



# Northeastern University

## POLS2333 ~ Politics and Film

- Fall 2015 -

M/W: 2:50 - 4:30pm ~ 265 Ryder Hall

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Office Hours: TBA

### Objective

The objective of this course is to instruct the student on the interconnected roles of Politics and the Film Industry. Students will have the opportunity to gain an understanding of the film as a political tool while learning how to read the political messages of films. Students will also be shown how politics affects the film industry and some of its decision-making processes. Lastly, students will be exposed to several archetypes of political filmmaking, be able to watch full length examples of these, and be given the opportunity to discuss the content and techniques of these films.

### Reading Materials

#### Required Texts

Giglio, Ernest. Here's Looking at you: Hollywood, Film, and Politics.  
Christensen, Terry & Peter Haas. Projecting Politics: Political Messages in Film  
Butters, Gerald R. Banned in Kansas: Motion Picture Censorship, 1915-1966.

#### Required Films

You are not required to purchase any films for this course. You will be required to watch several films during the semester. These films will be available in the Snell Library's Media Center. Opportunities to watch a film outside of class (in the evenings) may be possible during the semester; Any said opportunities will be publicized in class.

### Grading and Requirements

All assignments should be passed in by the assigned deadline. If you need to pass an assignment in late or if you need to miss an exam, please talk to me PRIOR to the due date. Consideration for missed/late exams/papers that I am notified about after the due date will only be accepted with proper documentation. Assignments late without permission or documentable reason may not be graded, at the discretion of the professor.

Midterm: 30%

Final Exam: 30%

Paper: 20%

(Including a short proposal)

Participation & Attendance: 20%

## Course and Department Policies

### **Academic Honesty Statement:**

Warning. The Department of Political Science takes very seriously the issue of academic honesty. Any student who appears to violate the University's Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy (see [www.osccr.neu.edu/policy.html](http://www.osccr.neu.edu/policy.html)) may be referred to the University's Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If a proven violation involves an exam or course assignment, the student shall receive a failing grade for the assignment, in addition to sanctions imposed by the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Individual faculty, with the support of the Department, can impose harsher penalties as they deem necessary.

The Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy includes cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and other types of dishonest activities. Plagiarism is defined broadly as taking ideas, concepts, or actual words of another person and passing them off as your own work. Of particular note in recent years is the increase in cut-and-paste plagiarism, which involves downloading phrases from websites or other Internet sources. Your instructor will clarify specific guidelines on fair use of material for this class, but you should regard this as your official warning.

### **Amendments**

The Instructor reserves the right to change this Syllabus during the semester. In the event that the syllabus is changed, the class will be informed at the next session of the class. Students are expected to maintain an up-to-date version of the Syllabus for their personal reference.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. Excluding excused absences, students are expected to miss not more than 2 classes or meetings. The professor retains the right to lower any student's grade for failure to meet attendance expectations or failure to support the learning environment through regular attendance and participation. This includes attendance at all presentations.

### **Extensions & Late Assignments**

Requests for extensions will only be considered prior to the due date of an assignment. Assignments will not be accepted late unless they are accompanied by documentation detailing circumstances covered under University Policies.

### **Film Assignments**

For each week, Pick (1) of the films listed and watch entirely. When there are two films listed, please watch at least 30 minutes of the other film. When there are three listed, one is required and you must choose one of the other two to watch in addition. You are invited to watch all films in their entirety if you have either the time or the interest.

### **Film Viewing**

During this class you will be asked to watch some films that may be offensive to you for political, social, or moral reasons. You may also encounter scenes with graphic language, violence, or nudity. Before any film is shown in class or is assigned, the professor will give a general disclaimer about the content of the film. If, for any reason, you are uncomfortable viewing specific material, appropriate accommodations will be made for you. I do ask that you remain open-minded during this class and that you expose yourself to different viewpoints whether political, social, or moral.

### **TRACE Surveys**

All students are required to participate in the TRACE evaluation process. TRACE is accessible through the MyNEU Portal and can be filled out on most electronic devices.

# Schedule

## Week 1: Sept 9

Introduction, Course Outline,  
Film Art Part I

*Readings: Giglio: Ch. 1, Christensen, Ch. 1*

*Films: In class scenes only*

## Week 2: Sept 14/16

Film Art Part II  
Filmmakers  
Genres

*Reading: Christensen, Ch. 2 & 3.*

*Films: In class scenes only*

## Week 3: Sept 21/23

Realism, Classicism, Formalism  
Categories of Political Film

*Readings: Giglio, Ch. 2, Christensen, Ch. 4.*

*Films: In class scenes only*

## Week 4: Sept 28/30

Documentary

*Reading: Giglio, Ch. 3, Christensen, Ch. 12.*

*Films: 1. Fog of War 2. Fahrenheit 9/11*

## Week 5: Oct 5/7

Propaganda & War

*Reading: Giglios, Ch. 8, Christensen Ch. 6.*

*Films: 1. Casablanca (Required), 2. Mrs. Miniver, 3.  
The Life Aquatic*

## Week 6: Oct 14

Historical Perspective  
Paper Proposals DUE: Monday

*Films: 1. Amadeus*

## Week 7: Oct 19/21

Films: Gender  
MID-TERM Exam

*Reading: Christensen, Ch.14.*

*Films: 1. Red Dawn (1984), 2. Thelma & Louise*

## Week 8: Oct 26/28

Social Commentary

*Readings: Christensen, Ch. 13.*

*Films: 1. Pleasantville, 2. Fight Club*

## Week 9: Nov 2/4

Regulation/Censorship

*Reading: Banned in Kansas, ALL*

*Films: 1. Freaks (Required), 2. Birth of a Nation, 3.  
South Park: The Movie.*

## Week 10: Nov 9

Comedy & Political Satire I

*Readings: Giglio, Ch. 10*

*Films: 1. Dr. Strangelove (Required), 2. Clue, 3. Thank  
You For Smoking.*

## Week 11: Nov 16/18

Comedy & Political Satire II  
Politics in the Industry, Part I  
Contemporary Issues on Film

*Read: Giglio, Ch. 5 & 6, Christensen, Ch. 7.*

*Films: 1. Inherit the Wind, 2. Good Night & Good  
Luck*

## Week 12: Nov 23

Politics in the Industry, Part II  
Research Papers DUE:

*Reading: Christensen, Ch. 5 & 8*

*Films: 1. Network, 2. The Player*

## Week 13: Nov 30/ Dec 2

Issue Films: Religion

*Reading: Christensen, Ch. 9 & 10*

*Films: 1. Dogma, 2. Passion of the Christ*

## Week 14: Dec 7/9

Wrap-up & Review

*Reading: Giglio, Ch. 11, Christensen, Ch. 11.*