FILM 2282.01 POLITICAL FICTION FILM:  Woods College of Advancing Studies
Summer Session I: May 18-June 22
Mondays: 6:00-9:15pm

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Office Hours: Prior to class and by appointment
Boston College Mission Statement
Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description: Since the rise of Communism in Russia following the 1917 revolution, Americans have had a profound ambivalence toward Russia. During almost a century since the revolution, the relationship froze, thawed, and iced over again, only to be in abeyance in recent days of a Russian crackdown on civic freedoms, the growth of the Russian Mafia, and the return to power of former KGB official, Vladimir Putin. The socio-political power of film follows parallel to the ideological changes in the relationship of the two countries. This course will provide the student with the history of America’s rapport with the Soviet Union focusing especially on the period of the Cold War.

Required Readings: Read and referenced throughout the course
Terry Christensen and Peter J. Haas. *Projecting Politics: Political Messages in American Films* (Routledge)


Textbooks & Readings (Recommended)

Brian Neve: *Film and Politics in America*
Canvas
Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) at Boston College, designed to help faculty and students share ideas, collaborate on assignments, discuss course readings and materials, submit assignments, and much more - all online. As a Boston College student, you should familiarize yourself with this important tool. For more information and training resources for using Canvas, click here.

Course Objectives
1. To understand the history of the US socio-political scene through film.

2. To determine the ideology viewed in each of the films.

3. To develop a skill for film analysis.

4. To write coherently on the content of the various political issues expressed in film.

Grading
Final grades are determined by the quality of the research papers and content of the final exam. However, class attendance and participation in discussions comprise a good portion of the grade as well. Late papers will be marked a grade less.
The undergraduate grading system for Woods College is as follows:

A (4.00), A- (3.67)
B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67)
C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67)
D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67)
F (.00)

All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Students who complete course evaluations can access grades earlier, as they are posted.

Requirements:

2 research papers (4 pp. each with footnotes and bibliography)

Due: June 6 and June 20

Required readings

Required film viewings (O’Neill Reserves)

Class attendance/discussion

Final exam : June 22
Course Assignments
It is expected that you will spend 8 hours per week on out-of-class assignments and exercises. These are listed below. Please note that some weeks will require more time and some weeks less time but the average is approximately 8 hours per week over the semester.

Late papers will be marked one grade less.

Course Syllabus:

1. May 18: Intro. to Political Fiction Film/Racism
   Integrating Sports: 42 (Jackie Robinson biopic)
   Jackie Robinson (Ken Burns documentary)
   Lou Montgomery: A Legacy Restored
   Read: Hilliard: Chapter 7 “Racism”
   O’Neill Reserve: Do the Right Thing

2. May 20: Racism (cont.)
   Essence of Political Film
   Racial Stereotypes: Color Adjustment
   Early Prejudices: Birth of a Nation
   Black Balance: Oscar Micheaux: Midnight Ramble
   Southern Whites Supreme: Gone with the Wind
   Black and White Together: Defiant Ones
   Institutional Racism: Raisin in the Sun
   White Prejudice: Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner
   Read: Tom, Coons, Mulattoes, Bucks and Mammies (Bogle, on Reserve)
   Christinsen: “Political Environment of Film”

3. May 23: Terrorism
   Israeli Revenge: Munich
   Anti-Colonialism: Battle of Algiers

4. May 25: The War Film:
   Pacifist: All Quiet on the Western Front (1930 version)
   Russian Allies: North Star
   Guts & Glory: Green Berets
   Realism: Platoon
   Action: Behind Enemy Lines
Read: Hilliard: Chapter 2 “War”  
Christensen: “Hollywood Goes to War”

O’Neill Reserve: Paths of Glory

NO CLASS MAY 30, MEMORIAL DAY

5. June 1: Anti-Semitism  
   Clanish: The Longest Hatred  
   Social/Cultural: Gentleman’s Agreement  
   Crossfire  
   Nazi Terror: Great Dictator  
   Post-Traumatic Stress: The Pawnbroker  
   Neo-Nazis: Nazis in America

Read: Hilliard: Chapter 3 “Anti-Semitism”
O’Neill Reserve: Michalczyk’s Of Stars & Shamrocks

6. June 6: Prison and Justice System  
   Documentary Realism: Titicut Follies  
   Early Prison Images: The Big House  
   Chain Gang Images: I am Fugitive from the Chain Gang  
   Cool Hand Luke  
   Innocence Denied: Shawshank Redemption

Read: Hilliard: Chapter 4 “Prison and Justice Systems”

FIRST PAPER DUE: A film from one of the earlier topics

7. June 8: Poverty  
   Industrialization: Modern Times  
   Migrant Workers: Grapes of Wrath  
   Southern Poverty: Sounder  
   Single Mother Concerns: Places in the Heart  
   Irish Comic-tragedy: Angela’s Ashes

Read: Hilliard: Chapter 6: “Poverty”  
Christinsen: “Political Movies and the Great Depression”
O’Neill Reserve: Grapes of Wrath (entire film)

8. June 13: Unions

Mining Crisis: Salt of the Earth  
Swimming with the Fishes: Hoffa
Feminine Strength: *Norma Rae*

**Read:** Hilliard: “Labor-Management”

9. **June 15: Politics**
- Government Corruption: *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*
- Louisiana Politics: *All the King’s Men*
- Corruption Uncovered: *The Candidate*
- Following the Money: *All the President’s Men*

**Read:** Hilliard: Chapter 8 “Politics” (over two classes)
**O’Neill Reserve:** Burns’ *Huey Long*

10. **June 20: Sexuality—Images of Women and Homosexuality**
- Vestal Virgin: *Birth of a Nation*
- Femme Fatale: *Mildred Pierce*
- A Woman Scorned: *Fatal Attraction*
- Women on the Run: *Thelma and Louise*
- Out of the Closet: *Celluloid Closet*
- Killer AIDS: *Philadelphia*
- Two’s a Scream: *Birdcage*
- Uphill Battle: *Brokeback Mountain*

**Read:** Hilliard: Chapter 9 “Homophobia”
**O’Neill Reserve:** *Celluloid Closet*

Second Paper Due: Topic—Sexuality, Politics, or Labor

11. **June 22: Final Exam**

**WEB RESOURCES:**
- [www.bc.edu/libraries/research/howdoi/s-findfilm reviews](http://www.bc.edu/libraries/research/howdoi/s-findfilm reviews)
- [www.bc.edu/libraries/research/guides/s-films](http://www.bc.edu/libraries/research/guides/s-films)

**DATABASES:**
- International Index of Performing Arts
- American Film Institute Catalog
- Expanded Academic ASAP (wide variety of disciplines)
- [www.bc.edu/libraries/resources/databases](http://www.bc.edu/libraries/resources/databases) (click Performing Arts and Film under Browse Databases by Subject)

[For the Participation Grade, a form will be distributed at the final class to note readings, programs, screenings done for the course, etc.]