CES 379 INDIGENOUS FILM

FALL 2013

MWF 1:10-2:00                         Instructor: Jeanette Weaskus, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: MWF 2:00-3:00 or by appointment

Required Text:

Rollins, Peter C. & O’Connor, John E., Eds. Hollywood’s Indians. U of Kentucky Press,

Catalog Description: Critical examination of films and videos featuring and by indigenous peoples; traces the history of the indigenous peoples as subjects of films and as filmmakers.

Course Description: We will explore the necessary aspect of indigenous film courses by looking at the stereotypes and American mythos that began in movies with the early portrayals of Native Americans in film. I want you to have this foundational knowledge before exploring the recent boom in films made by Natives for Natives. The very earliest work of by Native for Native was the 1989 film, Powwow Highway, which included in its narrative the “Reign of Terror,” a historical period of violence on the Lakota Reservation in the 70’s that was virtually unknown by non-Indians. Powwow Highway not only contains civil rights movement references, but Native humor as well, which can be defined as culturally related humor that is shared on the inter-tribal level and thus humorous to Native audiences from coast to coast.

Along with films, we will also be reading from the course textbook which examines the stereotypes perpetuated by Hollywood throughout the decades of motion pictures. The text addresses the film, The Vanishing American, which would set the tone for American Indians in motion pictures until the 1970’s when the “noble savage,” of the silver screen was upgraded to a “militant civil rights warrior,” the familiar image of the civil rights era Indian on television newscasts. Native filmmakers are currently portraying “rez life” and “Indian humor” in their latest films which Native audiences had never seen in movies until recently. We will look at several of these “rez life” style films during the course of the semester.

Course Objectives: WSU Learning Goals which are addressed in my course objectives are highlighted

- Students should finish this course with an understanding of how the American Indian transformed historically over the years of film from a “noble savage” to a “rez life
superstar” = Communication, Diversity, Depth, Breadth, and Integration of Learning, Critical and Creative Thinking

To be able to “get” the cultural references appearing in current movies made for Natives by Natives = Critical and Creative Thinking, Diversity, Information Literacy

Critically examine the stereotyped images of Native people in movies that have been a part of the worldwide consciousness since the 1920’s with the emergence of the very first westerns = Quantitative Reasoning, Critical and Creative Thinking, Scientific Literacy

What I want for you is to acquire a “cultural literacy” through a semester of discussion so that you can confidently and successfully build relationships using what you have learned about Natives should you ever need this skill during your years at WSU or while employed = Depth, Breadth, and Integration of Learning, Communication, Information Literacy

WSU Learning Goals

Critical and Creative Thinking

Graduates will use reason, evidence, and context to increase knowledge, to reason ethically, and to innovate in imaginative ways

Quantitative Reasoning

Graduates will solve quantitative problems from a wide variety of authentic contexts and everyday life situations.

Scientific Literacy

Graduates will have a basic understanding of major scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision-making, participation in civic affairs, economic productivity and global stewardship.

Information Literacy

Graduates will effectively identify, locate, evaluate, use responsibly and share information for the problem at hand

Communication

Graduates will write, speak, and listen to achieve intended meaning and understanding among all participants.

Diversity

Graduates will understand, respect and interact constructively with others of similar and diverse cultures, values, and perspectives.
Depth, Breadth, and Integration of Learning

Graduates will develop depth, breadth, and integration of learning for the benefit of themselves, their communities, their employers, and for society at large.

WSU Policies:

Plagiarism: The Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) argues that “In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.” The WSU Academic Honesty Policy (based on State of Washington Code) expands the CWPA definition of plagiarism as well as explaining other categories of academic misconduct. As a WSU student, you are bound by these policies and are responsible for being aware of and abiding by them. Students who commit intentional acts of plagiarism will be reported to the Assistant Director of Composition and the Dean of Students’ Office and will fail the class. See also www.wsulibs.edu/plagiarism.

Disability Accommodations: Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC (Washington Building, Room 217). Please stop by or call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist by email at drc@wsu.edu.

Cell Phones: Washington State University cell phone policy is to set your personal communication device to vibrate during class time. Use of cell phones, pagers, PDAs, or similar communication device is not allowed during classes unless activity supports class activities. Your personal communication devices are an integral part of the WSU’s emergency notification system and in the event of a campus emergency, all cell phones will vibrate simultaneously. If this occurs, you may consult your device to determine if a University emergency exists. If that is not the case, the devices should be immediately returned to silent mode and put away. Other exceptions to this policy may be granted upon request.

Classroom Etiquette: Student’s grades depend upon being able to pay attention to class lectures and discussions. Please be respectful of students who want to earn high grades by keeping quiet during lecture periods. In the event of students talking loudly during a lecture, I will ask the disruptive student(s) to stop talking. If a student continues to talk and be disruptive, they will be asked to leave. If the behavior continues, I will request a meeting with the student’s department chair so that action can be taken to preserve a respectful environment for the rest of the class.

