

INTERROGATING POPULAR REPRESENTATIONS OF BRITAIN THROUGH FILM

IFSA-Butler London Flagship

US semester credit hours: 3 credits
Contact Hours: 45; four hours per week
Course Code: AN381-04 or COM381-04
Course length: Semester
Delivery method: Face to face
Language of Instruction: English

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course interrogates the ways in which contemporary British society is oft depicted through film, questioning the values, assumptions and attitudes that are presented. Utilizing theories of anthropology and communications, vibrant space for critical comparisons between real life and dramatic imagery is offered. Is British film a *reflection* of British society or is it a *guide* that people use to create it. This is an experiential learning course where students will learn production techniques and use those techniques to create their own short videos on their smart phones reflecting the questions and approaches brought up in the course.

COURSE DELIVERY

The course will use discussions, lectures, hands-on projects, and guest speakers to explore how film and video in the U.K. reflect as well as guide perceptions of British society and culture. A different film each week will be used to analyze features of British society including urban and rural differences, the class system, family life, migration, social and ethnic differences, crime, and the good life in the United Kingdom.

Tools of the study of communication from Anthropology, Sociology and Art are used to analyze popular culture in the U.K. today. These tools include the ways of seeing film and video in the U.K. today as well as ways to participate in focused production of short smart-phone videos.

Students are expected to read or view assigned resources in advance and be prepared to actively discuss them in class. In most meetings, the instructor will overview the topic and then facilitate a group discussion, drawing out relevant themes, following up on specific lines of inquiry, and prompting students' thoughtful engagement with the topic.

Students are not expected to have prior skills in using a smart phone to make videos, as this will be included in the teaching of the class.

Students are encouraged to bring their prior learning experiences into class discussions (based on experiential learning theory) and to make cognitive connections between this course and others in

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the IFSA-Butler London Flagship whenever possible (based on the philosophy of integrative learning).

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will have skills in:

- Using methods from anthropology and film studies to explore topics of society and culture in Great Britain.
- Discussing and writing about the relationship between film and society.
- Cultural Awareness. To focus on how films about the U.K. approach cultural values and behaviors that are assumed to be part of human nature, to analyze cultural adaptation, assimilation, multiculturalism, and cultural conflict as reflected through film.
- Production of short videos. Skills involving how to take social science topics such as gender, race, social stratification, ethnic identity, and other topics discussed each week and produce short smart phone videos about those topics.
- Making a digital learning portfolio that includes informal thoughts and notes about this course and how it influences your own skills and outlook.
- Become familiar with resources available for further research on the topic of visual communication.
- Make connections between learning in this course and other learning experiences in the IFSA-Butler London Flagship.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week	Topics	Activities	Readings, viewings
1A	Expectations for the class, including syllabus, grading, etc. Film and Culture from a social science perspective. Point of view in film.	Who are you? Have a classmate take a portrait of you from a point of view that you choose. Write a one-sentence description of that point of view and how it relates to your personality.	Point of View in Photography https://www.nyfa.edu/student-resources/point-view-photography/
1B	British society and British culture. How do social scientists decide what to study? What are some themes of British society and culture?	Class discussion of models of society: A. ways of adapting to meet “basic needs” of social, biological reproduction. B. institutions and relationships between them. C. internal and external conflicts over resources.	Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead on photography as art and as social science: http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1052&context=svc “Huge survey reveals seven social classes in UK” http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-22007058

