

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
PERS 2615 Politics & Film
Syllabus

Instructor:

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Description:

A study of regional and global political processes and institutions, policy issues, and political personalities using documentaries and movies as the teaching medium. Techniques will include analysis of plot, theme, significant characters, and selected criticism.

Class Schedule:

Class meets each Wednesday, from 5:30 PM to 10:15 PM, during the 8-week term—August 13, 2008 through October 1, 2008.

Course Texts:

Christensen, T. & Haas, P. (2005). *Projecting politics: Political messages in American films*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc. ISBN 9-780765-614445.

Giglio, E. (2007). *Here's looking at you: Hollywood, film & politics* 2nd Edition. New York: Peter Lang. ISBN 9-780820-470993

Course Requirements:

Each student will:

1. Prepare for every class
2. Actively (and respectfully) participate in class discussions, presentations, and projects
3. Complete all class assignments on-time
4. Have computer skills sufficient to navigate the Internet, e-mail attachments, communicate via e-mail, and manipulate Microsoft Office applications (Microsoft Word and PowerPoint as examples)

Course Objectives / Desired Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the political intent and content of political films and their relationship to the development public policy.

2. Evaluate how our political system may be affected by film and vice versa from the 1900's-2000's .
3. Evaluate the political, economic, social issues influencing film production
4. Discuss the politics of filmmaking to include questions of political agenda, film accuracy (historical et cetera), and societal portrayal as examples.

Objectives will be achieved through presenting chapters, watching films, developing research papers, analyzing films and completing selected readings .

Prior to First Class Session:

Read *Projecting Politics* Part 1 Chapters 1-3 and preview Appendices 1 & 2

Read *Here's Looking at You* Preface and Chapter 1 then preview the text

Instructor reserves the right to change assigned chapters as needed.

E-mail me at faubhaus@valdosta.edu identifying your preferred e-mail address for class communications

Week 1 August 13:

Discussions / Activities:

Discuss class schedule and assign reading assignments

Discuss syllabus, concerns, and comments

Preview texts

Establish chapter presentation groups as necessary.

Assign Film analyses

Discuss research papers and topics

Discuss group chapter presentations and topic debate requirements

Use this link for movie information: The Internet Movie Database

<http://www.imdb.com/> and to view video www.watch-movies.net

Week 2 August 20:

Submit Film Analysis: *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939)

Reading:

Projecting Politics: Chapters 4 & 5

Here's Looking at You: Chapters 1 & 2

Week 3 August 27:

Submit Film Analysis: *Twelve Angry Men* (1957)

Reading:

Projecting Politics: Chapter 7: *The 1950's*

Here's Looking at You: Chapter 6

Week 4 Sept 03:

Submit Film Analysis: *All the President's Men* (1976)

Reading:

Projecting Politics: Chapter 9: *The 1970's*

Here's Looking at You: Chapter 8

Week 5 Sept 10:

Submit Film Analysis: *Goodnight and Good Luck* (2005)

Reading:

Projecting Politics: Chapter 10: *The 1980's*

Here's Looking at You: Chapter 9

Week 6 Sept 17:

Submit Film Analysis: *Thirteen Days* (2000)

Reading:

Projecting Politics: Chapter 11: *The 1990's and Beyond 9/11*

Here's Looking at You: Chapter 10

Week 7 Sept 24:

Submit research paper

Present research paper findings

Week 8 Oct 01:

Present research paper findings

Evaluations

ACADEMIC POLICIES:

Attendance Policy:

PARTICIPATION is the **KEY** to your success in this class and participation is impossible if you are not present. Students should attend every class and submit work when it is due. It is VSU's policy that if you miss more than two classes - excused or not, you will receive a "W" or "I" grade in the class! Do not let this happen to you!

Absences:

1. Contact me in advance (minimum of 24 hours) of any absence. Make-up work will be given only if the absence is excused (copy of military orders or command memo, written memo from superior, or a signed doctor's note).

2. Failure to discuss your absence, with me in advance (of the absence), or as soon as possible thereafter, and failure to provide me with written documentation of the excuse, will result in (a) an “unexcused absence” (b) losing a chance to make-up work, and (c) losing class attendance points. Furthermore, class work will not be accepted, if you are unexcused, on the day class work is due.
3. Your absence, on the day of your respective chapter presentation or topic debate, will result in an “F” for that assignment.

Tardy and Leaving Early:

1. You are expected to arrive on time and attend the class (for the entire period). Failure to do so will be counted as an absence at the discretion of the instructor.
2. Emergencies are the exception provided the instructor receives an explanation as soon as possible.
3. Leaving early, without a justifiable reason or without being excused by the instructor, constitutes an unexcused absence or a reduced class participation grade or both. I am a proponent of class participation and active learning. Neither can take place if you leave early or decide not to attend.

Late Work:

All assignments are due as designated and at the beginning of class. If you are absent (presuming absence is excused), you are expected to make every reasonable effort to provide the assignment to me at the time that it was due, but in no case more than one-week.

Emergencies (medical et cetera) and official military duty are exceptions (with proper documentation).

The penalties for late work:

One-day late:	One letter-grade reduction
Two-days late:	Two-letter-grade reductions
Three or more-days late:	No credit for assignment(s)

Classroom Accommodations/ Modifications:

Valdosta State University complies fully with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you believe you are covered under this Act, and if you have need for special arrangements to allow you to meet the requirements of this course, please contact personnel at the VSU Center at the Naval Submarine Base. The office will put you in contact with VSU’s Special Services Office. Furthermore, please discuss this situation with me at the first class meeting.

Classroom Behavior:

Eating and drinking in class is permitted if you (a) do not disturb the other students, and (b) deposit all your trash in the proper trash receptacles upon exiting the class.

Please observe the smoking areas (if available) and parking areas, and comply with all rules of SUBASE, the building, and VSU.

Using cellular phones (text messaging and phone calls) is prohibited. Please set cell phones on vibrate mode to avoid / reduce class disruption. Disregarding this request will result in a **10-point deduction** (minimum) in your weekly participation grade, for lack of respect toward others. The second offense will result in withdrawal from class. A signed memo from the VSU director or assistant director, stating such actions will cease, is required for admittance back into class activities. Thank you for your assistance.

GRADING:

Film Policy Position Papers (30%)

During the term, as a group you will develop an 8-12 page political analysis of a selected movie(s) using *A Guide for the Political Analysis of Movies* (in the *Projecting Politics* text) for content guidance. Students will use APA 5th edition format style in developing the papers. The paper presentation will be 10-20 minutes or as needed.

Class Presentations (20%)

There are two (2) class presentations: Film analysis presentation and Chapter presentation as determined.

During your chapter presentation, consistent/excessive reading from (a) the text, (b) your notes, or (c) PowerPoint is an unacceptable practice in developing your academic knowledge and skills. That practice will result in a significant grade reduction (minimum 20-30 points). Individually or as a group, chapter presentations will include a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation and class handouts. Details will be discussed in Week 1.

Quizzes (10%)

The scheduled quizzes assess student knowledge and understanding of issues that are discussed in class.

Film Analysis Assignments (30%)

Complete and submit Film Analysis Reports for assigned films. Film analysis reports and guidelines will be assigned and distributed during Week 1.

Participation / Attendance (10%)

If you attend all classes, you will receive ten points toward your final grade. See *Attendance Policy* for details

Class participation is important toward your academic success in PERS 2615. Participation is evident in Policy Position Paper, film analyses, and presentations, class discussion, and attendance.

COURSE GRADING:

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

90% and over = A

80 - 89% = B

70 - 79% = C

65 - 69% = D

64% and below = F