

GLOBAL STUDIES: POLITICS AND FILM

Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth, Princeton, New Jersey

Politics and Film (CTY Catalog Course Description)

As early masterworks like Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (Russia, 1925) and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (Germany, 1927) illustrate, film has always been a key medium for exploring and confronting urgent political and social concerns around the world. By dramatizing important, controversial events and situations, directors place viewers into narrative contexts that allow them to experience people and circumstances that might otherwise remain somewhat remote.

This course examines films from different cultures and traditions that deal with some of the most pressing international political issues of our time. From David O. Russell's deconstruction of American military intervention in the Persian Gulf War in *Three Kings* (United States, 1999) to Fernando Meirelles' poignant portrait of abject poverty and the devastation of AIDS in northern Kenya in *The Constant Gardener* (United Kingdom, 2005), students analyze crucial works of world cinema within the complex historical and political contexts which give rise to such films. Beginning with a classic of political filmmaking such as Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (Algeria, 1967), students learn the language of contemporary film criticism and focus on critical issues such as poverty and violence, the just use of force, imperialism, and oppression based upon race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Students also consider how directors approach political issues from different perspectives and narrative techniques.

Students study four to six complete films in depth, and write and revise four formal critical essays. Through intense discussion and analytical writing, students grapple with some of the most prescient issues that our world faces today and gain the foundational skills necessary to successfully engage the ever-increasing complex global society in which we all live.

Reading (for purchase):

- Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*. Fifth ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2004.
- *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families*, Philip Gourevitch (Picador, 1998)
- Morgan, Ted. *My Battle of Algiers: A Memoir*. New York: Smithsonian Books, 2005.

Additional Reading:

- Ebrey, Patricia Buckley, ed. *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*. New York: Free Press, 1993, excerpts
- Cheek, Timothy. *Mao Zedong and China's Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002, excerpts.
- Benson, Linda. *China since 1949*. London: Longman, 2002, excerpts.
- Steve A. Yetiv, *The Persian Gulf Crisis*, excerpts.
- "Bystanders to Genocide: Why the United States Let the Rwandan Tragedy Happen", by Samantha Power, *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 2001.

Note: Morning sessions include a 15-minute break; afternoon and evening sessions include a 10-minute break.

Day 0: Sunday

Evening	Introductions Intro to Course	Students complete and share questionnaire about film and politics. Review course. Define politics, define political film.
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Day 1: Monday

Morning	Film Basics/Analyzing Film	Reading: Corrigan, Ch. 1-2 Pre-assessment: Students view and discuss clip from <i>October</i> (1927, Eisenstein), then write brief essay analyzing clip
Afternoon	Analyzing Film (cont'd) Essay Writing 101	Reading: Corrigan, Ch. 3, and Glossary Film Jeopardy to review key terms Review handouts on plagiarism & footnoting; students create rubric for evaluating essays.
Evening	Film Analysis	View clip: <i>I Am Cuba</i> (part 4) Small group analysis: individually, students identify topics, themes, or questions about the clip on index cards. Then students break into small groups and compare their cards; then organize their cards and create an outline for an analytical essay. Class reviews outlines: what cards did they keep, what cards did they dispose of?

Day 2: Tuesday

Morning	Film Screening	<i>The Battle of Algiers</i> followed by 10-minute free write (reaction to film and 3 or more possible essay topics) and discussion.
Afternoon	Writing period	Write one paragraph on 3 possible essay topics. Select best paragraph to read to group.
Evening	Reading period	Background Reading: Morgan

Day 3: Wednesday

Morning	Writing period	Students draft critical essays.
Afternoon	Film History/Film Genres	Topic: Genre/Realism View & analyze clips: <i>Pepe Le Moko</i> (1936, Duvivier); <i>Paisà</i> (1946, Rossellini); <i>Bicycle Thief</i> (1948, de Sica); <i>Traffic</i> (2000, Soderbergh).
Evening	Reading period	Continue reading Morgan, followed by discussion.

