

ENG 4130 Colonial and Postcolonial Cinema

Class# 26782 Section 9009



Instructor Name: Pietro Bianchi

Course meeting times & location: MWF 5 (11:45 AM – 12:35 PM) Turlington 2334

Screening meeting times & location T E1-E3 (7:20 PM – 10:10 PM) Rolfs Hall 0115 (Projectionist: Brooke Whitaker)

Office Hours: Wednesday 9 AM – 11 AM Turlington 4342 (or Zoom) or by appointment

Course website: elearning.ufl.edu

Instructor Email: pietrobianchi@ufl.edu

This course examines how European Colonial powers (French, British, Italian and German) in their cinematographic history represented the occupation and colonizing of other territories, and visually racialized colonized populations. From the idealization of life in the colonies for propagandistic purposes in pre-WWII cinema to the emergence of films about anti-colonial resistance in the 60s, 70s and 80s, we will analyze how the colonial project has traversed the history of Western Cinema in a neglected and conflicting way. Our task will be to investigate the role of cinema in constructing the “political unconscious” of European Colonial Empires. After a two weeks general introduction to colonial history, in the first part of the course we will focus on propagandistic films produced in the 30s and 40s. However, we are convinced that every account of colonial history will always be incomplete if it does not give voice to the forms of representation of the colonized, given that every colonial occupation is always traversed by conflicts and antagonisms. In the second part of the course we will therefore analyze several examples of anti-colonial cinema from France, United Kingdom, Senegal, Ethiopia, Algeria, Palestine.

The course is based on the analysis of a series of films – usually one long-feature a week, but at times they can also be two – that students will be required to watch during the dedicated screenings at Rolfs Hall and that will be contextualized and discussed together in class (along with excerpts from chapters of monographic volumes and scholarly articles). Assignments include weekly discussion posts on Canvas, two short quizzes, one brief in-class presentation and a 5-pages final research paper.

Course Objectives

Through active and persistent engagement with course materials, activities and discussion in class students will:

- Be able to historically contextualize the films that will be analyzed in class in the history of colonialism and persisting consequences of the colonial project.
- Discuss the impacts of colonialism and imperialism on a variety of communities worldwide and the attitudes of both colonizers and colonized.
- Analyze how European Colonial Empires ideologically represented otherness and discuss the underlying political agenda of these films.
- Analyze and discuss various works of anticolonial cinema from around the world.
- Improve critical analysis capabilities in the process of analyzing and writing on films in general.
- Discuss issues of imperialism, nationalism, racism, race, identity, gender, culture, and consider how filmmakers engage with those issues.
- Find and use scholarly research on postcolonial/diasporic film in an academic essay.

Required Readings and Films

All readings will be available on Canvas in the Files section of the website. No textbook purchase is required for this class. While not being substantial in terms of number of pages the readings will have to be studied thoroughly and with extreme care: together with the films, they will be the subject of class assignments, in-class discussions, presentations and two in-class quizzes. Readings will consist of reviews and scholarly articles that will give an interpretation or an analysis of the films, but also of book chapters and essays that will offer a historical overview and a general reflection on the history of the colonial project. Some of them will be more theoretical and challenging, some other will be more accessible. You are expected to come to class prepared and be able to faithfully summarize the content of every assigned

article or book chapter. If you will encounter particular difficulties with the reading, schedule an appointment with me or come to office hours.

The films required for this class will be screened every Tuesday at 7:20 PM in Rolfs Hall 0115 (the projections will be taken care of by Brooke Whitaker). The screenings should be considered the most essential part of this class and attendance is mandatory. The core of this class will be the discussion and analysis of the films that you will see on Tuesday evening. Films are an integral part of the assignment for the class and need to be watched with care and attention (avoiding taking breaks, avoiding checking the cell phone while watching them, always keeping a notebook where to write down your impressions during the viewing etc.). Some films required for this course might include scenes of menace, violence, and the deaths of humans and other living beings. Some scenes might include nudity and scenes of sexual activity.

Organization of the Class

This is a discussion-based course, where participation is vital and it will be significantly considered for the final grade. Students are strongly encouraged to participate actively in class discussions by asking questions, drawing class attention to passages of the film or of the reading, or offering a possible interpretation. In general (but there will be exceptions, so always check the schedule of classes!) the course will be organized as follows: on Monday I will introduce the film and offer a historical contextualization of the topics of the week; on Tuesday evening there will be the screening at Rolfs Hall 0115; on Wednesday, the class will be briefly introduced by two or three of you where you will share – with a 5-minute presentation – your reflections on the assigned film and reading, and open up the discussion with the class; on Friday we will continue the discussion and I will eventually present other films (or excerpts of films) or subsequent readings.