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			<p>MIT University “BASIC CONCEPTS from Sociology and Anthropology - Tools to think with.” https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/anthropology/21a-219-law-and-society-spring-2003/study-materials/hobasicconcepts.pdf</p> <p>Video Clip: The Grumpy Guide To Class - Part One – YouTube (9:56) 2008 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZAYBDUNug</p>
2A	Reading a film like a book, reading a photograph like an article: what to look for in British cinema.	<p>Watch “The King’s Speech” (Netflix)</p> <p>Class discussion of the film using the “Discussion Guide” for this class</p>	<p>Thought Economics: The Role of Film in Society 19TH JUNE 2011 https://thoughteconomics.com/the-role-of-film-in-society/</p>
2B	The King’s Speech	<p>Discussion of social class and gender as seen in “The Kings Speech” using the approach of John Berger.</p> <p>Continue using the “Discussion Guide.”</p>	<p>Video Clip: John Berger: Ways of Seeing (BBC 1972, 30:05) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pDE4VX_9Kk</p> <p>Two opposing views of England 'The King's Speech' and 'Kes' http://www.popmatters.com/article/139790-two-opposing-views-of-england-the-kings-speech-and-kes/</p>
3A	The Working Class as seen in British films	<p>Watch the film “Kes” (Netflix)</p> <p>How does the film compare with the article “Most people in Britain today...”</p> <p>Class discussion of the film using the “Discussion Guide” for this class</p>	<p>“Most people in Britain today regard themselves working class” http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2016-06-30-most-people-britain-today-regard-themselves-working-class</p>

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3B	Are social classes a core part of British society and culture?	<p>Discussion: How is “working class” expressed through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language 2. Dress and fashion 3. Making a living 4. Living spaces 5. Leisure activities <p>How is this different in the U.K. as compared to your home?</p> <p>What are the major contrasts between social class as presented in “The Kings Speech” and “Kes?”</p>	<p>San Diego Film Festival, “HOW TO ANALYZE A MOVIE: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE.” http://sdfilmfest.com/how-to-analyze-a-movie-step-by-step-guide-to-reviewing-films-from-a-screener-point-of-view/</p> <p>Video clip: Social Classes and Accent: British https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYHTsmvdthc</p>
4A	Video Moments 1: social class in the U.K.	<p>How to make a short 2-3 minute video with your smart phone. Technique, content, story, and ethics. In class practice.</p> <p>The first video production will be on the changing nature of social class in Great Britain. Social class is very conscious and considered an explanatory model for people in the U.K. to understand each other. The idea of social class is changing in the U.K. today. Your video should explore something about this concept (relation to economy, language, style, political attitudes, family life, gender roles, etc.) in a creative way. Be sure to use emotion in your video (humor, pathos, anger, etc.)</p>	<p>Video Clip: How to Make A Short Video movie using your mobile phone. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxKwy_NLWpU</p>
4B	Showing and reacting to short videos	Peer reviews of short videos (use the peer review evaluation sheet while watching the videos)	
5A	Showing and reacting to short videos, continued	<p>Completing reviews of other class videos</p> <p>Use Peer Review form for each video</p>	

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5B	Rural and Urban views of the U.K.	<p>Watch the film “The Leveling” (available on YouTube for rent, \$3.99)</p> <p>Class discussion of the film using the “Discussion Guide” for this class</p>	<p>The Guardian, “The Levelling review – a tremendous debut from Hope Dickson Leach” https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/may/14/the-levelling-review-mark-kermode-somerset-hope-dickson-leach</p>
6A	Discussion of “The Leveling”	<p>Points for class discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family Life 2. Friendship 3. Death and loss 4. Economy 5. Values 	<p>BBC: Urban or Rural, which is better? http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-13617401</p>
6B	Video Moments 2: Rural fantasy and reality	<p>Create a 2-3 minute video using still pictures from postcards, art galleries, famous paintings, and other visual sources to contrast rural life as good and healthy to rural life as unhealthy. Be sure to focus on one aspect such as young people, gender, work, health, etc. Put appropriate music to your video. Be sure to cite locations of your images in a handout that accompanies your video</p> <p>Use Peer Review form for each video</p>	<p>The Guardian: Rural deprivation and ill-health in England 'in danger of being overlooked' https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/mar/18/rural-deprivation-and-ill-health-in-england-in-danger-of-being-overlooked</p>
7A	Showing and critique of “video moments 2” from class	<p>Peer critiques of videos.</p> <p>Use Peer Review form for each video</p>	
8A	Midterm Exam		
8B	Small town comedies: Local Hero	<p>Watch the film “Local Hero” (Netflix)</p> <p>Class discussion of the film using the “Discussion Guide” for this class</p>	<p>The Arts Desk, Q&A Special: The Making of Local Hero http://www.theartsdesk.com/film/qa-special-making-local-hero</p>
9A	The place of Scotland in British culture	<p>Discussion of “Local Hero”:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sound track of the film 2. Small town eccentric characters 	<p>“A Transactional Geography of the Image-Event: The Films</p>

