

SOC 372: Sociology of Film
Summer Session 1, 2016
1:30-2:45 MTWTF, Todd Hall 404

Instructor: Sarah Morton, M.A.
Office: Wilson-Short 147
Email: sarah.morton@wsu.edu
Office Hours: TBA

Course Description:

This course will teach you basic sociological concepts “through” film. While we will discuss the economic, political, and cultural aspects of the film industry, I chose this approach to the class because I think mass media is a great way to teach sociology, other useful skills involved in social science research, and skills you will use in your future careers.

Course Materials:

Required Textbook: *Cinematic Sociology: Social Life in Film (2nd Edition)*
by Jean-Anne Sutherland (Editor) and Kathryn M. Feltey (Editor)
Course assignments: Blackboard (do not email me assignments)
Other course readings: TBA (will be posted in Blackboard)

Course Goals:

The main goal of this course is for you to learn about and apply sociological concepts to film. These concepts will range from basic sociological theory to research methods in sociology (with a special focus on content analysis). Other goals of this course include improving writing and research skills, developing critical thinking, gaining an awareness of social issues portrayed in films, and learning about the role of film in society. Some of these goals may sound boring right now, but film will make these very important concepts more fun and easy to learn!

Expectations:

This course will hopefully be fun and informative, but I expect you to take it seriously. This is an upper-level sociology class, and I will treat it as such. You will need to work hard to excel in this course, but putting in the work will get you the grade you want. I expect your best college writing (free of jargon and other inappropriate language*), respect towards other students and the instructor, and participation through completing assignments in and outside of class. If you need any help with the course, feel free to see me during office hours or contact me via email. I will usually respond very quickly during the week, but less often on weekends. If you need any special accommodations for this course, please let me know.

*Side note on inappropriate language: Some of the films we watch will use language that normally would not be appropriate to use in professional writing. However, it is appropriate to use this language in your assignments if it is relevant to your point, you use direct quotes, and you cite the source (such as the film). Failure to do any of these will result in a loss of points.

Course Requirements (100 Points Total):

In-Class Participation (15%)

For each day I lecture I will provide a “notes sheet” for you to fill out. This is to practice taking good notes and to help you earn your participation grade. I will randomly collect these sheets throughout the semester and grade them on a completion basis, so make sure you come to class and are engaged. Also make sure you complete the readings on time, because I may ask you questions about them in these notes! I will collect 5 of these notes sheets for a total of 15 points. To earn full points, you must completely fill out the notes sheet and correctly answer any questions about the readings I may pose. Some of the notes sheets will have in-class activities over the films we watch, so it won't all be boring!

Assignments (20%)

You will have 4 short writing assignments assessing your ability to apply sociological concepts to film.

Film Blog Posts (15%)

After each film festival week in class, you will need to create a 200 word “blog” post with any connections you can make to the course material (such as theory) and your overall reaction to the film. There will be 6 opportunities to do this, and you must complete 5 of them.

Final Paper (25%)

Your final paper will be a 4-7 page research paper using the two films shown in class from the “film festival” week of your choice. I will supply a rubric in advance outlining other requirements for this paper. I will expect you to use ASA (American Sociological Association) formatting.

Final Exam (25%)

This exam will be online, and will cover material from the in-class lectures. All lecture slides will be posted online in Blackboard.

Grading Scale:

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|----|--------------|
| A | 94-100% |
| A- | 90-93% |
| B+ | 87-89% |
| B | 84-86% |
| B- | 80-83% |
| C+ | 77-79% |
| C | 74-76% |
| C- | 70-73% |
| D+ | 67-69% |
| D | 60-66% |
| F | 59% or below |

Other Course Policies:

Attendance

Although I don't grade on attendance, you must be present in class to get full participation. If you are unable to attend class, please let me know in advance and in writing (preferably by email). You are allowed 1 make-up participation assignment if I collect the notes sheet on your day of absence.

More than 2 unexcused absences will result in a letter grade being dropped from the course, and 4 or more unexcused absences will result in failing the course.

Assignments

All assignments must be turned in to me on Blackboard. If you email me an assignment, I will not grade it. The following loss of points will occur for late assignments:

Same-day late assignments: 10%

1 day late: 25%

2 days late: 50%

3 or more days late: no credit

*I will evaluate emergencies on a case-by-case basis.

Plagiarism/Cheating

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Any instances of either will result in an automatic failure of the course.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: This week will be an introduction to the course and will review basic sociological theories. You will then apply these theories to various film clips.

Week 2: This week I will review basic research methods used in sociology, with a focus on content analysis. We will use film as our data and analyze how it represents social reality using various techniques.

Weeks 3-5: These will be "film festival" weeks. We will watch 2 films per week in class, and I will provide short lectures over each theme for the week. Each week has the following themes:

- Week 3: Social Institutions (with a special focus on education and the labor market)
- Week 4: Race and Class
- Week 5: Gender and Sexuality

Week 6: The final week will be spent wrapping up the course. Your final papers and exam will also be due by the end of this week.

*This schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.