

Cinema and Violence
Jessie Kabwila Kapasula
Fall 2009

Comparative Literature Coli 331E (01)

The representation of Violence in Global Cinema

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Venue: Science 2 (145)

Time: T, R 01.15pm - 2.40p.m

Office hours: T 3 – 5 pm, LT 1509A

Course Description

This course investigates the representations of violence in cinema. It examines the articulations of violence in films from countries all over the world. We will watch films from South Africa, United States of America, Brazil and India. The films under study will be read as text of violence. The sources and types of violence will be interrogated in view of perspectives on violence of scholars like Sonkin, Phoenix and Fanon. The course engages the question posed by the polarity of the Malcolm X versus Martin Luther Jr/Gandhi stand on violence. Based on their reading of the representation of violence in the films under study, students will critically analyse the sources and types of violence. Taking into consideration the historiography of the characters in the text, students will investigate the violence and/or non-violence school of thoughts, especially with regard to the people whom Rey Chow describes as ‘disposable’ (2006), the ones Fanon calls, the wretched of the earth (1967). The way film as a text articulates violence will be explored through the views of scholars like Kracauer and Mayne.

Goals and Objectives:

- To provide a forum to discuss and critically analyze the complex context of the violence represented in the texts under study.
- Cultivate and sharpen critical skills, extricate relevance of the texts and related theoretical readings to everyday life.

Films

The films viewed in class include,

Tsotsi Producer Gavin Hood (2005)

Crash, Dir. Paul Haggis (2004)

American History X, Dir. Tony Kaye (1998).

The City of God, Dir. Fernando Meirreles, Katia Lund (2003).

Do The Right Thing. (1989) Director Spike Lee

Textbooks

Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press. 2004 edition.

Preface and ‘On violence. ...’

Judith Mayne. *Cinema and Spectatorship*. New York: Routledge. 1993.

Siegfried Kracauer. *Theory of Film*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1997 edition.
Manthia Diawara (ed). *Black American Cinema*. New York: Routledge. 1993.

Most of the books are quite pricy, check with suppliers like Amazon, Mando etc for second hand books if new ones are too expensive for you. There are books we will just refer to a few pages so if buying of texts is an issue for you, and it is for most of us given the financial crisis the whole world has been plunged into, see me to see which ones are a must have.

Schedule of Classes (Tentative, subject to change)

Introduction to the course - Laramie, Sonkin	Sept 1
Definition of violence	
Horizontal – vertical violence.	
Mazower, Arblaster on violence	Sept 3, 8, 10
Tsotsi and Kracauer	Sept 15, 17, <u>22</u> , 24
City of God and Mayne	Sept 29, Oct 1, <u>6</u> , 8
Slumdog Millionaire and Fanon	Oct 13, 15, <u>20</u> , 22
Crash and	October 27, 29, Nov <u>3</u> , 5
Do the Right Thing and Diawara, hooks	Nov 10, 12, <u>17</u> , 19
Project preparation - Luther King Jr and Malcolm X	Nov 24,
Projects	Dec 1, 3, 8
Summary and course evaluation	Dec 10

(underlined dates are group presentation dates)

Group Presentation

We will do various types of group and pair work, please let me know if your have problems with the group you are in. Group members will meet to discuss the novel, do the researching of backgrounds of the various history and culture relevant to the issue in the film being watched, explore important critical and theoretical texts, form questions and interpretations and develop a presentation for the class. Presentations that combine, theoretical application, critical thought, creativity, active learning strategies, extensive class involvement, fun and depth - will attract a good participation grade. Group presentations should be unified and coherent, not a series of individual reports or verbatim downloads from the internet.

Individual Participation

This grade will be based an evaluation of how active a student is in class, be it in asking or answering questions, doing research and applying it to discussions in class and critical thought. Punctuality and regular attendance will enhance this grade. Being distracted in class, for example sending phone text messages, reading text messages, making calls whilst the class is going on, dosing off and sleeping, will impact your grade negatively.

Project/Paper

You have a choice to do a paper (5 pages excluding the works cited page, MLA format. Format – Times New Roman 12, double spacing) or project. You will present your paper or project in class and hand the paper in or written up summary of the project at the end of your presentation. If you decide to do a project, see the instructor during her office hours for clearance before you start working on the project. This course uses black board extensively for example for response paper and group work. Make sure you upload your work in time. It is your responsibility to check blackboard for new information. If you cannot hand in a paper, response paper or project to the instructor in class, hand it in by putting the paper in my mail box, 15th Floor Comparative Literature Department by 4.00 pm on the due date at the latest, if you cannot give it to me during my office hours. The paper or project must always be handed in a folder, together with the other work done in class. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that assignments are uploaded in a program that Binghamton blackboard system can open.

Grades

Quizzes/Black Board Response papers	20%
Project/Final Paper	20%
Group Work	20%
Individual class participation	15%
Attendance	25%

Absences

Students who are absent must still submit assignments on time. Absent students are responsible for finding out from fellow classmates what was missed during the class lecture; absent students are responsible for any syllabus changes (i.e. changes in due dates, homework, etc.) that were discussed during the class period. It is **the student's responsibility** to become familiar with Binghamton University policies regarding absences. **If you are absent for more than three absences, your final grade will be docked a grade. If you miss 6, it goes down by two letter grades and so on.**

Email correspondence

All e-mail correspondence must be as professional as possible, avoid being emotional. All emails concerning this class need to have COLI 331E (01) in the subject heading.

Cell phones, laptops, newspapers (or other reading material not related to this class) and any other gadgets are not permitted in the classroom.

Academic Honesty

This class aims at inculcating a value for original thinking. Plagiarism will not be tolerated; all cases of plagiarism will be sent to the Dean and result in partial or total failure of the course. Any questions concerning plagiarism may be raised either in class or during the instructor's office hours; it is your responsibility to make sure you understand what amounts to plagiarism is ignorance is no defense in this issue.

(Instructor reserves the right to make changes at any time)