

American Studies 274gm: Exploring Ethnicity through Film [Updated]

Fall 2014 Lecture 10390R T/TH 12:30-1:50PM THH 101

Professor: **Lanita Jacobs**

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Office Hours: T/TH 10-10:50AM; also by appt. You can also contact me Monday-Friday via email.

Required Texts:

1. AMST 274 Reader. [This text is abbreviated RDR in the reading schedule.]
2. Corrigan, Timothy and Patricia White. 2012. *The Film Experience: An Introduction* (3rd Edition). New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.
3. Cornell, Stephen E. and Douglas Hartmann. 2007. *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World* (2nd Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Highly Recommended Texts:

4. Bell, Inge and Bernard McGrane. 1999. *This Book Is Not Required: An Emotional Survival Manual For Students*. London: Pine Forge Press.
5. Corrigan, Timothy. 2011. *Short Guide to Writing about Film* (8th Edition). London: Longman.
6. Zinsser, William. 2001. *On Writing Well* (6th Edition). New York: HarperCollins Publishers. (*Though optional, this text is highly recommended as an additional resource for your essay and writing in general*)

Course Description: This course explores the complexities of race/ethnicity in and beyond America through analyses of films. We shall ask such questions as: What is ethnicity? How is ethnicity shaped, or how does one “become” ethnic?, How is ethnicity actualized and/or performed?, What is at stake in claims and visual representations about ethnicity; what politics surround ethnic representations and performances?, Can there be an “authentic” ethnicity?, and, finally, How are such complexities reflected and/or constructed in film? Towards these ends, the initial weeks of the semester will be devoted to developing a critical vocabulary for speaking about race/ethnicity. We will also (continuously) hone our visual literacy by looking at the ways notions of ethnicity are privileged, constructed, and contested in film via such techniques as editing, sound, lighting, narration, etc. This middle of the course will focus on case studies in film that illuminate the complexities of ethnicity, nationhood, and diasporic affinities in relation to specific American ethnic groups. The latter weeks of the course will explore broader complexities of ethnicity, such as ethnic hybridity and inter-ethnic relations encompassing political conflict, interracial love and identity, and residential strife. This course fulfills requirements for both the Core Literacy in *Social Analysis (GE-C)* and *Global Perspective – Citizenship in a Global Era (GE-G)*,

Grading: There will be a midterm and final exam covering assigned readings, films, and guest speakers. The midterm is worth 25% (25 points) and the final exam is worth 40% (40 points) of your overall grade. Each of the exams will include short-answer and essay questions and will be non-cumulative. In addition, 10% (10 points) of your grade will be determined by your participation. As such, you are strongly encouraged to be punctual and stay abreast of assigned readings so that you are adequately prepared to participate in class discussions. The remaining 25% (25 points) of your grade will be determined by a 5-7 page essay (excluding bibliography of 3-5 sources) due in the front office of American Studies & Ethnicity Department in KAP 462 by 5PM on **Thursday, November 13th**. All essays **must adhere** to the following format: double-spaced, 12 point-font, 1” top, bottom, right, and left margins, pages numbered consecutively in upper right hand corner. (Additional guidelines for papers will be posted in Blackboard.) A total of 4 extra-credit points can be earned on the midterm and final exam via a two-point bonus questions based primarily on “optional” readings. The grading scale is as follows:

REMINDER: *in RDR* = In AMST 274 Reader, *Cornell & Hartmann* = Ethnicity and Race, *Corrigan & White*: The Film Experience, TBA = To be announced

Grading Scale:

94-100 = A	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+	≥ 59 = F
90-93 = A-	84-86 = B	74-76 = C	64-66 = D	
	80-83 = B-	70-73 = C-	60-63 = D-	

