

AAS 253/ Fall 2023/ Department of Africana and American Studies
Office Hours: By appointment on Mondays/Wednesdays via Zoom.

AAS 253

BLACKS IN FILM

(FALL 2023 SYLLABUS)

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SECTION ONE

Introduction

Folks/People/Guys,

Welcome, welcome, to this AAS 253 *online* course. Below, is a detailed description of this course, together with an indication of the basic requirements. Before you go through them, I want to emphasize several key points at the outset:

(1) To foster *professionalism* (which includes courteousness) in an environment where many have come to believe the very



false notion that rudeness equals personal strength, your emails must begin with this salutation *Dear Instructor...* and this closure *Sincerely...* plus your name as it appears in school records, **otherwise you may not get a response.** (For more on professional written communication skills, check out this document available [here](#).)

(2) If you are still registered in this course after the last day for drop/add, then it will be understood that **you have contractually agreed to abide by all the requirements and instructions concerning this course.** ← **Read this sentence again!** In fact, you will be asked to sign a disclaimer that you have diligently read the syllabus and you agree to follow all requirements and instructions for this course. There will be a penalty for not signing the disclaimer. In rare circumstances, course requirements *may be subject to change*, but with prior notice (and usually it will be to make requirements easier).

(3) It is your responsibility to check your emails via UBmail on a *regular* basis.

- (4) It is your responsibility to check all announcements on Brightspace (UBLearns) *and* the class home page on a *regular* basis. **NOTE:** You will not always get email reminders about announcements.
- (5) Among many evils unique to human beings is their penchant for “scapegoating.” They will scapegoat parents, siblings, *teachers*, spouses, other ethnic/racial groups, other countries, and so on. Please do not engage in this evil.
- (6) A special note for those who suffer from a psychological syndrome called “learned helplessness” (means giving up before even trying): do not ask questions that have already been answered in this syllabus or in announcements. If you do so, you will be directed to go back and look up the answers. If you claim that you are “confused” about the information that answers your question, you will be asked to *quote* the exact wording or sentence that is supposedly confusing you, in your email. Do not send pictures of the page or screen; however, there is this one exception: If you *claim* that you cannot see a link for an item on your screen, send me a clear picture of the entire screen, *end to end*, as an email attachment. Reminder: IF there is a missing link (or information) it will affect the *entire* class, not just an individual.

SECTION TWO

Learning Outcomes

(What you are expected to learn in this course)

See Appendix at the end of this document.

SECTION THREE

Basic Course Information

1. Course Requirements

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

- (a) The required textbooks, indicated below, are now *optional*—that is, you do **not** have to purchase them. Instead, you will be assigned online readings; plus films/documentaries. (This will of course create copyright issues; so, see below.)
- (b) Instead of textbooks, you are **required** to purchase a USB flash drive (if you do not have one already) for your computer. Cost of this drive is usually less than ten bucks; it is definitely much less than that of textbooks. The purpose of this USB drive is to enable you to download and save required online homework, which will include,

besides readings, AV materials (films, documentaries, videos, etc.). (For copyright and other reasons, homework assignments will be available only via this link: http://bit.ly/online_depository)

Streaming is totally discouraged. To do well on the tests/quizzes, because of the way human memory works, you will be well advised to view/read



homework material *twice*, leaving at least two days in between, with absolutely no distractions of any kind (texting, gossiping, etc.).

- (c) **80%** of the course grade will be based on written and/or multiple-choice quizzes; tests; extra credit quizzes; etc. Missed tests/quizzes cannot be made up, unless, with rare exception, you have an excuse backed up by written documentation. ←Read this sentence again.
- (d) **20%** of course grade will come from a test-based term paper *project*. (More about this requirement later.)
- (e) There will be an **optional** final exam during exam week. If you choose to take it, it will serve as **extra credit**.

(f) On the basis of the above, your final course grade, therefore, will be computed by using this formula: $(c) * 0.80 + (d) * 0.2$ Note: * = multiply. Percentages of test/quiz scores (item c) must be averaged.

