

# Film & Social Justice

## Syllabus SPRING 2024

Courses: HUMN 4390 / 25890 & FILM 4340 / 23548

Instructor: John De Frank

Class format: Hybrid online & in-class session Thursdays 3:00 – 4:20 in COTT 207

Office hours: Wednesdays 1:00 – 2:00 by appointment.

*Students may request a phone conference, IM dialog, or online video conference if they wish.*

Office Phone: 747-5835

*Please leave a message if I am out of office so that I may return your call.*

Email: [jdefrank@utep.edu](mailto:jdefrank@utep.edu) *This email is the primary contact email.*

***Do not use Blackboard messaging to contact me, use standard UTEP email.***

Blackboard support: 747-4357 / [helpdesk@utep.edu](mailto:helpdesk@utep.edu)

Humanities Website: [utep.edu/liberalarts/humanities](http://utep.edu/liberalarts/humanities)

**Semester Calendar:** Please refer to Blackboard

**Course description:** The Film & Social Justice course is designed to review, discuss and understand topics and movements in social justice through the lens of film, and how film is used as a tool in both a narration of history as well as medium for social justice. This course counts as a Humanities or Film credit. Students will gain understanding of different social justice issues via selected films that are based on true events or stories that span back to the 1970's. The films are paired with readings that will help compare and contrast how the film depicted that particular event or person(s) as well as correlate in relation to current issues and news. Students are expected to participate in discussion on each topic of social justice issues and how they are told through the lens of film and how our society is comprehending and acting on these issues both in past and in present.

### IMPORTANT NOTICES

- **The Film & Social Justice syllabus in terms of schedule, dates, readings and video are subject to change upon timely notice.**

- **There are no textbooks assigned for the course, but you will be responsible for streaming/renting films selected for the course (if not available through UTEP Library Services). Please see detail description below.**
- **Course work must be completed and submitted via computer (desktop or laptop) and not by smart phone or other devices.** This is an upper division college level course that is online therefore it is insinuated that you must have the proper resources and tools necessary to participate in the course. That said, it is expected you have access to a working computer. The tests and discussion posts are not meant to be completed by smartphone or tablet but on a computer (desktop or laptop). There are technical issues sometimes with Blackboard and the compatibility with smart devices such as phones and tablets that can hinder your access or functionality in completing and submitting work. Therefore, it is advised that all work for this course is to be done via computer. Any complications or technical issues you come into using a device other than a computer will be your responsibility and will not be excused by the instructor. You can reach out to Blackboard support for help but there will be no exceptions made for technical issues involving devices other than a computer.

**Course Readings & Videos:** This course will consist of required readings in which you are responsible for reading on your own time as well as other required research pertaining to your assignments and projects. Some readings and videos will be subject to change, but an email announcement will be sent out ahead of time. All readings will be made available on Blackboard in the weekly folders via links.

**Film Streaming Rental Fees:** There is no textbook required for this course, but there may be rental/streaming fees for the films not provided by the instructor. Usually, the instructor will try and provide links provided by UTEP Library to the films that will be covered in the course. Although not all films can be acquired by the UTEP Library and in such cases the students have the responsibility to rent/stream the films for the course. Most rental/streaming fee range between \$3.00 - \$4.00

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. Academic dishonesty includes not doing one's own work, plagiarism, and unacceptable collusion. Not doing one's own work may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person as ones' own.

Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Violations will be taken seriously and referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators but also for the entire community. It is expected that UTEP students will

Understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts.

### **Plagiarism Detecting Software**

Some of your course work and assessments may be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase. Also, any work sourced from ChatGPT will also be considered plagiarism. If instructor suspects usage of AI and kind generate wording in which wording and sentence structure matches what was submitted by student, instructor will submit both student work and generated AI docs to Director and Dean for review.

### **ADA statement**

As per Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation, then the Office of Disabled Student Services located at UTEP need to be contacted. If you have a condition which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to CASS. Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) to provide any accommodation the student may need.

Monday thru Friday 8:00a.m.-5:00p.m. Phone:(915) 747-5148 Union Building East Room 106  
[cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu)

### **COURSE WORK & GRADING**

Students Responsibility for Assignments/Semester Project: As part of their grade, students are required to complete readings, conduct research, participate in online discussions and submit work on time. Instructions for any course work will be posted in the weekly folder section of Blackboard and sent via email announcement when assignment is issued.

**Films, Course Readings & Videos:** All readings will be made available on Blackboard in the weekly folders via links. There is no textbook required for this course, but there may be rental/streaming fees for the films not provided by the instructor. Usually, the instructor will try to provide links provided by UTEP Library to the films covered in the course, which is no charge to the students. Although not all films can be acquired by the UTEP Library and in such cases the students have the responsibility to rent/stream the films for the course. Most rental/streaming fee range between \$3.00 - \$4.00.

**Grade percentage breakdown by points:**

20 points = 8 Film Topic Journal Reflections (2.5 points each)

60 points = 4 Tests: (15 points each)

10 Points = 2 In-class activities

10 points = Participation & Attendance

Grading scale:

90% - 100% = A

80% - 89% = B

70 % - 79% = C

60% - 69% = D

59 – 0 % = F

**PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE**

**Participation & Attendance (10% of grade):** Participation will be based on student's ability to partake in online or Face-to-Face discussions by offering insight on the subject matter including research information, asking questions, reiterating, or disputing another student's view with sufficient backing and sourcing. Attendance will be taken every Thursday at our face-to-face meeting. Students will have three excused absences. The fourth absence is a deduction of 5 points and the fifth absence will result in a drop from the course. Excessive tardies will result in being marked as an excused absence.

**TOPIC REFELCTONS in JOURNAL (20% of grade, each worth 2.5%)**

There will be 8 required journal entries, four in-class and four outside of class. There will be two journal entries per topic/film. Journals will be provided to you in class, and you will be expected to write your entries legibly so that the instructor can read them. If the instructor cannot read your handwriting, your entry will not be graded.

**IN-CLASS ACTIVITY (10%of your grade, each worth 5%)**

There will be two in-class activities, each worth 5% of your grade. Activity dates are listed in the calendar, please plan accordingly as attendance is required in order to gain your in-class activity points. Activities will be announced in class and on Blackboard announcements as the dates of in-class activity approaches.

## **TESTS**

**4 Blackboard Tests (60% of grade, each worth 15%):** There will be four tests (one for each topic/film), on readings, videos, films and online lectures, materials and discussions provided by the instructor. Tests will be administered on Blackboard on Fridays at the close of the topic, dates are listed in class Calander on Blackboard.

**No Make-up Tests** - The instructor's responsibility is to this class, not student's personal life, job schedule or other classes. Therefor there are no make-up tests as they are online and accessible from Friday, 12:00 noon to Sunday, 11:00 PM on scheduled dates.

## **OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT**

**Non-Profit Volunteer Extra Credit Assignment** - A student may receive extra credit by volunteering at a local, not for profit organization that is 501 c3 certified for five hours to receive 5 points. Students must submit the organization name for instructor's approval before contacting the organization for volunteer time. If approved, student must submit organization's contact person with ph # and email to verify student hours. Further instructions will be given once the student is approved for extra credit volunteer.

**Special events and lectures:** On occasion, specified events or lectures hosted by UTEP departments on social justice topics might be available throughout the semester to attend for extra credit. The instructor will post to the announcements when such events are available to offer extra credit. You are expected to attend the event or lecture and then write a short reflection on what the event or lecture was about and how it impacted you. Ask the instructor for further details.

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