

ANTHROPOLOGY s27

DECODING DISNEY: RACE, GENDER & SEXUALITY IN THE ANIMATED BLOCKBUSTER
SHORT TERM 2012

MTR 10-2 HEDGE 106

INSTRUCTOR

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The full-length cartoons so formative for the current generation of college students become, for us, “cultural texts” subject to anthropological analysis. Students learn to discern America’s contested beliefs and values by unearthing the cultural politics embedded in Disney Corporation’s mainstay—feature length animated motion pictures. Such demystification entails delving beyond apparent surface messages to reveal underlying tensions, recurring contradictions, and even counter-hegemonic themes. With respect to the particular intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability and nation, what distinguishes millennial popular culture from animated productions of the early 20th century? What American cultural continuities do we detect? Given the corporation’s covert messages on love & sex, individualism & freedom, pleasure & entertainment, violence & conquest—to name just a few—what are the implications of Disney’s increasingly global touch?

Students are responsible for all assigned readings, screenings and essays, for keeping an up to date critical viewing journal, and for participating in our collective close textual analysis of the animated content. In addition, small groups conduct independent research on a particular cartoon and teach the rest of the class about the context of its production and reception.

Decoding Disney fulfills requirements for the Rhetoric major and counts towards the Racisms, Film & Media Studies, and Culture & Meaning GECs.

Due to departmental circumstances, this year’s class will be held in conjunction with ANs10 affectionately known as *Anthro Boot Camp* and officially called *Encountering Community: Ethnographic Fieldwork Methodology*. Our focus on American values and beliefs as rendered in Disney’s popular feature length cartoon texts will be supplemented by the fieldwork projects of the methodology students. As anthropologists, we “endeavor to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange” (Spiro 1990) and during the final week students in the two classes will compare notes on the advantages and disadvantages of the diverging approaches to the same material.

Besides doing assigned Lyceum readings, students are required to purchase, read and write about *The Mouse that Roared* by Giroux & Pollock . Additional items are on reserve for student researchers.

SUMMARY OF 2012 COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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|--|-----|
| 1. Attendance at all scheduled meetings | 10% |
| 2. Personal Reflection on formative film (first day) | 10% |
| 3. Weekly Viewing Journal (thematic focus) | 10% |
| 4. Group Presentation on one film (with students in s10) | 20% |
| 5. Draft Essay on Giroux and Pollock | 10% |
| 6. Revised Essay on Giroux and Pollock (entails peer tutor consultation session) | 10% |
| 7. Final Essay (thematic focus) | 15% |
| 8. Report Out to Fieldwork students in final 'Reviewing Viewing' session | 15% |

NB: Portfolio containing all logs, reports and essays due at the end of term

DAILY COURSE CONTOUR for s27

Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays in Hedge 106

10:00-11:30	Student Presentations/Discussion of last Disney Feature Film
11:30-12:30	Lunch/Break
12:30-2:00	Screening of next Disney Feature Film

ASSIGNMENTS IN MORE DETAIL

Items are listed on the day they are due. Bring them to class.

WEEK ONE:

Monday April 23 rd	INTRODUCTION
Presentaton:	Eames Introduction; Logistics Explained
Reading:	Handouts
Screening:	Mickey Mouse Monopoly Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
Tuesday April 24 th	PRESENTATIONS EXPLAINED
Presentation:	Dr. Misty Beck Writing Specialist
Reading:	Giroux Introduction Krazneiwicz Round up the Usual Suspects Eames Avatar and Anthropology
Writing:	Personal Reflection on Formative Film Due
Screening:	Little Mermaid

Thursday April 26th

Presentation: Little Mermaid
Reading: Giroux Chapter One
Kellner Adventures in Media and Cultural Studies
Artz Monarchs, Monsters and Multiculturalism
Screening: Beauty and the Beast
Writing: Turn in your Themed Viewing Log

WEEK TWO

Monday April 30th

Presentation: Beauty and the Beast
Reading: Craven Beauty and the Belles
Screening: Aladdin

Tuesday May 1st

Presentation: Aladdin
Reading: Giroux Chapter Two
Staninger Disney's Magic Carpet Ride
Screening: Lion King (you could attend OIE screening Wed. 6pm)