(g) Letter grade equivalents of percentage points: A =97-100 A- =93-96 B+ =90-92 B =85-89 B- =80-84 C+ =73-79 C =66-72 C- =60-65 D+ =55-59 D =51-54 F =0-50

(h) All materials (including films/documentaries) that are assigned for homework must be versions available via links on the class home page. Do not use any other versions.

Extra Credit

See above.

Policy on Incompletes

Incompletes will NOT be assigned in this course, with rarest exception. Note that university policy is that incompletes are assigned at the discretion of the instructor. ← *Read this sentence again.*

2. Course Description (What this course is about)

Among the most ubiquitous forms of mass entertainment today is the “moving” visual image in its various forms (cinema, television, video, and so on), most especially in Western countries, such as the United States. From the perspective of this course, what is of special significance is that this type of mass visual entertainment (where the quest for **verisimilitude** is foundational) carries with it a baggage of both *textual* and *sub-textual* messages that go far beyond simply its entertainment objectives. Visual mass entertainment is not simply about entertaining the viewer, nor is it just a commercial activity; it is also a powerful agency of mass *socialization*. Working from these two basic premises, the principal purpose of this course is twofold: First, is to use films/documentaries—together with supporting materials, such as lecture notes, readings, and videos—as a means for exploring the cinematic portrayal of the black experience in the United States (and to a lesser extent elsewhere in the world) from a sociological perspective; that is, in terms of race, class, gender, etc. In the final analysis,

this course is also about democracy, *to be understood in its widest sense*. Second, is to briefly get a sense of the technology, artistry, and entrepreneurship that makes cinema possible (or simply put, to get a sense of how films are made, as well as the character of the film industry). NOTE: As just hinted, you will also be assigned some films from outside United States. (Yes, you guessed right; there are black people in other parts of the world too.)

3. Contacting the Instructor

(a) Because this an online course, it is really important that when you write about some clarification you need, you quote the exact sentence or paragraph from the syllabus, announcements, etc. that is relevant to your email. This is super-important. Otherwise, depending on what your email is about, you may not get a response. (Quoting does NOT mean taking a picture.)

(b) Responses to emails will take place usually on Mondays and Wednesdays. Do not send me emails about concerns that are already covered by this syllabus and/or announcements. (All announcements are extensions of this syllabus.)

(c) I access my emails only through a desktop computer and not through any mobile device. (Question: Why am I telling you this?)

(d) As already indicated, to foster *professionalism* (which includes courteousness) in an environment where many have come to believe the very false notion that rudeness equals personal strength, your emails must begin with this salutation *Dear Instructor...* and this closure *Sincerely...* plus your name as it appears in school records, **otherwise you may not get a response.**

(e) The subject heading of your email must **always** include these two items: the course number, *and* what your email is about in a few words.

(f) Contact via a zoom appointment is available, however to discourage learned helplessness, AND to have a record of our discussion, I prefer to use email first to attempt resolve your issue.

SECTION FOUR

Textbooks (Optional)

As indicated above, the required textbooks are now optional—you do **not** have to purchase them. However, for those of you who may desire to go more deeply into some of the topics that will be covered in the course, then these are the original textbooks:

- (a) *The Film Encyclopedia: The Complete Guide to Film and the Film Industry*, 7th Edition (by Ephraim Katz and Ronald Dean Nolen) ISBN-13: 978-0062026156. Cost: about \$22.95
- (b) *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*, Updated and Expanded 5th Edition (By Donald Bogle) ISBN-13: 978-0826429537 Cost: about \$35.95

VERISIMILITUDE AND THE SOCIALIZATION OF MARGINALITY (with the U.S. as an example)

Human desire for pleasure in the form of performance entertainment (genetically determined? Probably). ↓

Leads to a permanent and insatiable quest for verisimilitude. ↓

Leads to the invention of cinema/television (and mass visual entertainment). ↓

Requires expensive technology aimed at high **production values** (and distribution). ↓