Course Requirements

The requirements for this course fall under four categories:

Attendance and Participation (10%)

The core of this class will be the discussions class, where your active participation will not only be graded but will be a fundamental component for the success of the class. I firmly believe that more than an individual performance, a university class is a collective effort to increase the knowledge of everyone and regarding which we should all be considered responsible. Please be an active participant of this class! Also, be aware that, **especially in this class**, discussions will often include review of materials not among the assigned texts or films. For these reasons, your presence in class is essential and attendance is mandatory.

No more than three unexcused absences for personal reasons will be tolerated (including Tuesday's screenings). Each additional unexcused absence will reduce your total final grade by 3 percentage points (for instance, if your final grade is 91% and you have 5 unexcused absences, your final grade will be 85%). **More than 6 unexcused absences will result in the automatic failure of the class.**

For every other absence (for medical reason or family emergencies) you should provide documentation as soon as possible, and make up the material covered in class, which includes viewing films and getting notes from class discussion. Absences for religious reasons do not require written documentation, but students should inform me timely so that they reflect credit for attendance. **I will take attendance at the beginning of class. If you are not there when I call your name, you will be counted as absent.**

Requirement for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies>

Post on Canvas and short introduction to the class discussion (20% + 5%)

1. Every Wednesday (starting 1 September), you will be asked to post a short paragraph (around 150 words) on the Discussion section of Canvas with a short reflection and/or a few questions regarding the film/reading assigned for the day. The purpose of this assignment is not to test your knowledge about the film/reading (you do not have to summarize them!) but ask you to share with the class what you believe are the most interesting problematics and questions that emerge from the film. This can also have the form of a question or a series of questions. An original post or a response to someone else's post will equally be counted (discussions are encouraged!). The deadline of the posts on Canvas is **Wednesday at 10:00 am**. You have the possibility to skip this assignment once in the semester without penalty. After that, every post uploaded after 10:00am of the due date will not be considered and receive a failed grade.

2. Once in the semester you will be asked to give a **5 minutes presentation** where you will share your reflections on the assigned film/reading and open up the discussion with the class. Every Wednesday class will be opened by three of you who will introduce and present the film (a calendar will be given in the second week).

Short Quizzes (20% + 20%)

Twice times during the semester there will be a short quiz based on few open-ended questions related on the readings and films analyzed in that section of the semester. They can cover general or specific topics related to the readings, films and discussions held in class.

Final research essay (25%)

A final 1,500-2,000 words research paper on a research topic related to the material covered in class. The paper is a research project, wherein you will have the opportunity to further expand upon, analyze in more detail, or take in new directions the material covered in the course. You may want to explore in more depth one of the films that we analyzed; make connections between several of them; examine a specific theme or issue that emerges in a number of different works; compare and contrast the arguments of different scholars in the analysis of a film; or try something else altogether. All paper topics must be approved in advance by the instructor (either coming to office hours – which is strongly encouraged – or by email) and submitted before the Thanksgiving break. The essay is due the last day of class.

Evaluation

Evaluation method in this course is consistent with UF's policies on grading

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)

Grades are calculated on a numeric scale, as below:

A 90–100	A- 87–89	
B+ 84–86	B 80–83	B- 77–79
C+ 74–76	C 70–73	C- 67–69
D+ 64–66	D 60–63	D- 57–59

A grade of 56 or below is a failing grade (E). A minimum final grade of C is required for General Education Credit.

Cell phones and Computers

The use of personal computers and other electronic devices in class is acceptable only for purposes related to class discussion and collaboration. Casual web browsing, emailing, chatting, texting, etc. unrelated to class activities will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of the intellectual works of others, including published and unpublished material from the web or friends, as well as purchased papers or other research materials. Every form of cheating will result in a letter grade F for this course and in a report of misconduct to the Dean of Students Office.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/ ([Links to an external site.](#)) ([Links to an external site.](#)) ([Links to an external site.](#))) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester and contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Statement on Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sexual, racial, ethnic, gender, and religious discrimination and sexual harassment.

Online Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc> and 392-1575

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

Class Schedule

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Week 1

8/23 Presentation of the course

8/25 What is Colonial Cinema?

8/27 What is Colonial Cinema?

(reading: Edward Said, *Orientalism*, excerpts)

Week 2

8/30 Presentation of *Concerning Violence*

8/31 **Screening: *Concerning Violence*** (Göran Hugo Olsson, 2014, Sweden, 90min., English/Swedish/French/Portuguese w/ Eng subtitles)

9/1 Blog post #1 Discussion on *Concerning Violence*

9/3 Screening in class of excerpts of *L'Atlantide* (Jacques Feyder, 1921, France, silent)

(reading: Amber Murrey, *Review Concerning Violence*)

PART II: COLONIAL CINEMA

Week 3

9/6 (Holiday: Labor Day)

9/7 **Screening: *Pépé le Moko*** (Julien Duvivier, 1937, France, 94 min., French w/ Eng subs)

