IDH 3035-RVG (21045) Honors Seminar V: Aesthetics, Values, and Authority
Myth and Ritual in Film
Spring 2016

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Course Description
This online course integrates theoretical discussions of myth and ritual (as interrelated cultural dimensions of religion) with analyses of the relatively contemporary medium of film. In each case, a collective artistic experience employs narrative form to evoke, to explain, or even to create meaning. Following the trail of 19th-century anthropology and 20th-century psychology, we will examine the binding connections between myth and ritual, and we will also seek out their secular analogues in literature and drama on our way toward film as an integrative multi-media form of cultural expression. We will explore the sociological implications of mainstream cinema (such as Spielberg, Pixar, etc.) as shared experience, film adaptations of myth versus myth-inspired storytelling, theological and political interpretations (e.g., of alien films), and much more. Online interactive features will include live discussion, video, and even some amateur filmmaking on the part of the students.

Texts
To be purchased:

Other selections as assigned from the following:

Print.


Other selections as assigned

**Films**

*Star Wars: The Force Awakens*
*The Last Unicorn*
*Awake: The Life of Yoganada*
*Metropolis*
*Batman*
*Wall-E*
*The 36th Chamber of Shaolin*
*Kill Bill Vol 1.*
*Kill Bill Vol 2.*
*Amistad*
*“The Cause (1861)” The Civil War: A Film by Ken Burns (episode 1)*
*Django Unchained*
*Watunna*
*Frida*

**Assignments**

**Quizzes** – Each week students will complete a short quiz covering material discussed in that week’s readings and lectures. **20% of final grade**

**Vlogs** – (2 minutes minimum) students will be required to record and submit short video blogs or “vlogs” on a weekly basis. These consist merely of video of the students speaking. From the reading and lectures, students will utilize theoretical approaches about myth and ritual applied through the lens of the film we are reviewing that week. Students will also offer their own interpretation of the film’s meaning and impact. Each video must be preceded by a written outline. Instructor will provide detailed prompts of what to look for in each week’s films. **25% of final grade**

**Critical Review** – (5 pages minimum) students will attend the film *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* in the theater. Students will have reported back in a video blog, not only about the myth and ritual content of the film but also the sociological phenomenon of actually going to the movies—and in particular going to this movie. Students should emulate the anthropological field work and participant observation that Malinowski prescribed in our text. Experiences will vary depending on when students go, where, and with whom. They will pay attention to the audience before, during, and after the film, and feel free to reference any chatter in the media
that is relevant to your understanding of the Star Wars phenomenon, etc. For the vlog students may check in with live video from the event, but that is not required.

For the written review, students must reference at least 2 popular sources (e.g. internet reviews) and 2 scholarly sources (e.g. myth/ritual theorists studied in class, journal articles from other scholars, etc.). The critical review should accomplish three things: (1) assess the film as a piece of art and give a reasoned opinion about its value, (2) discuss “Star Wars” as a sociological phenomenon and how The Force Awakens contributes to that here and now, and (3) investigate the film for thematic elements of myth and ritual. 25% of final grade

Short Film – (3 to 15 minutes) students will become amateur filmmakers by creating a short original film utilizing themes discussed in the course (relating to myth and ritual) and elements of film (such as sound, music, photography, plot, performance, etc.). These student films can tell a straightforward structured story, or they can employ a more impressionistic or conceptual approach. In terms of equipment, ideally this will require only a smart phone video recorder and user-friendly web-based editing software. In addition to the final video product, students will also submit a storyboard and a brief abstract of their film. 30% of final grade

Calendar

Module 1: Course Introduction and Awakening

Week 1 (1/11 to 1/17)
Reading: Review syllabus and course materials
Film: Star Wars: The Force Awakens (in theaters now)

Week 2 (1/18 to 1/24) [MLK Holiday]
Reading: Reread Segal’s anthology, pp. 341-356
- “Walter Burkert, Homo Necans”
- “Claude Lévi-Strauss, Structure and Dialectics”

Lecture: View lectures carefully and take notes
Film: Star Wars: The Force Awakens (in theaters now)

Assignment – Vlog Response: Due 1/25, 11:59 p.m.
Quiz: Due 1/25, 11:59 p.m.