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Photography 4. Myths about Scotland 5. Cross-cultural stereotypes between Houston and Scotland 	<p>of Scottish Director, Bill Forsyth” Stuart C. Aitken Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers Vol. 16, No. 1 (1991), pp. 105-118</p>
9B	Youth Culture: Fun or Desolate	<p>Watch the film “A Hard Days Night” (Netflix)</p> <p>Class discussion of the film using the “Discussion Guide” for this class</p>	
10A	Does Youth Culture still exist in the U.K.?	<p>Discussion: what is a subculture? Do other countries have recognized “youth cultures” like the U.K.? Does music define “youth cultures?” How is “youth culture” portrayed in “A Hard Days Night?”</p>	<p>Buzz: News and features from Bournemouth and beyond: ‘The Subculture-less Generation: Extended Article.’ http://buzz.bournemouth.ac.uk/2017/01/subculture-less-generation-extended-article/</p>
10B	Youth culture, continued.	<p>Watch the film, “Trainspotting” (Netflix)</p> <p>Class discussion of the film using the “Discussion Guide” for this class</p>	<p>Buzz: The Subculture-less Generation: A timeline of British youth subcultures http://buzz.bournemouth.ac.uk/2017/01/subculture-less-generation-timeline-british-youth-subcultures/</p>
11A	Youth culture, continued	<p>Discussion Points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is “Youth Culture” still important today? 2. How is it different in other countries? 3. Is it a separate culture or is it a phase of general British culture? 4. Does it exist for all British young people? 	<p>Daily Telegraph: Trainspotting review, brave and glorious (2014) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/filmreviews/10765554/Trainspotting-review-brave-and-glorious.html</p>
11B	Video Moments 3: Young people and British Culture today	<p>Your “Video Moments 3” will be focused on contemporary British youth culture. Use the timeline from the “Buzz Article” and choose a time period that</p>	<p>The site “High Snobeity” has a series of short videos about British youth culture today. They are for the most part interviews, so they can help</p>

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		<p>you would like to more about. Then find someone in London who was part of that “youth culture” and do a 2-3 minute interview with them. Be sure your interview is informed by your interest in subcultures, changes, and portrayals of their identity in the media.</p> <p>Peer reviews of Video Moments 3. Use Peer Review form for each video</p>	<p>you with designing your project. (2016)</p> <p>http://www.highsnobiety.com/2016/05/11/young-blood-british-youth-culture/</p>
12A	Video Moments 3 continued	Peer reviews of Video Moments 3. Use Peer Review form for each video.	
12B	Migration as portrayed through British film	<p>Watch the film: Dirty Little Things (Netflix)</p> <p>Class discussion of the film using the “Discussion Guide” for this class</p>	<p>New York Times, FILM REVIEW; Amid the Luxury, Immigrants in Peril (July 18, 2003)</p> <p>http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9E06EEDA133CF93BA25754C0A9659C8B63</p>
13A	Immigration and British society	<p>Debate the importance of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immigrant assimilation 2. Immigrant acculturation 3. Immigrant neighborhoods 4. Immigrant language maintenance 5. Immigrant contributions 6. Immigrant dangers 	
13B	Gangs and Urban dangers	<p>Watch the film: Attack of the Block</p> <p>https://vimeo.com/52531285</p> <p>Class discussion of the film using the “Discussion Guide” for this class</p>	<p>Attack of the Block review, The Guardian,</p> <p>https://www.theguardian.com/film/2011/may/12/attack-the-block-review</p>
14A	Discussion of gangs and urban life in London	<p>Discussion points</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is a sympathetic view about gangs. How 	

