

Professor: E. Chávez
Office: Liberal Arts 314
Phone: 915.747.6591
E-mail: echavez@utep.edu
Office Hours: TTH 10:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.;
T 4:30 -5 p.m. TH 2:00-4:00 p.m.,
or by appointment.

History 3390: Special Topics **“Reel History”**

This course focuses on films that interpret and reflect U.S. history. Throughout the semester we will pay close attention to both how the past is presented on the screen and the forces that led to the motion pictures' production. Thus, we are interested in contextualizing why films about various historical subjects emerged when they do. As such, we will watch movies in class and discuss them. Our discussions will be based not only on the images, but also on criticism and other writing analyzing the films and history.

The films I have picked were for the most part produced in Hollywood and depict either a historical era or event. Most of them were released nationwide, while a few had limited viewership. In order for us to get a glimpse of not only the depiction of history, but also the history of film, I have chosen some silent films for us to watch.

My primary objective in this class is to have us use an interdisciplinary approach to the study of history via the medium of film. I hope that we all learn to see the past in different ways and that in the process gain a new perspective not only on history, but also on the production of film, both artistically and commercially.

Required Texts:

E. H. Carr, *What is History?*

ISBN: 0-394-70391

Cedric J. Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory & Meaning: Black & The Regimes of Race in American Theater & Film Before World War II.*

ISBN: 978-0-8078-5841-7

Robert A. Rosenstone, *History on Film, Film on History.*

ISBN: 978-1-4082-8255-7

(The assigned articles are available on Blackboard.)

Course Requirements:

There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. Your midterm will be administered on October 18 and the final will take place on Thursday, December 8, 1 p.m. -3:45 p.m. In addition, three response papers on the films will be due throughout the semester and one essay based on film reviews will also be required. There are no designated due dates for the response papers, instead I have divided the course into three parts and each essay will be due during one of those sections. The film review paper will be due on November 15. You are required to come to class and watch the films as a community.

Grade Distribution:

Midterm Exam: 20 %; Final Exam: 20%; 3 Response Papers: 10%. Film Review Assignment: 10%; Attendance and Participation: 20%.

Plagiarism, Rules, Procedures:

I must remind you that academic dishonesty, including cheating on an exam or quiz, and **plagiarism** of any form, meaning presenting someone else's ideas as your own, will not be tolerated. Cutting and pasting information from a website without citing the data constitutes plagiarism. If anybody is caught committing this egregious offense she/he will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. To prevent you from committing plagiarism, your papers will be submitted to "Safe Assign," on Blackboard, which will check your essay to ensure you are not trying to pass someone else's work as your own.

In addition, I ask that you respect your fellow students and me. If you are compelled to talk while in class—DO NOT. I find this habit annoying and just plain rude. I will not tolerate class disturbances of any kind. This means cell phones and other electronic devices are prohibited. If you do not comply with these rules I will ask you to leave the room. Finally, I must remind you that this class starts when I walk in the classroom; therefore you should be ready to pay attention and take notes when I start talking. **I urge you to take notes—you will not be able to remember what was said if you do not, and a good deal of the exams are based on class content.**

Keypad/Clicker:

We will use REEF polling to register responses in the class and also to record attendance. You can use your smart phone, tablet, or computer to access the app or website. A link to more information on the "clicker" can be found on Blackboard. You will need to register the device on Blackboard. Attendance is worth 20% of your grade. If you do not show up to class, it is likely you will not do well in it.

Schedule

Part I**Week 1: August 23***Introduction*

Readings: Roland Barthes, "The Romans on Film;" Carr, *What is History?* Chapters 1 & 2.

Week 2: August 30*The New World*

Readings: Rosenstone, Introduction, Chapters 1-4.

Week 3: September 6*Birth of A Nation*

Readings: Robinson, Preface, Chapters 1 & 2.

Week 4: September 13

Gone with the Wind

Readings: Robinson, Chapters 3 & 5.

Week 5: September 20

Old San Francisco

Reading: Yeman Wang, “The Art of Screen Passing: Ana May Wong’s Yellow Yellow Face Performance in the Art Deco Era.” *Camera Obscura* 60, Volume 20, no. 3 (2005): 158-191.

Week 6: September 27

Reds

Reading: Rosenstone, Chapter 6.

Part II

Week 7: October 4

The Big Parade

Readings: Tony Williams, “The Big Parade,” *Senses of Cinema*, 68, (September 2013); Richard P. May, “Restoring The Big Parade,” *The Moving Image*, Vol. 5, no. 2, (2005): 140-146.

Week 8: October 11

The Grapes of Wrath

Reading: Thomas Pauly, “Gone with the Wind and The Grapes of Wrath as Hollywood Histories of the Depression.” *Journal of Popular Film*, Vol. 3, no. 3 (1974): 203-218

Week 9: October 18

Come See the Paradise

Reading: Keith Aoki, “Is Chan Still Missing? An Essay About the Film Snow Falling on Cedars and the Representations of Asian Americans on Film.” *UCLA Asian Pacific American Law Journal*, Vol. 7, no. 1 (2001): 30-51.

Midterm.

Week 10: October 25

Saving Private Ryan.

Readings: Albert Auster, . “Saving private Ryan and American triumphalism.” *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 30, no. 2 (2002): 98-104; Phil Landon, “Realism, Genre, and Saving Private Ryan,” *Film and History*, 28, nos.3-4 (1998): 58-62.

Part III

Week 11: November 1

Salt of the Earth

Readings: Esteve Riambau, Casimiro Torreiro, and Rosaura Revueltas, “‘This Film Is Going to Make History’: An Interview with Rosaura Revueltas.” *Cinéaste* 19, no. 2/3 (1992): 50-51; Carl R. Weinberg, “‘Salt of the Earth’: Labor, Film, and the Cold War.” *OAH Magazine of History* 24, no. 4 (2010): 41-45.

Week 12: November 8

Selma

Reading: Marcos Norris, “Dr. King & the Image of God: A Theology of Voting Rights in Ava DuVernay’s *Selma*.” *Journal of Religion & Film*, 20, no. 2 (2016): 1-28.

Week 13: November 15

Stonewall

Reading: Martin Duberman, and Andrew Kopkind, “The Night They Raided Stonewall.” *Grand Street*, no. 44 (1993): 120-47; Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna M. Crage, “Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth.” *American Sociological Review* 71, no. 5 (2006): 724-51.
Film Review Paper Due.

Week 14: November 22

Platoon

Reading: Marita Sturken, “Reenactment, Fantasy, and the Paranoia of History: Oliver Stone’s Docudramas.” *History and Theory* 36, no. 4 (1997): 64-79.

Week 15: November 29

United 93

Reading: Duncan Greenlaw, “‘Until Justice is Done’: Authenticity and Memory in Paul Greengrass’s *Bloody Sunday* and *‘United 93*.’” *Revue Canadienne D’Études Cinématographiques / Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 19, no. 2 (2010): 2-25.

The final exam is scheduled for Thursday, December 8, 1 p.m.-3:45 p.m.