Inhabiting Other Lives: Self and Other

*Third World: First Class*

IDH 2004  
Section 51  
Class Number 11688  
Spring 2007  
Thursdays, 2:00-4:45 pm  
Library 150

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, 8 am – 3 pm  
and before and after class

This Honors seminar will expose you to issues of human commonality and diversity, and invite you to investigate and to understand the interconnectedness of other cultures, times and sets of life experiences. As we did last semester, we will explore foreign films.

Foreign films open up a new world of exotic traditions; amazing settings; fascinating architecture; strange costumes, objects, and people; and customs you’ve never heard of. You will read subtitles and listen to the sounds of languages you don’t speak. You will get to observe people behaving under extremely different circumstances but acting a lot like you.

We will screen about a dozen films representative of contemporary international film. I hope they will help you understand the history, politics, society, economy and aesthetic conventions of their largely non-Western cultures.

I have selected films distributed by the Global Film Initiative, a San Francisco-based, nonprofit foundation bringing award-winning films from the developing world to the United States. The Global Film Initiative promotes cross-cultural understanding. Its comprehensive effort to give value to stories from every corner of the world plays a vital role in promoting tolerance in all areas of human behavior.
Please see the attached list of films we will be screening at

http://www.globalfilm.org/catalogue04.htm
http://www.globalfilm.org/catalogue05.htm
http://www.globalfilm.org/catalogue.htm

Miami International Film Festival

Also, time and conditions permitting, I hope we can collectively and individually attend screenings of great foreign films this spring.

This is not merely a film appreciation course. Our objectives are to:

- Learn how societies other than our own address human needs and concerns
- Develop an understanding of non-Western cultures’ traditions, beliefs, and values
- Interpret patterns of behavior reflecting values and attitudes in different societies
- Develop an understanding of diverse geography and environments
- Develop an understanding of the ways in which culture, gender, and class affect individual and collective identities and experiences
- Develop an understanding of political ideas, institutions, struggles, and conflicts
- Learn of beliefs, sentiments, values and issues that unite and divide people
- Stretch our eyes, ears, and intellect by acquiring a taste for foreign films

Texts: The films (see attachment)

Course Methods:
- Film screenings
- Lectures
- Discussions
- Research
- Oral presentations
- Formal writing assignments
Course Requirements:
- View all films in class
- Actively participate in class discussions
- Submit all work on time

Grading
- Class participation . . . . . . . 33%
- Oral Presentation . . . . . . . 33%
- Formal writing assignment . . . . . . . 34%

Course Policies

Attendance
Class attendance is mandatory. Exceptions will, of course, be made for illnesses, emergencies, and religious holidays. Excessive absences will result in a lower grade.

Tardiness
Please come to class on time. Excessive tardiness will result in a lower grade.

Late Work
Please submit work on time. Exceptions will, of course, be made for illnesses, emergencies, and religious holidays. Excessive late submissions will result in a lower grade.

Academic Integrity
This course adheres to all Honors College and general University rules and regulations regarding academic integrity, by which I mean plagiarism and cheating.

Modification of Syllabus
I retain the right to modify the course syllabus for any reason throughout the semester provided that (1) fair and adequate notice is given to enrolled students either by email or in writing, (2) modifications to the syllabus are not arbitrary or capricious, and (3) students are not unfairly disadvantaged by mid-semester changes to grading standards, attendance standards, or performance measure.
Global Film Initiative

History repeatedly points to the importance of great storytelling in human affairs. Even today, an authentic narrative can foster trust and respect between cultures and mitigate cultural prejudice. In recent times, no medium has been as effective at communicating the range and diversity of the world’s cultures as the cinematic arts.

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