Requires large financial outlays—especially because films are almost always a gamble (in terms of viewership). ↓

Requires marketing to as large an audience as possible to recoup the financial investment. ↓

Requires themes and depictions that are in consonance with the outlook of the majority of the audience—Euro-Americans, males, etc. ↓

In the areas of *race/gender/class* relations these themes and depictions will play to preexisting racist/ sexist/ class stereotypes, as well as act to reinforce them. In other words, there is a dialectical relationship between say, racism and sexism in film, and racism and sexism in society at large. ↓

In addition, leads to textual erasure of people of color, women, etc. from scenes and storylines altogether—as if they don't exist in society at all. ↓

Final outcome: socialization of marginality of people of color, women, the working class, etc. (because films have become a powerful medium of socialization in general).

(c) *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*, Second Edition (By Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin) ISBN-13: 978-1405170550
Cost: about \$39.90

(d) *The Encyclopedia of Racism in American Films* by Salvador Jimenez Murguía ISBN-13: 978-1442269057 Cost: about \$95.26

SECTION FIVE

Class Proceedings Schedule

The class proceedings schedule that specifies course assignments, test dates, etc. is available as an interactive page; and you can access it via the class home page.

SECTION SIX

Pedagogy

(How this Course will be taught)

(1) This course is one of the most important classes you will ever take in this school. Yes, I know; I know; probably all teachers say that about their classes. However, I want you to think about this: I don't know if any of you know this, but we have just gone through something called a pandemic (and this will not be the first time either—going by the way we humans are destroying the planet). Hundreds of thousands have died from it (in fact, more than a million in this country alone); and some of you may have even lost, tragically, loved ones to it (like I did). Now, here is a question for ya: What is one of the most important lessons that the scientists, doctors, nurses, etc. were most surprised to learn from the pandemic? Really, really surprised. In fact, some have not even got over the shock of it yet, while a few others, very, very sadly, ended up committing suicide as an indirect consequence of it. Guess? No? The answer is simple: in a huge society-wide health-related crisis like the pandemic *that clearly demands the expertise of scientists, doctors, nurses, etc.*, it is also equally essential to pay attention to *politics!* Yes, sadly, politics! Things like democracy,

racism, classism, sexism, ageism, social media, etc. (Compare this situation with the politics of climate change.) Human beings do not always do what is good for them (even when it comes to health, or climate). That's why courses like this one are super important. Because if you really think about it, courses like this one are about democracy—meaning how do we build a society that is inclusive, fair, and just for everyone; a society in which the dignity, human rights, and civil rights of every one (regardless of who they are, in terms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and so on) are fully respected.

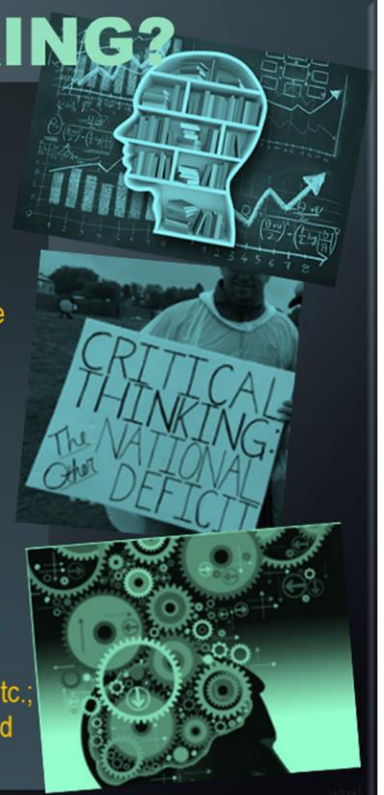
- (2) Given that most of you are majors/minors in business, STEM, health sciences and other similar fields, and therefore, you, most likely, will never take another course that deals with a similar subject matter as this one, my effort will be directed toward teaching you, both, *concepts* (as tools of analysis), as well as *factual* information. In other words, this course will be taught from the perspective of a “foundational course,” meaning in addition to factual content it will also seek to introduce you to key analytical theories and concepts that lie behind the major themes, debates, and issues relating to race and society.
- (3) This is an **online** course with all activities taking place *remotely* on the officially scheduled day and time. (Check your course schedule on HUB.) Instructor-produced class lecture material has been included (with rare exception) inside each film or reading assignment. As an online course it will require from you, first, a lot of self-motivation and *self-discipline*¹ (the course will be mainly test/quizzes driven); and second, access to a good internet connection coupled with a properly functioning computer. Note: course materials are not necessarily optimized for so-called “smart phones.” (Please drop this class if you cannot meet any one of these two fundamental requirements.)
- (4) Although this course is going to be taught remotely, as just noted, you will have to do the tests/quizzes during the times/days indicated for this course on your UB class schedule. To discourage cheating, this requirement cannot be modified. Therefore, you must keep your schedule open on these times/days accordingly *for the entire semester*.

