EXPRESSIVE CULTURE: FILM
MULTICULTURALISM, RACE, AND THE MEDIA

Spring 2005
Wednesday
3:30 – 7:30

Professors: Robert Stam and Ella Shohat
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Preceptors:
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Course Requirements:
2 brief response essays (10% of grade)
2 brief essays (20% of grade)
1 mid-term exam (20% of grade)
1 final 10-page take-home essay (40% of the grade)
Class Participation (10% of grade)

Course Policies:
Attendance at all lectures and recitation sections is mandatory. We will take attendance in each class, and three or more unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade.

All work must be handed in on time except in the case of serious illness, medical emergency, or other compelling or mitigating circumstances. Failure to hand in work on time will result in the lowering of your grade. Incomplete grades and extensions will not be given without documented evidence of hardship (e.g. medical problems).

Plagiarism (quoting, presenting, or paraphrasing someone else’s ideas as if they were your own without appropriate footnote and bibliographical citation) will result in a grade of “F.”

Required reading should be done before the recitation sections.
Educational Objectives:

Multiculturalism, Race, and the Media will discuss film and the media in terms of racial representation and multicultural history. On the one hand, we will look critically at the stereotyped ways in which race, ethnicity, and national identity have been portrayed in the mass media; on the other, we will celebrate alternative, multicultural, transnational representations. We will root the discussion in the longer 500-year history of European colonialism and imperialism. The films presented will range from Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*, to Pontecorvo’s *The Battle of Algier’s*, to Peter Davis’ *Hearts and Minds* to John Sayles’ *Lone Star* and Gurinder Shada’s *Bhaji at the Beach*. But apart from feature films, we will analyze a number of clips drawn from mass-mediated popular culture – the stand-up comedy of Chris Rock, the poets of Def Poetry Jam, the media-making of Michael Moore, the “Tropicalia” music movement in Brazil. In an attempt to internationalize the discussion, we will take a comparative approach by exploring how these same issues are dealt with not only in the U.S. but also in countries such as Brazil, France, and India. The goal is for students to understand some key issues and concepts, for which the word “multiculturalism” is merely a kind of shorthand, concepts such as: colonial discourse, contrapuntal history, political/artistic representation, cultural identity (and identification), ethnocentrism, systemic racism, inferential racism, ethnicities-in-relation, third world, minority, and transnational film, indigenous media, and alternative aesthetics. The goal is to have students reflect on the multicultural nature of New York City, of the United States, of the Americas and the world and on the ways that this multicultural reality is reflected, refracted, and translated by the media.

This course serves as an introduction to the analysis of film and the media, but from the specific angle of multicultural representation. More specifically, the course examines film and other media (especially television) by examining the multifaceted relations between the media and (multi)culture. How do multicultural issues impact the media in terms of 1) who produces media representations; 2) who is represented in the media, and in which ways; and 3) how are the media received by different groups. The course is also meant to serve as an introduction to close analysis of film in terms of image, sound, and editing. How are cultural representations shaped by specifically mediatic techniques?

The required texts for the course will be: Ella Shohat and Robert Stam: *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*; James Loewen: *Lies my Teacher Taught Me*; and Arthur Schlesinger, *The Disuniting of America*. Joseph Conrad’s novella *The Heart of Darkness*, and the Francis Ford Coppola film *Apocalypse Now* are highly recommended. The Preceptors will also be using a book of introduction to film analysis: Tim Corrigan/Patricia White, *The Film Experience*.
COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK I: (1/19/05)  INTRODUCTION: THE MULTICULTURAL CITY

SCREENING: DO THE RIGHT THING
EXCERPTS: CLIPS HAVING TO DO WITH MULTICULTURAL NEW YORK

WEEK II: (1/26/05)  FROM OPRESSION TO DIALOGISM

READING: UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MEDIA, CHAP. ONE
LOEWEN, LIES MY TEACHER TOLD ME: INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTER TWO (PP. 11-36)

SCREENING: ZELIG
PLUS EXCERPTS

WEEK III (2/2/05): FROM THE CONQUEST TO INDIGENOUS MEDIA

GUEST LECTURER: FAYE GINSBURG

SCREENING: EXCERPTS PLUS SMOKE SIGNALS

READING: UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MEDIA, CHAP. TWO
LOEWEN: CHAPTER TWO (PP. 37-74)

WEEK IV (2/9/05): TROPES OF THE IMPERIAL IMAGINARY

SCREENING: PRINCESSE TAM-TAM ***PLUS EXCERPTS

READING: UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MEDIA, CHAPTER THREE
LOEWEN: CHAPTER THREE (PP. 75-97)
WEEK V (2/16/05): RELATIONAL HISTORIES

SCREENING: JOHN SAYLES’ LONE STAR

READING: UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MEDIA, CHAPTER FOUR

READING: JAMES LOEWEN: CHAPTER FIVE (PP. 137-179)

WEEK VI (2/23/05) STEREOTYPE, REALISM, AND REPRESENTATION

SCREENING: COLOR ADJUSTMENT, PLUS EXCERPTS FROM NEGATION OF BRAZIL, BLACK AND WHITE AND COLOR

READING: UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MEDIA, CHAPTER FIVE

WEEK VII (3/2/05): RACE, GENDER AND GENRE

SCREENING: ILLUSIONS, IMITATION OF LIFE

UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MEDIA, CHAPTER SIX

LOEWEN: CHAPTER SIX (PP. 171-199)

WEEK VIII (3/9/05) THE THIRD WORLDIST FILM

SCREENING: THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS
PLUS CLIPS: THE BATTLE OF CHILE, LA MEMORIA OBSTINADA

READING: UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MEDIA, CHAPTER SEVEN

WEEK IX (3/23/05): MUSICAL DIALOGISM

SCREENING: HAIRSPRAY

READING: UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MEDIA, CHAPTER EIGHT
WEEK X (3/30/05): REPRESENTATIONS OF WAR

SCREENING: HEARTS AND MINDS
PLUS EXCERPTS FROM: FAR FROM VIETNAM

LOEWEN: CHAPTER NINE (PP. 238-253)
JOSEPH CONRAD’S HEART OF DARKNESS (REC: FILM APOCALYPSE NOW)

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WEEK XI (4/6/05): DIASPORIC AND TRANSNATIONAL CINEMA

GUEST LECTURERS: SUDHIR MAHADEVAN AND VICENTE RODRIGUES ORTEGA

READING: SCHLESINGER: THE DISUNITING OF AMERICA (PP 11-104)

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WEEK XII (4/13/05) POSTCOLONIAL CINEMA

SCREENING: LA HAINÉ

READING: UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MEDIA, CONCLUSION

READING: SCHLESINGER: THE DISUNITING OF AMERICA (PP 105-END)

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XIII (4/20/05) BRAZILIAN MULTICULTURALISM

LOEWEN: CHAPTER ELEVEN AND TWELVE (PP. 271-311)

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WEEK XIV (4/27/05): POP COSMOPOLITANISM

SCREENING: BHAJI AT THE BEACH, PLUS EXCERPTS
LOEWEN: “AFTERWORD”

REQUIRED TEXTS

ELLA SHOHAT/ROBERT STAM: UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MEDIA (ROUTLEDGE)
JAMES LOEWEN: LIES MY TEACHER TAUGHT ME (SIMON AND SCHUSTER)
ARTHUR SCHLESINGER: DISUNITING AMERICA
TIM CORRIGAN/PATRICIA WHITE: THE FILM EXPERIENCE

RECOMMENDED: JOSEPH CONRAD: THE HEART OF DARKNESS