Late Work:

Turn in your late work during office hours only. All late work must be submitted with any of the following documentation:

1) WSU Student Athlete Absence Form
2) Doctor’s Note/Hospital Release Form  
3) Job Interview Letter

*Date of assignment must coincide with documentation date*

**Student Support Services:** In the event of a death in your family, or some other traumatic experience that makes it difficult for you to come to class and turn in assignments, contact Student Support Services so that I may work with the counselors to make arrangements for your assignments and final grade. You need not go through that magnitude of stress alone, that is what Student Support Services is there for – to help you deal with difficult life experiences while at the same time trying to navigate and graduate WSU. Do not force me to deal with your difficult situation – let WSU counselors help student and instructor through it.

**Grading Criteria:**

**Weekly Online Angel work:** Every week you will submit the four questions you are responsible for bringing to class for discussion (4 questions for Friday’s class). You will post your questions on Angel at the end of the week after we have had time to discuss the class readings. One question of your choice must also be answered. The Angel submission window will be from Friday 8am – Monday 11:59pm. Angel submissions are 50% of your grade & you will need 14 submissions to pass the course.

**Movie write-ups:** 1 page write-up about the movie seen in class – due the next class period after the movie is finished. Briefly summarize the movie plot & characters in the first paragraph. Review the movie in the second paragraph with your likes and dislikes. Movie write-ups are worth 50%.

14 Angel Submissions = 50%  
10 Movie Write-ups = 50%  
TOTAL 100%

**Grading Scale:**

100-95% A, 94-90% A-  
89-87%, B+ 86-84%, B 83-80%, B-  
79-77%, C+ 76-74%, C 73-70%, C-  
69-67%, D+ 66-64, D 63% & below FAIL

**You are responsible for earning your grade! You are not getting a grade that I “give” you – YOU are EARNING your grade. I regularly get post-semester emails from students who**
are “shocked” that I “gave” them such a low grade & also from students who calculated their own grade (they always calculate a C up to a B).

I was inspired by these students to post the grid which I use to calculate your semester grades. You can keep track of all your assignments on this grid the very same way that I do so that nobody is “shocked” at their grade. Please also check your mid-term grade.

Course Calendar/Subject to Change

Week 1: AUG 19-AUG 23
M Introduction to your assignments & this course
W Hollywood’s Indian CH 2 (27-38) bring your 2 questions for class discussion
F Hollywood’s Indian CH 4 (58-71) Bring your 2 questions for class discussion/Angel submission opens at 8am – Post the 4 questions you prepared for class discussion & the answer to 1 question as learned through discussion.

Week 2: AUG 26-AUG 30
M The Vanishing American (45)(Angel submission ends at midnight for week 1)
W The Vanishing American (45)(109 min)
F The Vanishing American (20) – discussion/Angel submission opens at 8am – post your 4 questions

Week 3: SEP 2 – SEP 6
M HOLIDAY LABOR DAY
W “Movie Cards” - The Vanishing American movie write-up due/Angel submission closes at midnight for week 2
F “Movie Cards” Angel submission opens at 8am

Week 4: SEP 9 – SEP 13
M Reel Injun
W Reel Injun
F Reel Injun discussion – Angel submission opens at 8am/Reel Injun movie write-up due

Week 5: SEP 16 – SEP 20
M Billy Jack - Angel submission closes at midnight for week 4
W Billy Jack

F Billy Jack discussion - movie write-up due/Angel submission at 8am

Week 6: SEP 23 – SEP 27

M Hollywood's Indian CH 13 (206-227) Angel submission closes at midnight for week 5

W NO CLASS

F Alexie PDF (59-75) Angel submission opens 8am

Week 7: SEP 30 – OCT 4

M Smoke Signals (90 min) Angel submission closes at midnight for week 6

W Smoke Signals

F Smoke Signals discussion – Angel submission opens at 8am Smoke Signals movie write-up due

Week 8: OCT 7 – OCT 11

M Dreamkeeper Angel submission closes at midnight for week 7

W Dreamkeeper

F Dreamkeeper

Week 9: OCT 14 – OCT 18

M Dreamkeeper

W Dreamkeeper discussion/ movie write-up due

F Hollywood's Indian CH 9 (137-150) Angel submission opens at 8am for weeks 8-9

Week 10: OCT 21 – OCT 25

M Powwow Highway Angel submission closes at midnight for weeks 8-9

W Powwow Highway (87 min)

F Powwow Highway discussion - movie write-up due/Angel submission opens at 8am

Week 11: OCT 28 – NOV 1

M Skins Angel submission closes at midnight for week 10
W Skins (87 min)

F Skins movie write-up due/Angel submission opens at 8am

Week 12: NOV 4 – NOV 8

M Imprint Angel submission closes at midnight for week 11

W Imprint (85 min)

F Imprint movie write-up due/Angel submission opens at 8am

Week 13: NOV 11 – NOV 15

M HOLIDAY – VETERANS’ DAY

W Incredible Hulk episode/Angel submission closes at midnight for week 12

F Hollywood’s Indian CH 1 (12-21) Angel submission opens at 8am

Week 14: NOV 18 – NOV 22

M Dance Me Outside - Angel submission closes at midnight for week 4

W Dance Me Outside

F Dance Me Outside discussion – movie write-up due/Angel submission opens at 8am

Week 15: NOV 25 – NOV 29

HOLIDAY – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 16: DEC 2 – DEC 6

M Poltergeist II (Deer Woman if I can find it😊)

W Poltergeist II

F Poltergeist II movie-write up due