¹A good example of self-discipline is always keeping up with class announcements and homework assignments. (In fact, regularly viewing and digesting class announcements on a timely basis is mandatory.) If you lack self-discipline, this course may not be the right one for you.

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

It is the rigorous interdisciplinary intellectual practice of critically, skillfully, and consistently investigating, problematizing, conceptualizing, analyzing, synthesizing, theorizing, evaluating, and applying information against the backdrop of cognitive behavior characterized by, among other things:

- the scrupulous application of moral reasoning to ethical questions;
- professionalism (defined here as a web of interlinked behavioral habits, that include dedication, dependability, diligence, compassion, dignity, competence, civility, impartiality, honesty, and so on);
- a fiery passion for truth;
- a relentless commitment to fairness and justice (in one's own personal life, and in social terms);
- a profound belief in the value of honest research;
- intellectual humility;
- patience and open-mindedness to take seriously the views of peers;
- a deep commitment to the acquisition of knowledge and information on a variety of issues, both, personal as well as public;
- uncompromising honesty in confronting personal biases, prejudices, stereotypes, etc.;
- possession of limitless curiosity regarding all kinds of intellectual subject matter; and
- a refusal to make judgments that are not based on reasoned reflection.



(5) The course workload, on average, will require about one “concentrated” hour per day of your time (which equals to about 7–8 concentrated hours per week—this is like doing 3 hours of class time, plus about 4 hours of homework for an *in-person* class).² **Note:** A *concentrated* hour is an hour that requires full concentration from you--that means no distractions of any kind! All homework must be completed as per course schedule; in other words, you are not allowed to let your homework pile up until the day of the test. (Yes, I will be able to access data on when you accessed the homework, if you downloaded it, etc.) Given that for most of you, because of your major, this course will probably be the only one of its kind you will ever take in your *entire* life, you will be expected to do some work in this class, even though it’s a Gen Ed class. No, I don’t think this is a difficult class, for you *as a student*, as long as you do your homework on time *and* diligently. However, it is a very different matter if you are registered for more than 15 credit hours (including this course). If this is so, please drop one of your *other* classes. Why? Because the last time I checked there were only 24 hours in a day. Trust me on this one. 😊 (Incidentally, if you have a paid job to go to as well, then you will definitely not be able to do your home homework

² Based, roughly, on this formula: 40-hour work-week, divided by 15 (credit hours), multiplied by 3 (credit hours).

diligently, which of course will mean poor performance on the tests/quizzes/exams.)

- (6) Separate from the lecture material, the very act of accessing and viewing/reading the assigned homework is considered in this course an end in itself (in terms of learning)—provided, of course, it is done with diligence! The implications of this point is that you will be asked *detailed* questions solely to determine if you did do the homework at all; and if so, **did you do it diligently**. ← Read this sentence again!
- (7) Regardless of which race you *think* you belong to (race is not a biological category, it is a “political” category), please do NOT racialize the epistemology on which this course rests. What does this mean in practice? The view that since this course deals with knowledge by and/or about people of color it is not important enough to require *diligence*. ←-- What does this word mean?
- (8) Instructor-produced class lecture material has been included (with rare exception) inside each film and/or reading assignment. For film assignments, this lecture material, which averages about 40–50 minutes, will usually be at the beginning of the film, and it will comprise material that would normally be presented in class; such as: (a) lecture notes; (b) annotations of scenes; (c) behind-the-scenes material; (d) filmmaker interviews; (e) video clips with background information; (f) slide images; and so on. Do not be tempted to ignore this material; it is just as important