Thursday May 3rd

Presentation: Lion King
Reading: Giroux Chapter Three
Byrne Racing Disney
Eames Whoopi Afri/Canis
Screening: Pocahontas
Writing: Turn in your Themed Viewing Log
(I will hand out prompt for upcoming paper today)

WEEK THREE

Monday May 7th

Presentation: Pocahontas
Reading: Parekh Pocahontas: The Disney Imaginary
Screening: Hunchback of Notre Dame

Tuesday May 8th

Presentation Hunchback of Notre Dame
Reading: Giroux Chapter Four
Bean Stripping Beauty
Screening Mulan

Thursday May 10th

Presentation: Mulan
Reading: Giroux Chapter Five
Byrne Queering Disney
Screening: Tarzan
Writing: Giroux Paper Draft Due Today

You must meet with a peer tutor by the 15th

WEEK FOUR

You may wish to attend an INTO THE WOODS performance this week

Monday May 14th

Presentation: Tarzan
Reading: Hurley Seeing White
Screening: Princess and the Frog

Tuesday May 15th

Presentation: Princess and the Frog
Reading: Giroux Chapter Conclusion
Screening: Tangled
Writing: Peer Tutor Your session should have happened by now

Thursday May 17th

Presentation: Tangled
Screening: (TBA) Class Choice!
Non Disney: Fern Gully The Last Rainforest?
Pixar: Ratatouille? Wall-E? Nemo?
Non Disney/Live Action: Babe?
Disney/Demi-live action: ...Roger Rabbit?
East Asian contrast: a Miyazake film?
Writing: Giroux Paper Revised Draft Due Today

WEEK FIVE

Monday May 21 st	REVIEWING VIEWING	Textual analysis alone can reveal American cultural contradictions, preoccupations, and established values & beliefs
Tuesday May 22 nd	FIELDWORK FAIR	Observation of people in time and space produces distinctive knowledge, adds insight, tests texts
Thursday May 24 th	PORTFOLIO DUE	That means everything, including Overview Essay on your Viewing Theme

FMI: Initial Tasks for Decoding Disney ANs27 2012

Initial Written Reflection (10 pts)

In a brief and relatively informal essay, due for the second class, please reflect upon your relationship with *one* personally formative Disney animated feature. Under what circumstances did you first encounter the film? With whom did you identify and why? What pleasures or terrors did the film contain for you? What lessons? Only if applicable, briefly articulate some ways in which your attitude shifted over time.

Thematic Viewing Journal (10 pts)

Every student will be responsible for keeping a viewing log focused on their assigned themes. These are to be turned in weekly, and are designed to feed into a thematically-focused final essay.

Group Presentation with Boot Camp Students (20 pts)

A set of three (or perhaps four) students drawn from a combination of s10 and s27 will collaborate to lead a morning class session through a discussion of the film screened the previous afternoon.

Four tasks are involved: 1) Conveying information; 2) Orchestrating a discussion; 3) Supplying an example of afterlife; 4) Assessing your process. Please note that our Teaching Assistants will serve as your advisors and mentors. Be sure to contact them in plenty of time to schedule your consultation!

- 1) The information to be conveyed about your film consists of at least its production history, popular reception, and critical reception.
- 2) Leading discussion entails at least the production and deployment of thought-provoking questions about filmic intertextualities as well as linkages to written course material. These sessions may be enhanced with inventive learning tasks or class activities.
- 3) What I mean when I ask you to supply an example of a film's 'afterlife' is sharing with the class a parody or imitation—examples of subversive or resistant re-readings abound in the world of Disney.
- 4) A brief written retrospective assessment of your role in your group's process is due within a week of your presentation day. It should also include an honest appraisal of relative success and speculate about what to change if you had the chance.

Assignments for upcoming weeks TBA:

Two Drafts of Giroux Essay (10 + 10 = 20 pts)

Final Thematic Essay (15 pts)

'Reviewing Viewing' Session (15pts)

YOU GET TO FOCUS ON THREE THEMES EACH (for discussions, viewing logs and final papers)

EVERYONE GETS TO CHOOSE *ONE* OF THESE TO STICK WITH ALL TERM:

- RACIALIZATION
- PATRIARCHY
- HETERONORMATIVITY
- CASTE ORDERING/CLASS RANKING

AND *TWO* OF THESE (but no more than two people per theme):

1. Age
2. Androgyny/Transgender
3. Attire/Dress
4. Autonomy
5. Beauty
6. Choice
7. Color/Shading
8. Conformity
9. Consumption
10. Dis/Ability
11. Family
12. Friendship/Teamwork
13. Greed/Jealousy
14. Justice
15. Labor/Work
16. Language/Accent/Voice
17. Love/Romance
18. Monstrosity
19. Nature
20. Order/Chaos
21. Persistence
22. Pleasure
23. Queerness
24. Size
25. Strangers
26. Touch
27. Transformation
28. Violence
29. ?
30. ?

