech to Kenyon College (2005)

#### WATCH

- *Shiva Baby* (dir. Emma Seligman, 2021), HBOMax
- *The Chair*, Season 1, Episode 1, (Netflix, 2021)

#### DO

- Study for the final exam!
- Ensure you have received all feedback and grades minus the final exam and final participation.
- Be sure to say farewell to the course and to your peers.

**PLEASE SUBMIT ALL OUTSTANDING ASSIGNMENTS BY 5:00PM ON JUNE 28th**