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		<p>is sympathy created in the film. Do you agree with it?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Do conflicts with outsiders help people come together? 3. What is the role of gender in this film? 4. How does the film use humor to help the narrative? 5. How is race portrayed in the film? 	
14B	<p>Beyond film: British culture and society through other media (first hour)</p> <p>Student Digital Portfolios in Visual Studies presentations</p>	<p>First hour of class: lecture/discussion.</p> <p>Second hour of class: Review of student portfolios in class presented by students</p>	<p>Review the article read at the beginning of class, Thought Economics: The Role of Film in Society 19TH JUNE 2011</p> <p>https://thoughteconomics.com/the-role-of-film-in-society/</p>
15	<p>Student Digital Portfolios in Visual Studies presentations</p>	<p>Review of student portfolios in class presented by students</p>	
15B	<p>Final Exam</p>	<p>Covers material since the midterm</p>	

RESOURCES

Readings: All readings listed in the syllabus are available in PDF form. There are no required texts for this course

ASSESSMENT

Film Reviews: (10 points each, 50 points) Each student will write 5 reviews of the films for this class. Each review will be 250-300 words long (approximately one-page, double spaced). The reviews will focus on how the film portrays a British value or social structure as discussed in class. These will be included in the “Digital Portfolio of Visual Studies” that each student produces.

Video Moments 1 (30 points)

The first video production will be on the changing nature of social class in Great Britain. Social class is very conscious and considered an explanatory model for people in the U.K. to understand each other. The idea of social class is changing in the U.K. today. Your video should explore something about this concept (relation to economy, language, style, political attitudes, family life,

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gender roles, etc.) in a creative way. Be sure to use emotion in your video (humor, pathos, anger, etc.)

Video Moments 2 (30 points)

Create a 2-3 minute video using still pictures from postcards, art galleries, famous paintings, and other visual sources to contrast rural life as good and healthy to rural life as unhealthy. Be sure to focus on one aspect such as young people, gender, work, health, etc. Put appropriate music to your video. Be sure to cite locations of your images in a handout that accompanies your video

Video Moments 3 (30 points)

Your "Video Moments 3" will be focused on contemporary British youth culture. Use the timeline from the "Buzz Article" and choose a time period that you would like to more about. Then find someone in London who was part of that "youth culture" and do a 2-3 minute interview with them. Be sure your interview is informed by your interest in subcultures, changes, and portrayals of their identity in the media.

Midterm Exam (30 points). A mix of multiple choice and essay questions covering the first half of the course. Exam questions will be taken from readings, class discussions, and will test your analytic abilities to understand British film and British society.

Final Exam (30 points). Material on this exam will be from the mid-term exam until the end of the course. The format will be the same as the midterm exam.

Digital Portfolio (30 points)

Students will create a digital portfolio for this course. It will be available for review by the instructor at the midterm of the course and will be presented to the entire class during the last two class periods.

The portfolio can be a web-page you create or a series of files on a USB drive. It should contain the following sections:

1. A one-page resume about who you are, your plans and goals, and your academic background.
2. Reviews of each film shown in class. This should be written in an informal style, much like a "blog" that illustrates your own aesthetic and opinions. Each review should be no more than 250 words.
3. Video Moments 1, 2, 3. These three short videos are discussed in the syllabus. The videos should be interesting, creative, and use humor and other means to heighten their interest. The videos will not be judged on their technical level, other than being "watchable." The videos can be produced on a smart phone or computer, whichever you would like to do.
4. A section on tips, reflections, and reactions to visual media you see during this class that helps you do a better job of using media to understand society and culture. This section is made up of short ideas you jot down without too much explanation.
5. A letter to a future student who might take this class telling them about what they will need to do to make their participation in the class successful.

Total Points possible: 230

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Timely Submissions

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be accepted at the discretion of the course instructor and generally only in the event of a documented illness or emergency.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any academic endeavor must be based upon a foundation of honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by principles of academic integrity and must be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work while studying abroad. Any academic work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student's original work. Any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty, will subject a student to disciplinary action.

IFSA-Butler takes academic integrity very seriously. Students must not accept outside assistance without permission from the instructor. Additionally, students must document all sources according to the instructions of the professor. Should your instructor suspect you of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty, you may receive a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action may result. The incident will be reported to the IFSA-Butler resident director as well as your home institution.