

College of San Mateo
Official Course Outline

1. **COURSE ID:** ETHN 288 **TITLE:** African-American Cinema
Units: 3.0 units **Hours/Semester:** 48.0-54.0 Lecture hours; and 96.0-108.0 Homework hours
Method of Grading: Letter Grade Only

2. **COURSE DESIGNATION:**
Degree Credit
Transfer credit: CSU; UC
AA/AS Degree Requirements:
 CSM - GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: E1b. Ethnic Studies
 CSM - GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: E5c. Humanities
CSU GE:
 CSU GE Area C: ARTS AND HUMANITIES: C1 - Arts (Arts, Cinema, Dance, Music, Theater)
 CSU GE Area F: ETHNIC STUDIES: Ethnic Studies
IGETC:
 IGETC Area 3: ARTS AND HUMANITIES: A: Arts

3. **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**
Catalog Description:
 Contributions of Blacks in the film industry and their historical relationship to the industry. Extensive use of films, supplemented by lecture and presentations by Black persons involved in the film industry.

4. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):**
 Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:
 1. Analyze the aesthetic, cultural, and social forces that influence African American cinema.
 2. Examine how African American images and stereotypes in cinema affect viewing audiences' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors towards African Americans.
 3. Identify the theme, plot and characters related to African American films.
 4. Synthesize the content of a series of African American films and compare and contrast the content, themes, characters, and plot.
 5. Analyze and articulate concepts such as race and racism, racialization, ethnicity, equity, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization, sovereignty, imperialism, settler colonialism, and anti-racism as understood within African American studies and ethnic studies.
 6. Apply theory and knowledge produced by African American communities to describe the critical events, histories, cultures, intellectual traditions, contributions, lived-experiences and social struggles of those groups with a particular emphasis on agency and group-affirmation.
 7. Critically analyze the intersection of race and racism as they relate to class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, language, and/or age, particularly in African American communities.
 8. Critically review how struggle, resistance, racial and social justice, solidarity, and liberation, as experienced and enacted by African Americans, are relevant to current and structural issues such as communal, national, international, and transnational politics as, for example, in immigration, reparations, settler-colonialism, multiculturalism, and language policies.

5. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**
 Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:
 1. Analyze the aesthetics, cultural, social forces that influence African American cinema.
 2. Examine how African American images and stereotypes in cinema affect viewing audiences' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors towards African Americans.
 3. Identify the theme, plot and characters related to African American films.
 4. Synthesize the content of a series of African American films and compare and contrast the content, themes, characters, and plot.
 5. Analyze and articulate concepts such as race and racism, racialization, ethnicity, equity, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization, sovereignty, imperialism, settler colonialism, and anti-racism as understood within African American studies and ethnic studies.
 6. Apply theory and knowledge produced by African American communities to describe the critical events, histories, cultures, intellectual traditions, contributions, lived-experiences and social struggles of those

groups with a particular emphasis on agency and group-affirmation.

7. Critically analyze the intersection of race and racism as they relate to class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, language, and/or age, particularly in African American communities.
8. Critically review how struggle, resistance, racial and social justice, solidarity, and liberation, as experienced and enacted by African Americans, are relevant to current and structural issues such as communal, national, international, and transnational politics as, for example, in immigration, reparations, settler-colonialism, multiculturalism, and language policies.

6. COURSE CONTENT:

Lecture Content:

1. American Cinema: An Overview
 - A. A brief history of the American film
 - a. Silent and talking
2. An Historical Survey of the Black Stereotype in Society and in Film
 - A. Rastus and African Americans in film
 - B. Birth of a Nation or perpetuation of a stereotype and racial hatred: art or propaganda
 - a. An analysis of theme, plot, special effects, editing, technical production, distribution, producer, writer, actors and actresses
 - b. A look at the effects of the Birth of a Nation on:
 - i. movie industry
 - ii. race relations
 - C. Uncle Tom, mammy, brutal bucks, clowns, criminals, mulattoes, entertainers, and others
3. How the Movies Affect the Black Community
 - A. Positives and negatives: an evaluation of the social values projected by films with Black characters
 - a. 1920s-1930s: Black face, an insult to dignity
 - b. 1930s: the era of the servant
 - i. Stepin Fetchit, Bill Robinson, Clarence Muse, Fredi Washington, Louise Beavers, Rochester, Hattie McDaniels
 - ii. The anti-stereotypicals: Paul Robeson and Rex Ingram
 - c. 1930s-40s: the independent film producer
 - i. Oscar Micheaux: stereotypes or not
 - d. 1940s: new stereotypes and old themes
 - i. The introduction of the light skinned beauty and the musical
 - ii. Movies and stars: Hazel Scott, Lena Horne
 - e. 1950s: the integration movement and films
 - i. Integrated films and interracial love
 - ii. Sydney Poitier, Dorothy Dandridge, Harry Belafonte and associates
 - f. 1960s: the Black power movements and the movies
 - i. The evolution of the new Black hero
 - ii. Militant films with militant themes: overt and subtle
 - a. Gordon Parks, Chester Hines
 - g. 1970s: the Blaxploitation films and the rescue of Hollywood
 - h. 1980s: the decline in the quantity of Black movies and the rise of quality - documentaries, art films, social them
 - i. 1990s - Black independent films and more
 - j. 2000 to present - GenZ and millennial filmmakers
 4. Black Production Companies
 - A. Finances, production, distribution
 5. Black Cinema: The Future

7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Discussion

8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

Writing Assignments:

Students write short critiques of each film addressing themes, plot and characters.

Reading Assignments:

Weekly reading assignments from the assigned texts.

9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Projects
- C. Essay and objective examinations; in-class recitation, written film critiques for each film viewed; survey projects.

10. REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):

Possible textbooks include:

- A. Reid, Mark A., Ed.. *African American Cinema through Black Lives Consciousness*, ed. Wayne State University Press, 2019
- B. Reid, Mark. *Black Lenses, Black Voices: African American Film Now*, ed. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013
- C. Bogle, Donald. *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*, 4th ed. Continuum, 2001
- D. Reqester, Charlene B.. *African American Actresses: The Struggle for Visibility, 1900-1960*, ed. Indiana University Press, 2010
- E. Kisch, J, Spike, L. and Gates, H.L.. *Separate Cinema: The First 100 Years of Black Poster Art*, ed. Reel Art Press, 2014
- F. Barker, D. and McKee, K.. *American Cinema and the Southern Imaginary*, ed. University of Georgia, 2011
- G. Benshoff, H. and Griffin, S.. *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*, 2nd ed. Wiley, 2009
- H. Patterson, Lindsay. *Black films and film-makers: A comprehensive anthology from stereotype to superhero*, ed. Dodd, Mead, 1975
- I. Leab, Daniel. *From Sambo to Superspade: The Black Experience in Motion Pictures*, ed. Houghton Mifflin, 1976
- J. hooks, b. *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies**Reel to Real: Race, Sex and Class at the Movies*, ed. Routledge, 2012

Origination Date: December 2020

Curriculum Committee Approval Date: December 2020

Effective Term: Fall 2021

Course Originator: Malathi Iyengar