9/8 Blog post #2 Discussion on *Pépé le Moko*

9/10 Discussion on *Pépé le Moko*

(readings: Slavin, D. H., *Colonial Cinema and Imperial France, 1919–1939: White Blind Spots, Male Fantasies, Settler Myths*) (excerpts)

Week 4

9/13 Presentation of *Lo squadrone bianco*

9/12 **Screening: *Lo squadrone bianco*** (Augusto Genina, 1936, Italy, 94 min., Italian w/ Eng Subs)

9/15 Blog post #3 Discussion on *Lo squadrone bianco*

9/17 Screening in class of excerpts of *Sentinelle di bronzo* [Dusky Sentinels] (Romolo Marcellini, 1937, Italy, 92 min, version dubbed in English)/ Discussion on *Lo squadrone bianco*

(reading: Angelo Del Boca, *The Myths, Suppressions, Denials, and Defaults of Italian Colonialism*; Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Lo squadrone bianco*)

Week 5

9/20 Screening in class of excerpts of *Sentinelle di bronzo* [Dusky Sentinels] (Romolo Marcellini, 1937, Italy, 92 min, version dubbed in English) / Presentation of *L'esclave blanc*

9/21 **Screening:** *L'esclave blanc* (Jean-Paul Paulin, 1936, France, 77min., French w/ Eng subs)

9/22 Blog post #4 Discussion of *L'esclave blanc*

9/24 Discussion on *L'esclave blanc*

(reading: Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Imperial Bodies, Slaves of Love, Slaves of Labor*)

Week 6

9/27 Presentation of *Germanin - Die Geschichte einer kolonialen Tat*

9/28 **Germanin - Die Geschichte einer kolonialen Tat** (Max W. Kimmich, 1943, Germany, 88min., German w/ Eng subs)

9/29 Blog post #5 Discussion on *Germanin - Die Geschichte einer kolonialen Tat*

10/1 Quiz #1

Week 7

10/4 Presentation of *Sanders of the River*

10/5 **Screening:** *Sanders of the River* (Zoltán Korda, 1935, United Kingdom, 98 min, English)

10/6 Blog post #6 Discussion on *Sanders of the River*

10/8 Holiday (Homecoming)

PART III: NOTES FROM ANTI-COLONIAL STRUGGLES

Week 8

10/11 Presentation of *Battle of Algiers*

10/12 **Screening:** *Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966, Italy/Algeria, 120 min., Arabic/French w/ English subs)

10/13 Blog post #7 Discussion on *Battle of Algiers*

10/15 Discussion on *Battle of Algiers*

(reading: Sherzer, D., *Cinema, Colonialism, Postcolonialism: Perspectives from the French and Francophone Worlds*, excerpts)

Week 9

10/18 Presentation of *Adwa: an African Victory*

10/19 **Screening:** *Adwa: an African Victory* (Haile Gerima, 1999, Ethiopia/Italy/United States, 96 min., Amharic, English w/ Eng subs)

10/20 Blog post #8 Discussion on *Adwa: an African Victory*

10/22 Discussion on *Adwa: an African Victory*

(reading: Tekletsadik Belachew, *The Dead Speaking to the Living. Religio-Cultural Symbolisms in the Amharic Films of Haile Gerima*)

PART IV: POST-COLONIAL CINEMA

Week 10

10/25 Presentation of *Xala*

10/26 **Screening:** *Xala* (Ousmane Sembène, 1975, Senegal, 123 min., French/Wolof w/ Eng subs)

10/27 Blog post #9 Discussion on *Xala*

10/29 Discussion on *Xala*

Week 11

11/1 Presentation of *Teza*

11/2 **Screening:** *Teza* (Haile Gerima, 2008, Ethiopia/Germany/France, 140 min., Amharic/English/German w/ Eng subs)

11/3 Blog post #10 Discussion on *Teza*

11/5 Discussion on *Teza*

Week 12

11/8 Presentation of *Soleil O*

11/9 **Screening:** *Soleil O* (Mauritania, 1967, Med Hondo, 98 min., Arabic w/eng subtitles)

11/10 Blog post #11 Discussion on *Soleil O*

11/12 Quiz #2

Week 13

11/15 Presentation of *Game of Love and Chance*

11/16 **Screening:** *Game of Love and Chance* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2003, France, 123 min., French w/ Eng subs)

11/17 Blog post #12 Discussion on *Game of Love and Chance*

11/19 Discussion on *Game of Love and Chance*

PART V: COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM TODAY

Week 14

11/22 Introduction to Colonialism and Imperialism Today

11/24 Holiday (Thanksgiving)

11/26 Holiday (Thanksgiving)

Week 15

11/29 Presentation of *Atlantics*

11/30 **Screening:** *Atlantics* (Mati Diop, 2019, France/Senegal/Belgium, 104 min., Wolof/English w/Eng subs)

12/1 Blog post #13 Discussion on *Atlantics*

12/3 Discussion on *Atlantics*

Week 16

12/6 Concluding remarks

12/8 Final paper due