

FILM 390 – 501 & 510 – Black Film Studies

Tues – 1:30-4:45pm

Location: CDM Center, 708

Prof. Raphael Nash

Office hours: Tues - Noon-1:30pm, 14 EAS 200B, Online by appt.

Rnash3@cdm.depaul.edu

Course Description

This course will explore the history of films featuring, produced, written, and/or directed by African-American men and women. We will trace several eras of African American film production – from the early 20th century, to present day. Specifically, we will explore Minstrel, Race Film, Blaxploitation, Black New Wave, and Contemporary eras of African American Cinema. We will explore patterns of African American representation and its relationship to American Popular Culture. Our goal will be to analyze the various movements in African American Cinema, as they relate to moments in American history, and how cinema has been an effective complimentary and often reactionary tool.

Course Work

Homework will consist of written responses to book chapters, articles, films, and online material. Assignments will be posted to our class blackboard.

Quizzes will cover terminology and historical facts related to our topics.

Mid-term will be an outline of your research project's topic.

Final Research Project will consist of extensive research on a particular mode of representation, and/or movement in African American film. Projects may be:

- 3-5 Min Video Presentation
- 20 Slide PowerPoint Presentation
- 5 Page Essay

Course Management System – D2L

Required Textbook

Donald Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks*, 5th Edition.

ISBN: 9780826429537

<https://www.amazon.com/Toms-Coons-Mulattoes-Mammies-Bucks/dp/082642953X>

On Writing Papers for the Course

Length:

Single-spaced typed pages, with 1-inch margins on all sides.

Citation:

All papers should be referenced properly, and a reference page/bibliography included at the end of the paper. If you cite a source or use a quotation, document the source (e.g., with a parenthetical citation). APA style is recommended.

Grammar/Spelling/Punctuation:

Be sure your paper is “clean” with regard to grammar, spelling and punctuation errors.

Course Policies

- Attendance and class participation is mandatory
- Late assignments will not be accepted without permission

Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

Grading

Writing Assignments: 25%

Quizzes: 30%

Mid-Term: 10%

Final: 25%

In-Class and Online Participation: 10%

This is a fast-paced course that will cover a lot of ground in 10 weeks. Therefore, your regular and engaged attendance is critical. Students are expected to attend all film screenings, participate in class discussion, and complete all assignments.

Class Schedule

Week 1: "Birthing Entertainment"

The History of American Entertainment.

- Class overview and student introductions.
- Screening and Discussion (Video Shorts):
 - o Minstrelsy, Civil War, and Reconstruction
- Homework:
 - o Listen to episodes 1-3 of 1619 Podcast
 - o Read Introduction and Ch. 1 of Bogle (*Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks*)

Week 2: "Holly-wouldn't"

Early Black American representation in Cinema.

- In-class group activity
- Screening and discussion:
 - o "Classified X", Melvin Van Peebles
- Homework:
 - o Read Ch. 2-3 of Bogle
 - o Read: Week 2.pdf text & linked articles
 - o Writing Assignment #1

Week 3: "Towards Uncivil Rights"

From Race Films to Civil Rights.

- Screening and discussion of clips:
 - o "Oscar Micheaux: The Czar of Black Hollywood", Bayer L. Mack
 - o "The Emperor Jones", "Stormy Weather", "Cabin in the Sky", "Song of the South"
 - o "Carmen Jones", Otto Preminger
 - o "Ethnic Notions", Marlon Riggs
- Homework:
 - o Read: Ch. 5 of Bogle
 - o Read: Week 3.pdf text & linked articles
 - o Quiz #1

Week 4: "Towards Uncivil Rights pt. 1"

From Civil Rights to Blaxploitation era.

- Screening and discussion, clips from:
 - o "Sidney", Reginald Hudlin
 - o "Sing Your Song", Susanne Rostock
 - o "They've Got to Have Us", Simon Fredrick
- Homework:
 - o Read Ch. 6 of Bogle

Week 5: “Towards Uncivil Rights pt. 2”

From Civil Rights to Blaxploitation era.

- Screening and Discussion:
 - “Is the Black Enough for You?!?”, Elvis Mitchell
 - “Baadasssss Cinema”, Isaac Julien
- Homework:
 - Read Ch. 8 of Bogle
 - Writing Assignment #2

Week 6: “Black New Wave”

The Black Independents Return

- Screening and discussion, clips from:
 - “She’s Gotta Have It”, Spike Lee
 - “Hollywood Shuffle”, Robert Townsend
- Homework:
 - Read Ch. 10 of Bogle
 - Mid-term Prep
 - Watch: “Do The Right Thing”, Spike Lee
 - Quiz #2

Week 7: “The Almighty Hood Film”

Hip-Hop Culture Arrives

- Screening and discussion:
 - “Boyz in the Hood”, John Singleton
- Additional Selections:
 - “New Jack City”, Mario Van Peebles
 - “Juice”, Ernest Dickerson
 - “Clockers”, Spike Lee
 - “Belly”, Hype Williams
 - “Bamboozled”, Spike Lee
- Homework:
 - Read Selections in Ch. 10 of Bogle
 - Writing Assignment #3

Week 8: “Black Love & Romance”

Aspirational Black Life

- Screening and discussion:
 - “Love Jones”, Theodore Witcher
 - “Soul Food”, George Tillman Jr.
 - “The Best Man”, Malcolm D. Lee
- Homework:
 - Read Selections in Ch. 10 of Bogle
 - Writing Assignment #4

Week 9: “Contemporary Independence”

Home-grown Black Film Networks

- Screening and discussion:
 - o “Middle of Nowhere”, Ava Duvernay
 - o “Medicine for Melancholy”, Barry Jenkins
 - o “Selma”, Ava Duvernay
 - o “Moonlight”, Barry Jenkins
- Homework:
 - o Quiz #3

Week 10: “Where are we now?”

2020 and Beyond

- Screenings TBD
- Writing Assignment #5

Final Exam Day – NO EXAM, PROJECTS PRESENTED

March 21st, 11:30-2pm

Online Course Evaluations

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student’s identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#).

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

Academic Policies

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment,

withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment.

Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: csd@depaul.edu.

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296

COVID-19 Health and Safety Precautions

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

Name & Gender Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this information early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>