

Film 272 *Violence in Film*

4:30-7:00 Wed, Spring 2002 (LaFayette 302)

Rec. Screening Wed 7pm-9pm (LaFayette 302)

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Office Hours: MWF 10:45-11:45

Course Description and Objectives: The focus of this course will be on the history of violence in film, analysis of how violence is represented in film, and the theoretical, philosophical, and political debates that surround these topics. The aim of the course is that students come away with a grasp of the fundamental issues underlying the relationship between violence and film.

Required Texts:

Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (0679752552)

René Girard's *Violence and the Sacred* (0-8018-2218-1)

Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (0802150837)

J. David Slocum's *Violence and American Cinema* (0-415-92810-9)

Hannah Arendt's *On Violence* (0-15-669500-6)

James Gilligan's *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic* (0-679-77912-4)

Recommended texts:

Stephen Prince's *Screening Violence* (0813528186)

Grade breakdown:

Participation 10 %

Two Response Essays 15%

Midterm Exam 25%

Paper 25%

Final Exam 25%

Paper: One paper is required, roughly 15 pages. For the paper, you can either take a specific critical approach and develop it through a reading of the film of your choice, or you can elaborate your own theoretical position, using other theorists as points of reference, comparison, and contrast. This paper requires research and thus outside sources. These requirements will be discussed in detail in class.

Exams: The midterm will cover the material from the first half of the semester and final exam from the second half of the semester. You will be required to demonstrate your ability to articulate the nuances of the various theories, as well as the various histories and issues of representation raised in class.

Responses: You must write a four-page, double-spaced (12 pt) response paper for two different class meetings during the semester. Response papers can develop an argument of a thinker that we're reading, attack a position of a thinker, explore an undeveloped or tangential aspect of a thinker's thought, or engage a film or filmmaker through the issues raised in class. The response papers have due dates (as noted on the course schedule) but may be turned in any time before or on the due date.

Summary of the films and/or readings on the exam, response papers, conference paper, or final paper is NOT allowed. We must argue, interpret, and discuss, but not summarize. Papers with paragraphs of summary will be marked down accordingly. How and why to avoid summary will be discussed in class.

Participation and Attendance: Since this class is primarily a discussion class, students should come to class prepared to participate. In order to be a quality participant in discussion, students should be very familiar with the reading by the time they get to class. I would recommend, if not rereading the assignments, then at least a careful, deliberate reading. Without careful reading, you will not be able to be a viable member of the class.

Late Work: Papers turned in late will be lowered one grading step for each day that they are late.

Screenings: There will be a screening provided after class from 7pm to 9pm in Lafayette 302 and it is recommended that you stay for this. If you cannot, however, it is your responsibility to see the film on your own before coming to the next class.

Tentative Class Schedule:

Part One: Violence in History

Week One:

January 16 Intro Discussion
Screening: *The Wild Bunch* (Sam Peckinpah, 1969, 135 original, 145 min re-release)

Week Two:

January 23 Reading: Foucault (3-104); Slocum (introduction)

Screening: *Bonnie and Clyde* (Arthur Penn, 1967, 111 min)

Week Three:

January 30 Reading: Foucault (195-308); Slocum (Marsha Kinder's article)

Screening: *Marathon Man* (John Schlesinger, 1976, 125 min)

***First Response Paper Due**

Part Two: Theorizing Violence

Week Four:

February 6 Reading: Zizek's "Repeating Lenin" (<http://www.lacan.com/replenin.htm>);
Arendt (3-87)

Screening: *Raging Bull* (Martin Scorsese, 1980, 129 min)

Week Five:

February 13 Reading: Zizek's "'I Hear You With My Eyes'; Or the Invisible Master" (on line reserve); Slocum (William Rothman, Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg, and Richard Matby)

Screening: *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999, 139 min)

Week Six:

February 20 Reading: Zizek's "An Ethical Plea for Lie and Masochism;" "Welcome to the Desert of the Real" (on line reserve)
NO SCREENING
*You are also required to attend the talk that Zizek will give on Thursday from 4:30 to 6pm in Lafayette 108

Part Three: Gender and Violence

Week Seven:

February 27 Reading: Gilligan (1-267)

Screening: *American Me* (Edward James Olmos, 1992, 125 min)

Week Eight:

March 6 Reading: Neroni's *The Violent Woman* (online reserve);
Slocum (Rikke Schubert)

Screening: *The Long Kiss Goodnight* (Renny Harlin, 1996, 120 min)

Week Nine:

March 13 Reading: Neroni's *The Violent Woman* (online reserve)
Midterm Exam (one hour)
NO SCREENING

Week Ten: Spring Break

March 20 No Class
Screen Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* and Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* on your own over the break and we will discuss them when we return

Part Four: Ultra Violence

Week Eleven:

March 27 Reading: Girard (1-168, 309-318)

Screening: *La Última cena (The Last Supper)* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1976, 120 min);
***Second Response Paper Due**

Part Five: Justifiable Violence

Week Twelve:

April 3 Reading: Fanon (1-149)

Screening: *Sweet Sweetback's Baad Asssss Song* (Melvin Van Peebles, 1971, 97min)

Week Thirteen:

April 10 Reading: Fanon (150-315)

Screening: *The Spook Who Sat by the Door* (Ivan Dixon, 1973, 102 min)

Week Fourteen:

April 17 Reading: Slocum (Ed Guerrero, Lee Clark Michell)

Screening: *Frenzy* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1972, 116 min)

Part Six: Violence and Narrative

Week Fifteen:

April 24 Reading: Slocum (Phyllis Frus, Leo Charney)

***Final Paper Due**

Week Sixteen:

May 1 **Final Exam (one hour)**

Final Exam