GRADE BASIS
Midterm: 25%
Essay: 25%
Final Exam: 40%
Participation: 10%

An Official Note on Examinations: Make-up exams will only be given under extraordinary circumstances and will require documentation from a physician. The content and form of any make-up exam will be at my discretion. In any case, you should inform me via email or phone prior to missing an exam. If you feel you must reschedule an exam on account of having (a) two additional exams scheduled at the same time or (b) three exams in a 24-hour period, inform me *at least* two weeks prior to our scheduled mid-term. The final exam **must** be taken at the time noted below. **Also, late essays will only be accepted in exceptional cases and will be deducted a minimum of 3 points.**

Attendance: A grading percentage will not be given for lecture attendance. However, consistent and punctual attendance in seminar is strongly encouraged to increase your understanding of course materials. Your record of attendance may also be considered in the case of borderline grades. It is ultimately *your* responsibility to be aware of class lectures and assignments. Should sickness, family emergencies, or other events necessitate your absence from class, I recommend that you consult your peers for lecture notes.

Class Dynamics: Class meetings will consist of lecture and discussion, with a clear emphasis on the latter. As such, it is essential that you keep up with the weekly readings and that you submit assignments on time. I also welcome you to actively participate in class by asking questions and sharing your perspectives and personal experiences as they relate to the course. Please also be aware that this course does not seek to rehearse a comprehensive history of American ethnicities, nor does it encompass all ethnic groups in America. Instead, this course seeks to explore the socially constructed nature of ethnicity and the socio-political implications of race/ethnicity in the everyday through an analysis of film.

Class Resources: Resources for this course are available through Blackboard. Consult ANTH 274 in Blackboard for access to the course syllabus, grades, essay guidelines, announcements, mock essay and short answer questions, exam study guides, and other helpful information. The optional readings for this course are also highly recommended. Zinsser's accessible and extremely helpful book (*On Writing Well*) and Corrigan's book (Short Guide to Writing about Film) – as well as Corrigan & White's Chapter 14 (Writing a Film Essay) – are useful guides for your film essay. Inge Bell and Bernard McGrane's book (*This Book is Not Required*) is useful for both writing and navigating life as a student. (I wish I could have read their text as an undergraduate). Consider adding their and Zinsser's text to your library and read them at your leisure.

Discussion Sections: The teaching assistants for this course are **Jih-Fei Cheng** (jihfeich@usc.edu), **Haven Perez** (havenper@usc.edu), and **Jennifer Tran** (jennifkt@usc.edu). Disc 10391R meets on Th 4-4:50PM in THH 108; Disc 10397R meets on T 3-3:50PM in VKC 155; Disc 10392R meets on F 9-9:50AM in KAP 165; Disc 10393R meets on F 11-11:50AM in KAP 134; Disc 10394R meets on T 4-4:50PM in SGM 226; Disc 10395R meets on F 10-10:50AM in KAP 165; Disc 10396R meets on F 1-1:50PM in GFS 221; and Disc 10398R meets on TH 3-3:50PM in WPH 107. As you know, discussion section enrollment is based on a first-enroll-first-serve basis. As such, you must attend the discussion section in which you are enrolled.

Students with Disabilities: Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability should register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when necessary documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible, preferably by or before fifth week. DSP is located in Student Union (STU) 201 and is open from 8:30AM-5PM, Monday through Friday. Their contact information is as follows: 213-740-0776 (Phone), 213-740- 6948 (TDD Only), 213-740-8216 (Fax); Email: ability@usc.edu; and Webpage: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html

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Academic Integrity: USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General Principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, The Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/> Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: [http://usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/Information on intellectual property at USC is available at: http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html](http://usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/Information%20on%20intellectual%20property%20at%20USC%20is%20available%20at%20http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html)

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in Crisis: In case of emergency, when travel to campus is difficult, if not impossible, USC executive leadership will announce a digital way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of the Blackboard LMS (Learning Management System), teleconferencing, and other technologies. Instructors should be prepared to assign students a "Plan B" project that can be completed 'at a distance.' For additional information about maintaining your classes in an emergency, please access: <http://cst.usc.edu/services/emergencyprep.html>