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity

All students are responsible for reading and understanding the Bates College Statement on Academic Honesty (see <http://abacus.bates.edu/pubs/Plagiarism/plagiarism.html>). When you turn in an assignment to satisfy the requirements for this course, you are indicating it is your own work. The failure to properly acknowledge your use of another work is plagiarism. When citing your sources, use the American Anthropological Association Style Guidelines (link available on the library website, the department website or see http://www.aaanet.org/publications/style_guide.pdf). Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated by the Instructor and will result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the class. NB: Your instructor serves as the Faculty Co-Chair of the Student Conduct Committee and knows whereof she speaks!

Late Assignments

Overdue assignments will be penalized. Assignments handed in late will be graded down, in fairness to students who have met the deadline. For each day an assignment is late, I will mark it down 1/3rd of a letter grade. For example, a student hands a paper in 2 days late; the initial mark is a B+ but the actual recorded grade will be a B-.

Statement on Learning Differences

If you have any learning difference which may hinder your ability to succeed in the course as laid down in this syllabus, please inform me directly and immediately. I will then endeavor to make adjustments to improve the learning environment for all concerned. Also always remember to contact Holly Gurney in the Dean of Students Office (786-6220 or hgurney@bates.edu) if you have these or other special needs.

Additional Class Policies

- Come to class with assigned material in hand and be prepared to discuss them.
- Many additional items are on reserve for you to consult as you require.
- Arrive to class on time, leave only during breaks, and turn off all cell phones.
- Only on rare occasions should a computer be open in class (but see me if yours is required as an accommodation).
- Practice active and respectful listening.
- If you cannot attend class, contact me directly.
- No assignments may be submitted via email.
- All work must be completed in order to receive a passing grade for this course.

FYI FOR DECODING DISNEY STUDENTS (boot camp syllabus first page)
 ANTHROPOLOGY s10
 ENCOUNTERING COMMUNITY: ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY
A.K.A.: "ANTHRO BOOT CAMP"
 SHORT TERM 2012 *MTWR 10-4 Hedge 106*

INSTRUCTOR	TEACHING ASSISTANT	WRITING SPECIALIST
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Required of all sophomore anthropology majors (and available to Environmental Studies majors on the 'human culture' track), this short term unit teaches students not only how to "do ethnography" but how to "be anthropologists." A series of skill-building exercises (along with screenings, readings and discussions) will focus learners' attention upon anthropological praxis, epistemology, and the ethics of fieldwork. By the end of five exceptionally intense weeks, students will have been trained to conduct original ethnographic fieldwork. Bates anthropology majors will then be prepared for junior year independent study projects and subsequently for their senior theses.

Due to departmental circumstances, this year's class will be held in conjunction with ANs27 *Decoding Disney*. Hence, our focus will be on deciphering American values and beliefs as rendered in Disney's popular feature length cartoon texts from the millennial period. Primary fieldwork sites may be related to our Disney theme, but, alternatively, they might derive from a longstanding affiliation or interest unrelated to media representations. As anthropologists we "endeavor to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange" (Spiro 1990).

Besides doing all Lyceum readings, students are required to purchase and read two textbooks: *Fieldworking* by Sunstein & Chiseri-Slater and also *The Mouse that Roared* by Giroux & Pollock

SUMMARY OF 2012 COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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|--|-----|
| 1. Attendance at all scheduled meetings | 10% |
| 2. Participation in all group activities | 10% |
| 3. Group Presentation on one film (with students in s27) | 20% |
| 4. Fieldwork exercises (every 'Box' and 'Do This' is required, unless specifically excluded) | 35% |
| 5. Ethnographic Essay Draft | 10% |
| 6. Presentation to Decoding Disney students in final week's 'Fieldwork Fair' | 15% |

NB: Portfolio containing all analytical exercises and essays due at the end of term