as the film or documentary itself. Questions on tests/exam will also come from this material. (In fact, only a super-genius would not know that instructor-produced material takes precedence over everything else.) For reading assignments, lecture material may comprise instructor notes, as well as images.

Open-Mindedness and Critical Thinking

The five characteristics of *intellectual humility* as a gateway to open-mindedness (one of the keys to critical thinking):

- Having respect for other viewpoints
- Not being intellectually overconfident
- Separating one's ego from one's intellect
- Willingness to revise one's own viewpoint
- Willingness to try new experiences (including an openness to new information)

If your mind is so closed, why is your mouth always so open?

DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE OPEN-MINDED. YOUR BRAIN ISN'T GOING TO FALL OUT.

THE SAME OLD THINKING → THE SAME OLD RESULTS

Test your open-mindedness by taking the intellectual humility test, here:
<http://www.shanesnow.com/articles/intellectual-humility/>

Do not ignore this material either. When an instructor devotes time to produce material specifically for a class, then that material takes precedence over anything else that is assigned. Man, you have to be super-intelligent not to know this.

- (9) The learning of *executive function skills* (which is an unstated objective of Gen Ed classes) is also a requirement of this class. An example of executive function skills are those associated with *professionalism*. I consider it my responsibility as a teacher to encourage you to learn these important skills, as well as introduce you to information that can help you succeed in achieving your educational goals.
- (10) This course will be taught from an *interdisciplinary* perspective. That is, it will introduce you to whatever insights, concepts, and theories relevant to the study of a given topic, regardless of their disciplinary location.
- (11) From a **structural** point of view, the course has three parts to it: (a) lecture material (analytical comments, questions, definitions, and so on); (b) course readings; and (c) films and other audio-visual material. **Be super-careful about paying close attention to item (a)—meaning study this material too, with diligence.**
- (12) Because this is also a Gen Ed course, you will also be introduced to the workings of a *research* university (in contrast to a teaching university), *and* pointers on how to succeed in such a university. Therefore, this two-part topic will also be part of this course. While some of this information may *appear* not to be related to the content of this course, in reality it is part of what is called the *hidden curriculum* (the teaching of *executive function skills*, which is also the unstated requirement of Gen Ed classes). I consider it my responsibility as a teacher to encourage you to learn these important skills, as well as introduce you to information that can help you succeed in achieving your educational goals. About the difference between a *research* university and a teaching university: compared to a teaching university, the responsibility for learning falls heavily on your own shoulders because faculty are contractually required to spend only about 40% of their time teaching; they must devote the rest of their time to research and service. If you haven't already figured it out, this is the reason why, unlike say a community college, this is not a “hold-my-hand-and-pamper-me” type of educational institution.

- (13) For purposes of tests, all materials (including films, videos, etc.) that are assigned for homework must be versions available via links on the class home page and/or the homework/test schedule. **Do not use any other versions.**
- (14) A common question students ask: What should I be looking out for when I am doing the homework assignments? Very briefly, everything! However, for a more detailed response, see the *Test Instructions* document available via the class home page.
- (15) Basic procedures for tests/quizzes/exam are as follows:
- (i) If you intend to do well in this course it is super important that you do not wait to do the homework until the last day; and when viewing the material please do so without any distractions. Reminder: sometimes a very important scene can last less than a minute.
 - (ii) Questions on tests/exam will be detailed enough to determine that you did actually read/view the material with **diligence**. ← What does this word mean?
 - (iii) While you will be able to look at your notes or even the homework material itself during the tests/exam, you won't have much time to do so. The tests will be timed.
 - (iv) I will be able to view statistical data for each one of you to determine **if** you accessed the homework, and **when** you accessed it. At the same time, I will also have access to data for each one of you relating to a specific test (such as when you started the test, when you stopped, how much time you spent on a given question, etc.).
 - (v) All tests/exam will be on Brightspace (UBLearns). **IMPORTANT:** Tests will be available only on test day and only for the duration of the test. For example, if a test is one hour long then it will be available only for one hour on test day at the time indicated in the test schedule—not before, and not after.
 - (vi) Once a test begins it cannot be “reopened” if you step away from it for *any reason*. If, in my estimation, you had a valid reason for stepping away from the test then a new test will have to be constructed. If this is a large class, this may mean making up the test toward the end of the semester (this will also provide an indication if there is a pattern here).

