HU422: Topics in Communication
Film and Political Representation
Spring 2000
Monday 7:05-9:35 PM
Walker 134

Professor:
Dr. Mehdi Semati
331 Walker
Office Hours T 11-1 and by appointment
Phone 487-3251
email msemati@mtu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
As a “Topics in Communication” course, addressing a selected issue in the study of communication, this class addresses political representation and cinema. In order to manage the scope of this topic, it addresses contemporary popular Hollywood films (post cold-war era) which depict a particular political issue (international terrorism). While the disciplinary emphasis in this class is that of Communication, the insights of Film Theory and Cultural Studies are utilized to address the following questions:

Theoretical:
- What is the relationship between politics and popular culture?
- What is the relationship between politics and Hollywood films?
- What is “popular” cinema?
- What is a “genre”?

Empirical:
- What do Hollywood films tell us about international terrorism today?
- What is the relationship between recent acts of political violence and the representation of terrorism in popular films?
- What is the predominant cold-war political imagery?
- What is the predominant post-cold war political imagery?
- What do popular films tell us about the cultural and political contexts of their emergence in the post-cold war era?

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
- Expose students to the study of film as a scholarly inquiry
- Introduce theoretical and methodological frameworks for the study of film from Communication, Communication and Film Theory, Communication and Cultural Studies
- Conduct an examination of a number of major Hollywood films from 70s, 80s, and 90s
- Conduct an exploration of the relationship between some recent acts of political violence and those films
- Engage students in scholarly writing and reading about films
REQUIRED READING:


COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

- Students are required to take five quizzes/short papers (questions on these quizzes address different issues form the readings for the class).
- Students are required to take a final exam.
- Students are required to participate in class discussion.
- Students are required to provide analyses/feedback of films.
- Students are required to screen the films selected for the class.
- Students are required to attend all class meetings.

GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quizzes/papers (5)</th>
<th>50%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Participation/feedback</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Grading Scale:

- 91-100 A 89-90 AB
- 81-88 B 79-80 BC
- 71-78 C 69-70 CD
- 61-68 D

NOTE:

* “MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education and services at MTU, please call Associate Dean of Students Gloria Melton at 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head/chair, or the Affirmative Action Office at 487-3310.”

* I may have to introduce changes to the schedule and other matters for the benefit of the class. Feel free to stop by my office to express any concern you might have regarding any aspects of the class. Your feedback is always appreciated.
**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>Introduction; Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>Screening/discussion; <em>Prince’s Introduction</em> (pp. 1-13)</td>
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<td>March 20</td>
<td>Screening/discussion; <em>Chapter 1</em> (pp. 15-48)</td>
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<td>March 27</td>
<td>Screening/discussion; <em>Chapter 1 continue</em></td>
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<td>April 3</td>
<td>Screening/discussion; <em>Chapter 2</em> (pp. 49-80)</td>
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<td>April 10</td>
<td>Screening/discussion; <em>Chapter 3</em> (pp. 81-113)</td>
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<td>April 17</td>
<td>Screening/discussion; <em>Chapter 4</em> (pp. 115-153)</td>
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<td>April 24</td>
<td>Screening/discussion; <em>Chapter 5</em> (pp. 155-189)</td>
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<td>May 1</td>
<td>Screening/discussion; “Afterword” (pp. 191-198)</td>
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<td>May 8</td>
<td>Screening/discussion; review</td>
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**Final Exam: Date and Place TBA**