Day 4: Thursday

Morning	Small Group Activities	Debate on torture. (Distribute handout on torture and terrorism.)
Afternoon	Writing or reading period	Students work on critical essays. Those who finish review with I/TA; then continue reading Morgan.
Evening	Writing Workshop	Students discuss each others' papers

Day 5: Friday

Morning	Writing Workshop, cont'd	Students discuss each others' papers
Afternoon	Second Screening	<i>The Battle of Algiers</i> . Students take notes for critical essays.

Sunday

Evening	Writing/reading period	Students revise essays or read Morgan's <i>Battle of Algiers</i>
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Day 6: Monday

Morning	Film Screening	<i>To Live</i> followed by 10-minute free write (reaction to film and 3 or more possible essay topics) and discussion.
Afternoon	Reading Period	Begin background reading: "China's Revolutions"
Evening	Thesis Workshop	Class discussion on writing a successful thesis. Students draft first paragraph and thesis then workshop in groups.

Day 7: Tuesday

Morning	Reading period Small Group Activities	Complete "China's Revolutions"; review with Jeopardy. Students write & perform scripts based on primary sources.
Afternoon	Film History/Film Genres Topic: Theory/Auteur theory.	Brief lecture on eastern/western cinema. View & analyze clips: <i>New Year Sacrifice</i> (1956, Sang); <i>The Yellow Earth</i> (1984, Chen); <i>Raise the Red Lantern</i> (1993, Zhang); <i>Hero</i> (2002, Zhang).
Evening	Writing period	Students work on critical essays.

Day 8: Wednesday

Morning	Workshop	I/TA lead two groups.
Afternoon	Second Screening	<i>To Live</i> . Students take notes for critical essays.
Evening	Writing period	Students finish critical essays.

Day 9: Thursday

Morning	Film Screening	<i>Three Kings</i> followed by 10-minute free write (reaction to film and 3 or more possible essay topics) and discussion.
Afternoon	Writing period	Students draft first paragraphs and thesis.
Evening	Reading period	Historical Background Reading: Yetiv, ch. 1-2. Discussion

Day 10: Friday

Morning	Small Group Activities	Students work in pairs reading sections of Yetiv, ch. 3-7 and begin preparing lessons to peer-teach history of the Persian Gulf Crisis.
Afternoon	Small Group Activities	Peer lessons.

Sunday

Evening	Film History/Film Genres	Topic: War Films/ hero & anti-hero View & analyze clips: <i>The Green Berets</i> (1968, Kellogg); <i>Apocalypse Now</i> (1979, Coppola); <i>Saving Private Ryan</i> (1998, Spielberg).
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Day 11: Monday

Morning [in lab]	Thesis Workshop Writing period	Students workshop first paragraph and thesis in groups. Student draft critical essays.
Afternoon	Second Screening	<i>Three Kings</i> . Students take notes for critical essays.
Evening LAB???	Writing period	Students complete 3K paper or make revisions to first essay (<i>BofA</i> or <i>To Live</i>) and type up paper

Day 12: Tuesday

Morning	Film Screening	<i>Hotel Rwanda</i> followed by free write (reaction to film and 3 or more possible essay topics) and discussion.
Afternoon	Reading period	Background Reading: Gourevitch.
Evening	Roundtable preparation	Students prepare for roundtable on reconciliation.

Day 13: Wednesday

Morning [in lab]	Writing period	Student complete critical essays.
Afternoon	Roundtable	Roundtable on reconciliation.
Evening	Film History/Film Genres	Filming the un-filmable. View & analyze clips: <i>Diary of Anne Frank</i> (1959, Stevens); <i>The Killing Fields</i> (1984, Joffe); <i>Ararat</i> (2002, Egoyan); <i>The Pianist</i> (2002, Polanski).

Day 14: Thursday

Morning [in lab]	Writing period	Student complete critical essays.
Afternoon [in lab]	Writing period	Student complete critical essays.
Evening	Latin American Political Film	Julia presents film clips.

Day 15: Friday

Morning	Film	<i>Dr. Strangelove</i>
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