14. UB Portfolio: An Announcement from the Gen Ed folks:

“If you are completing this course as part of your UB Curriculum requirements, you may wish to select an ‘artifact’ from this course that is representative of your learning and save it in a safe location with a clear title. Your final UB Curriculum requirement, UBC 399: UB Curriculum Capstone, will require you to submit these ‘artifacts’ as you process and reflect on your achievement and growth through the UB Curriculum. Artifacts include homework assignments, exams, research papers, projects, lab reports, presentations, and other coursework. For more information, see the UB Curriculum Capstone website:
<https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcurriculum/capstone.html>”

SECTION SEVEN

General Course Administrative Policies

(a) You are reminded that the University’s “Student Responsibility Statement” (available [here](#)) specifies as follows: “By accepting responsibility for their education, students enhance the development of their academic, social and career goals. As a condition of enrollment, students are responsible for reviewing, understanding, and abiding by the university’s regulations, procedures, requirements and deadlines as described in official publications, including the university’s undergraduate catalog, UB websites, and official university email communications. In addition, all students are required to positively affirm their knowledge of UB’s Student Conduct Rules, University Standards and Administrative Regulations (available [here](#)) prior to their inaugural semester at UB. Asserting a lack of knowledge of university regulations will not be accepted as a basis for an exception to these regulations.” ← Folks, read this last sentence again. (Note: the student code of conduct, and administrative rules and regulations, just mentioned are available [here](#), and [here](#).) In other words: this course will strictly abide by university policies on:

(i) academic honesty (available [here](#));

- (ii) disability (available [here](#));
- (iii) discrimination (available [here](#));
- (iv) sexual harassment (available [here](#));
- (v) academic freedom (see below); and
- (vi) classroom etiquette (available [here](#)).

(b) Special Note on Disability: Reasonable accommodations for equal access to this course because of disability should be requested through Accessibility Resources in Capen 60. However, providing me with a note from the disability office is not enough. You must also indicate how I can best accommodate your needs.

(c) As already noted, to foster *professionalism* (which includes courteousness) in an environment where many have come to believe the very false notion that rudeness equals personal strength, your emails must begin with this salutation *Dear Instructor...* and this closure *Sincerely...* plus your name as it appears in school records, *otherwise you may not get a response.*

SECTION EIGHT

Academic Freedom

People, because of the kinds of topics we will be covering in this course (relating to race, gender, class, democracy, the rule of law, etc., etc.) which may sometimes provoke controversy among some of you, it is really important that you understand the university's policy on academic freedom *as it relates to faculty*. This policy reads in part:

The University supports the principle of academic freedom as a concept intrinsic to the achievement of its institutional goals. This principle implies a trust in the integrity and responsibility of the members of the academic community. Samuel P. Capen, former Chancellor of the University of Buffalo, who is remembered for the tradition of academic freedom he implemented during his leadership of the University, said in 1935:

“Acceptance by an institution of the principles of academic freedom implies that teachers in that institution are free to investigate any subject, no matter how

much it may be hedged about by taboos; that they are free to make known the results of their investigation and their reflection by word of mouth or in writing, before their classes or elsewhere; that they are free as citizens to take part in any public controversy outside the institution; that no repressive measures, direct or indirect, will be applied to them no matter how unpopular they may become through opposing powerful interests or jostling established prejudices, and no matter how mistaken they may appear to be in the eyes of members and friends of the institution; that their continuance in office will be in all instances governed by the prevailing rules of tenure and that their academic advancement will be dependent on their scientific competence and will be in no way affected by the popularity or unpopularity of their opinions or utterances....”