Week 3 (1/25 to 1/31)
Reading: “In Quest of the Hero” from Theorizing about Myth by Robert A. Segal [PDF]

Lecture: View lectures carefully and take notes
Film: *The Last Unicorn*

Assignment – Critical Review of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* – Outline Only with Sources: Due 2/1, 11:59 p.m.

Assignment – Vlog Response: Due 2/1, 11:59 p.m.

Quiz: Due 2/1, 11:59 p.m.

Week 4 (2/1 to 2/7)

Reading: selections from *The Upanishads* [PDF]

Lecture: View lectures carefully and take notes

Film: *Awake: The Life of Yoganada*

Assignment – Vlog Response: Due 2/8, 11:59 p.m.

Quiz: Due 2/8, 11:59 p.m.

**Module 2: Lessons Learned on the Streets of Dystopia**

Week 5 (2/8 to 2/14)

Reading: Continue Segal’s anthology: pp. 357 – 378
- “William Ridgeway, The Dramas and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races”

Lecture: View lectures carefully and take notes

Film: *Metropolis*

Assignment – Critical Review of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*: Due 2/12, 11:59 p.m.

Assignment – Vlog Response: Due 2/15, 11:59 p.m.

Quiz: Due 2/15, 11:59 p.m.

Week 6 (2/15 to 2/21)

Reading: Continue Segal’s anthology: pp. 379 – 387
- “James Frazer, Introduction to Apollodorus, *The Library*”
- “H. J. Rose, The Evidence of Divine Kings in Greece”
Lecture: View lectures carefully and take notes

Film: *Batman*

**Assignment – Vlog Response:** Due 2/22, 11:59 p.m.

**Quiz:** Due 2/22, 11:59 p.m.

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**Week 7 (2/22 to 2/28)**

**Reading:** Continue Segal’s anthology: pp. 388 – 411
- “S. G. F. Brandon, The Myth and Ritual Position Critically Examined”

Lecture: View lectures carefully and take notes

Film: *WALL-E*

**Assignment – Vlog Response:** Due 2/29, 11:59 p.m.

**Quiz:** Due 2/29, 11:59 p.m.

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**Module 3: Quietness, Slowness, Extension, Pause, Flexibility: Martial-Arts Film Then and Now**

**Week 8 (2/29 to 3/6)**

**Reading:** Continue Segal’s anthology: pp. 412 – 427

Lecture: View lectures carefully and take notes

Film: *The 36th Chamber of Shaolin*

**Assignment – Vlog Response:** Due 3/7, 11:59 p.m.

**Quiz:** Due 3/7, 11:59 p.m.

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**Week 9 (3/7 to 3/13)**

**Reading:** Continue Segal’s anthology: pp. 428 – 459
- Joseph Fontenrose, The Ritual Theory of Myth

Lecture: View lectures carefully and take notes

Film: *Kill Bill Vol. 1*

**Assignment – Storyboard for Short Film** Due 3/11, 11:59 p.m.
Assignment – Vlog Response: Due 3/14, 11:59 p.m.

Quiz: Due 3/14, 11:59 p.m.

Week 10 (3/14 to 3/20) [Spring Break]

Week 11 (3/21 to 3/27)
Reading: Selections from the Tao Te Ching [PDF]

Lecture: View lectures carefully and take notes

Film: Kill Bill Vol. 2

Assignment – Vlog Response: Due 3/28, 11:59 p.m.

Quiz: Due 3/28, 11:59 p.m.

Module 4: Walking through Hellfire: Slavery, Narrative, and American Identity
Week 12 (3/28 to 4/3)
Reading: TBA

Lecture: View lectures carefully and take notes

Film: Amistad

Assignment – Vlog Response: Due 4/4, 11:59 p.m.

Quiz: Due 4/4, 11:59 p.m.

Week 13 (4/4 to 4/10)
Reading: TBA

Lecture: View lectures carefully and take notes

Film: “The Cause (1861)” The Civil War: A Film by Ken Burns (episode 1)

Assignment – Vlog Response: Due 4/11, 11:59 p.m.

Quiz: Due 4/11, 11:59 p.m.