READING & EXAM SCHEDULE

TOWARDS A CRITICAL LITERACY OF ETHNICITY AND FILM

- Week 1:** COURSE INTRODUCTION, QUESTIONS OF ETHNICITY: *What is race and/or ethnicity? How can race/ethnicity be understood?*
 8/25
 8/27
- Cornell & Hartmann: Chapters 1-2
 - Film: *Understanding Race (1999)*
- Week 2:** VIEWING ETHNICITY IN FILM: *How do we "read" films critically? How do films "speak" to questions of ethnicity/race across local and global contexts?*
 9/2 **No class**
 9/4
- Corrigan & White: Introduction (Studying Film: Culture, Practice, Experience)
 - Corrigan & White: Chapter 1 (Encountering Film: From Preproduction to Exhibition)
 - Corrigan & White: Chapter 2 (Exploring a Material World: Mise-en-Scène)
 - Film/Clips: TBA
- Week 3:** SPEAKING OF ETHNICITY AND FILM: *How do we "read" films critically? How do films "inflect" ethnicity/race? What do we make of viewer responses to films? Most importantly, can we speak honestly about race/ethnicity in film? What issues emerge during frank and informed discussion?*
 9/9
 9/11
- Cornell & Hartman: Chapters 3
 - Connolly: What's In a Name (in RDR)
 - Films/Clips: *In Whose Honor (1997)*

ETHNICITY IN AMERICA: CASE STUDIES IN FILM

- Week 4:** INDIGENOUS AMERICANS: *Self-definition/Critique, Representation, Appropriation*
 9/16
 9/18
- Price: Laughing without Reservation (in RDR)
 - Root: "White Indians": Appropriation and the Politics of Display (in RDR)
 - Films/Clips: *Dances with Wolves (1990)*
- Week 5:** AFRICAN AMERICANS: *Racial Authenticity, Sexuality, Representation*
 9/23
 9/25

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- Cornell & Hartmann: Case Studies in Identity Construction: Case 1 (pg. 107-119)
- Cornell & Hartmann: Chapter 4
- Hall: What is the “Black” in Black Popular Culture (in RDR)
- Jackson: A Little Black Magic (in RDR)
- Film: *Black Is ... Black Ain't (1994)*

Week 6: African Americans (Continued)

9/30

- Readings: To be announced (TBA)

10/2 Midterm

- Film/Clips: TBA

Week 7: EUROPEAN AMERICANS: *Race, Assimilation, “Whiteness”*

10/7

- Cornell & Hartmann: Chapter 6

10/9

- Cornell & Hartmann: Case Studies in Identity Construction: Case 3 (pgs. 126-136)
- Corrigan & White: Chapter 9 (Rituals, Conventions, Archetypes, and Formulas: Movie Genres)
- Kendall: Understanding White Privilege (*Optional*; in RDR)
- Waters: The Costs of a Costless Community (in RDR)
- *Film/Clips: Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible (2006), other clips TBA*

Week 8: JEWISH AMERICANS: *Migration, Assimilation, (American) Identity*

10/14

- Corrigan & White: Chapter 5 (Listening to Cinema: Film Sound)

10/16

- Corrigan & White: Chapter 6 (Telling Stories: Narrative Films) – *Optional*
- Brodtkin: A Whiteness of Our Own (in RDR)
- Brodtkin: Race Making (*Optional*; in RDR)
- Film/Clips: *The Jazz Singer (1927)*

Week 9: ARAB AMERICANS: *National Identity, Assimilation, Gender, 9/11*

10/21

- Cornell & Hartmann: Chapter 7

10/23

- Ansary: An Afghan-American Speaks (in RDR)
- Abu-Lughod: Do Muslim Women Really need Saving (in RDR)
- Corrigan & White: Chapter 12 (Writing a Film Essay)
- Film/Clips: *Tales from Arab Detroit (1995), In My Own Skin (2001)*