(The full policy is available via the student code of conduct, available [here](#).)

Appendix: Learning Outcomes

(What you are expected to learn in this course)

Folks, these learning outcomes, including the following language in which they are couched, are mandated by the Gen Ed Curriculum:

“Having completed the Diversity in the United States Requirement you will be able to:

- Understand the challenges and possibilities inherent in a diverse society.
- Think critically, and with an open mind, about controversial contemporary and historical topics stemming from issues such as gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, and disabilities in American society.
- Understand that categories of diversity develop and change over time.
- Describe how categories of diversity intersect or connect with each other, creating complex identities and perspectives.
- Recognize that categories of difference create both institutional inequalities and advantages.
- Explain how historical contexts (such as Western global expansion, slavery, capitalism, gender inequality, immigration, and/or social movements) have shaped contemporary realities.”

From the specific perspective of this course, the intended learning outcomes—within the parameters of a 200-level one semester course—from the perspective of a student who has *diligently and successfully completed all requirements of the course* (and recognizing that unplanned pedagogic factors may arise that may prevent coverage of all course topics), are,

What is Democracy?

"WE hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all [Persons] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."
—Preamble to the U.S. Declaration of Independence

There are two types of democracy: *Interpersonal* Democracy and *Institutional* Democracy. At the same time, the latter in its true sense, has **two** related halves: the *procedural* and the *authentic* (or substantive).

The first half refers to "majority rule" (but qualified by a *bill of rights* that protects minorities) and the accompanying institutional processes of universal suffrage, elections, term-limits, legislative representation, the rule of law, separation of powers, etc.

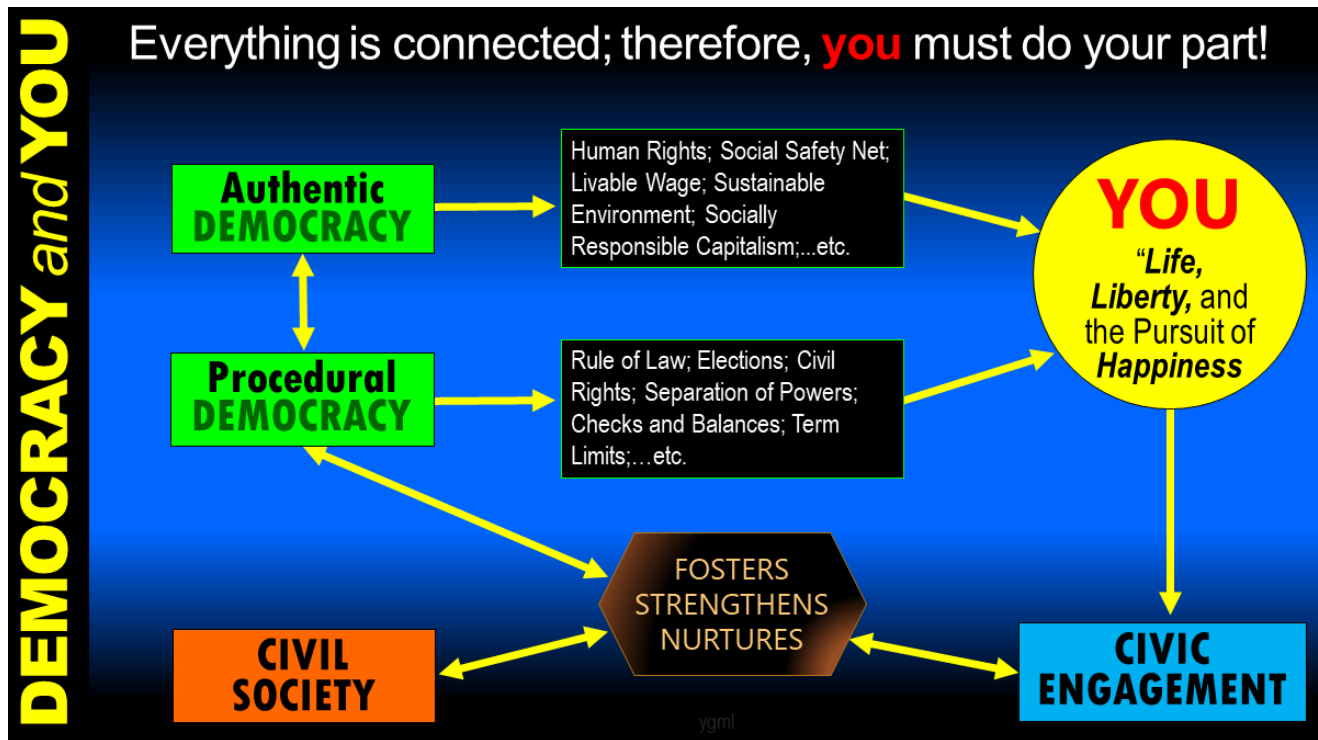
On the other hand, *authentic* democracy refers to equitably securing access for all human beings to the **four** fundamental *existential* needs: food, shelter, health, and security. Therefore, the purpose of procedural democracy is to guarantee authentic democracy. **In other words, the former is a means to the latter!**

