

Political Science 333

Advanced Topics in Global Politics

Michael J. Shapiro

Course Orientation and Grading

The focus of this course is on the relationship between popular culture and world politics with an emphasis on cinema's (both documentaries' and feature films') contributions to political thinking. As I have noted elsewhere, "It is ordinarily assumed that films are political when they explore the relationship between persons and recognized political institutions – for example Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), a film about a naïve everyman who fills a Senate vacancy and learns that he must cope with political corruption. The treatment of politics and film I am offering here operates with a very different assumption. Cinema as an art is political not because its content references familiar political institutions but because of the way it challenges familiar senses of reality, through the way it composes images, tones, words and sounds." Accordingly, to approach cinema as political thought requires attention to film form, which delivers the way films think. In this respect, discerning the politics of cinema is similar to discerning the politics of other art forms. As we analyze films and other genres, we will therefore be noting the relationships between form and meaning.

Course requirements: In addition to midterm and final "exams" (do-at-home essays), those registered in the course must write a weekly reflection paper, based on the reading for the coming session (Roughly 300 words, the reaction should be submitted to the class discussion file in Lulima's political science 333 site by the Sunday afternoon before class). A copy should also be brought to class to share if and when you are called on. The "reflection" can consist of interpretations of the reading, a personal reading and/or film viewing experience that the reading evokes for you, or a question or questions that you have about the reading. I grade on the basis of "presence" to the course. You begin with an A grade and keep it as long as you maintain presence – showing up for class and doing the written assignments on time. The grade attenuates with each act of non-presence.

Texts: To Acquire and Read:

Sean Carter and Klaus Dodds *International Politics and Film: Space, Vision, Power*

Frederica Caso and Caitlin Hamilton eds. *Popular Culture and World Politics: Theories, Methods, Pedagogies*

Gregoire Chamayou, *A Theory of the Drone*

To Read (I will make chapters available in our Lulima site):

Michael J. Shapiro, *Cinematic Geopolitics*

Reading and Viewing Schedule (TBA).