Week 14 (4/11 to 4/17)
Reading: Continue Segal’s anthology: pp. 460 – 470
- "H. S. Versnel, Prospects"

**Lecture**: View lectures carefully and take notes

**Film**: *Django Unchained*

**Assignment – Vlog Response**: Due 4/18, 11:59 p.m.

**Quiz**: Due 4/18, 11:59 p.m.

**Module 5: The Shaman Artist**

*Week 15 (4/18 to 4/24)*


**Lecture**: View lectures carefully and take notes

**Film**: *Watunna*

**Assignment – Vlog Response**: Due 4/25, 11:59 p.m.

**Quiz**: Due 4/25, 11:59 p.m.

*Week 16 (4/25 to 5/1)*

**Reading**: selections from *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait* [PDF]

**Lecture**: View lectures carefully and take notes

**Film**: *Frida*

**Assignment – Vlog Response**: Due 5/2, 11:59 p.m.

**Quiz**: Due 5/2, 11:59 p.m.

*Week 17 (5/2 to 5/7) FINALS WEEK* Short Films Due with Abstract 5/7, 11:59 p.m.

**Religious Holidays**

“Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.”

**Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges**
“Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC), if you have not done so already.” Please note that if you have a student who is registered with the DRC, you will receive notification about the student’s disability and a detailed description of accommodations the student will require.

Honors College Requirements
Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Honors College policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity.

Honors Citizenship Requirements
Beginning in Fall 2014, Honors College students are required to accumulate at least 20 citizenship points each academic year (Fall and Spring) by attending Honors College activities. Students attending only one semester (Fall or Spring) are required to accumulate 10 citizenship points. See http://honors.fiu.edu/academics/policies/citizenship/.

Student Portfolios
The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students’ learning outcomes. The portfolio allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. Students decide (with instructor consultation) what “artifacts” or assignments to include for consideration in their portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of five key student learning outcomes over the 4-year Honors experience. See www.honors.fiu.edu/portfolios.

Honors Education in the ARTS (HEARTS)
The HEARTS program is designed to give Honors College students opportunities to “explore and appreciate different artistic and cultural traditions and modes of artistic expression. HEARTS will also serve as a clearinghouse (and curatorial framework) for our students to experience the arts on campus and in the community by providing them with information about cultural activities and access to performances with free or discounted tickets. See http://honors.fiu.edu/hearts/.

Honors College Academic Misconduct Statement
In The Honors College, the term “honor” refers both to academic accomplishment and character. Students in Honors should therefore adhere to and be held to the highest standards of personal academic accountability. Academic dishonesty in any form, including plagiarism, is antithetical to the very definition of being an Honors student at FIU. Consequently, an Honors College student found responsible for academic misconduct will be dismissed from the College.

Procedures and Penalties
An Honors faculty member may bring charges of academic misconduct against an Honors student if the faculty member suspects plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct. The
A faculty member will decide whether to pursue informal resolution, file formal resolution charges, or take no further action, and will follow the procedures outlined in the Honors College website (http://honors.fiu.edu/academics/policies/), and the Academic Misconduct Procedures, available at http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/1acmisconductproc.htm.

Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

- FIU Honors College Student Handbook – http://honors.fiu.edu/handbook0910.html
- FIU Honors College Plagiarism Policy – http://honors.fiu.edu/current_policy_plagiarism.html

Courses designated as Global Learning courses (IDH 2003-2004, IDH 3034-3035) must list specific Global Learning outcomes. Assignments must be able to assess the students’ ability to demonstrate these outcomes. Questions on Global Learning should be addressed to Jose Rodriguez, rodrigej@fiu.edu.

**GL Learning Outcomes for IDH 3034-5**

- **Global Awareness**: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.
- **Course Learning Outcome**: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated global dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape aesthetics, values, and authority in diverse cultural contexts.
- **Global Perspectives**: Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.
- **Course Learning Outcome**: Students will be able to analyze the multiple global forces that shape their understanding of aesthetics, values, and authority — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.
- **Global Engagement**: Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.
- **Course Learning Outcome**: Students will be able to develop solutions to local, global, international, and/or intercultural problems related to aesthetics, values, and authority.

**NOTE**: This syllabus is subject to change. Please confirm with the instructor that this is the most current version.