"...that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."
—President Abraham Lincoln, the Gettysburg Address

briefly, as follows:

- explain how the ubiquity of a vehicle for mass entertainment does not preclude it as an object of scholarly scrutiny and research;
- describe the sociological impact of cinema on society (beyond its entertainment value) with a specific focus on the manufacturing of the "Other.";
- describe the basic *social realist* themes undergirding the cinematic portrayal of Blacks (to be understood as a generic term for the purpose of this course) in cinema;
- the ability to "think critically, and with an open mind, about controversial contemporary and historical topics stemming from issues such as gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, and disabilities in U.S. society;"
- provide brief biographies of a select number of black film directors making films today; and describe key concepts in the study of cinema and filmmaking.

With regard to the assessment of these learning outcomes, given that this is not a course in the natural sciences, technology, mathematics, and the like, and given that this is an online course, and cognizant of the fact that this course is within that body of knowledge that is both *non-positivistic* and *discursive*—hence, often precluding the one-to-one pairing of an assessment tool with a learning outcome—the assessment of learning outcomes in this course will be accomplished primarily by a *dynamic* combination of these tools: written assignments; quizzes; tests; and exams.



What is Interpersonal Democracy?

There are two types of democracy: *Interpersonal* Democracy and *Institutional* Democracy (while the latter in its true sense, has *two* related halves: the *procedural* and the *authentic*, or substantive).

Interpersonal Democracy refers to interpersonal relations among individuals in a society that are governed by the principle of equality of opportunity for respect, acceptance, and non-discrimination—regardless of age, class, color, ethnicity, gender, and other similar social structural markers.

Things Money Can't Buy

1. Manners.
2. Morals.
3. Respect.
4. Character.
5. Common Sense.
6. Trust.
7. Patience.
8. Class.
9. Integrity.
10. Love.

—Anonymous

Manners.
Kindness.
Respect.
Compassion.

These things are not "old school" or "quaint." They are what make a decent human being.

Then.
Now.
Always.

—Steven Wentworth

"I offer you peace.
I offer you love.
I offer you friendship.
I see your beauty.
I hear your need.
I feel your feelings.
My wisdom flows from the Highest Source.
I salute that Source in you.
Let us work together. For unity and peace."

—Mahatma Gandhi

Yes. I am old school.
I have good manners, I show respect and I always help those who need me — regardless of their skin color, their gender, their age, their disability, or anything else that has no bearing on their humanity.
No. It is not because I am old fashioned.
It's because I was raised properly!

—Anonymous