Week 10: LATINOS/CHICANOS, PUERTO RICANS: *Gender Roles, Family, Culture*

10/28

- Corrigan & White: Chapter 7 (Representing the Real: Documentary Films)

10/30

- Santa Ana: Insurgent Metaphors (*Optional*; in RDR)
- Additional Readings TBA
- Film/Clips: *The Bronze Screen: 100 Years of the Latino Image in American Cinema (2002)*

CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH IN AMERICAN STUDIES & ETHNICITY**Week 11: INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS/CONFLICT**

11/4

- Cornell & Hartmann: Chapter 8

11/6

- Jackson: Making Harlem Black (in RDR)
- Hunt: Raced Ways of Seeing (in RDR)
- Film: *Flag Wars (2003)*

Week 12: JIH-FEI CHENG LECTURE

11/11

- Readings/Films: TBA

11/13

📖 Essays Due: Thursday, November 13th by 5PM in the AMST Dept, KAP 462 (give to Mrs. Preston)

Week 13: HAVEN PEREZ LECTURE

11/18

- Readings/Films: TBA

11/20

Week 14: JENNIFER TRAN LECTURE

11/25/ • Readings/Films: TBA
 11/27 **Holiday**

Week 15: JENNIFER TRAN LECTURE (CONTINUED)
 12/2 • Readings/Films: TBA
 12/4 **No Class**

FINAL EXAM: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16TH, 11AM-1PM IN THH 101

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY (Textbooks in Bold)

AMST 274 Reader. [This text is abbreviated RDR in the reading schedule.]

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?: Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others. *American Anthropologist* 104(3): 783-790.

Ansary, Tamim. 2001. An Afghan-American Speaks. (September 14).

<http://archive.salon.com/news/feature/2001/09/14/afghanistan/index.html>

Bell, Inge and Bernard McGrane. 1999. This Book Is Not Required: An Emotional Survival Manual For Students. London: Pine Forge Press.

Brodkin, Karen. 1999. Race Making. *In How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (53-76). London: Rutgers University Press.

Brodkin, Karen. 1999. A Whiteness of Our Own?: Jewishness and Whiteness in the 1950s and 1960s. *In How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (138-174). London: Rutgers University Press

Connolly, Mark R. 2000. What's In a Name?: A Historical Look at Native American-Related Nicknames and Symbols at Three U.S. Universities." *Journal of Higher Education* 71(5): 515-547.

Cornell Stephen and Douglas Hartmann. 2007. Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Corrigan, Timothy and Patricia White. 2004. The Film Experience: An Introduction. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Hall, Stuart. 1993. What is This "Black?" in Black Popular Culture? *Social Justice* 20(1-2): 104-114.

Hunt, Darnell M. 1996. Raced Ways of Seeing. *In Screening the L.A. 'Riots'* (127-144). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hutchinson, John and Anthony D. Smith, Eds. 2009. Ethnicity. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jackson, John L. 2001. Making Harlem Black: Race, Place, and History in "African Americans' Africa. *In Harlemworld: Doing Race and Class in Contemporary Black America* (17-54). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jackson, John L. 2005. A Little Black Magic. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 104(3): 393-402.

Kendall, Francis. 2013. Understanding White Privilege. *In Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships across Race.* London: Routledge.

Price, Darby Li Po. 1998. Laughing without Reservation: Indian Standup Comedians. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 22(4): 255-271.

Root, Deborah. 1996. "White Indians": Appropriation and the Politics of Display. *In B. Ziff and P.V. Rao (eds.) Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation* (225-233). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Santa Ana, Otto. 2002. Insurgent Metaphors: Contesting the Conventional Representations of Latinos. *In Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse* (295-319). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Waters, Mary C. 1990. The Costs of a Costless Community. *In Ethnic Options* (147-168). Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Zinsser, William. 2001. On Writing Well. Sixth Edition. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

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