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Lectures: Mon Wed 11:00am-12:15pm Hamilton 517  
Screenings: Tues 7-10pm Hamilton 602

**Required texts:** (available at Book Culture and on reserve at Butler library)

Owen Wister, The Virginian  
Nathanael West, The Day of the Locust  
Woody Guthrie, Bound for Glory  
Chester Himes, If He Hollers Let Him Go  
Barbara Ehrenreich, The Hearts of Men  
Alison Bechdel, Fun Home  
Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities  
Paula Fox, Desperate Characters  
Steven Fraser, Wall Street: America's Dream Palace  
Andrew Ross, Celebration Chronicles  
Barack Obama, Dreams from My Father

(Other assigned readings are available online through the Courseworks site.)

**Required Films:**

*It's a Wonderful Life* (dir. Frank Capra, 1946)  
*Stagecoach* (dir. John Ford, 1939)  
*Chinatown* (dir. Roman Polanski, 1974)  
*The Grapes of Wrath* (dir. John Ford, 1940)  
*Casablanca* (dir. Michael Curtiz, 1942)  
*Home of the Brave* (dir. Mark Robson, 1949)  
*To Kill a Mockingbird* (dir. Robert Mulligan, 1962)  
*All that Heaven Allows* (dir. Douglas Sirk, 1955)  
*Far from Heaven* (dir. Todd Haynes, 2002)  
*The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (dir. Nunnally Johnson, 1956)  
*The Naked City* (dir. Jules Dassin, 1948)  
*Dog Day Afternoon* (dir. Sidney Lumet, 1975)  
*The Truman Show* (dir. Peter Weir, 1998)  
*The Godfather II* (dir. Francis Ford Coppola, 1974)

### **Course Requirements:**

Regular attendance at lectures and Tuesday night film screenings is required, as is informed participation in discussion sections. The TAs will discuss with you their expectations for section, which may include short written assignments. Discussion sections are held every week except weeks 1 and 15. Attendance and participation count for approximately 30% of your final grade.

### **Papers:**

There will be two short papers (of approx. 5pp. in length): 1) a paper on the films *All That Heaven Allows* and *Far From Heaven* due in your discussion section on Week 9 (the week after Spring Break); 2) a second paper (topics to be announced) due at the American Studies program office (HAM 415) by 1pm on Friday, May 8. **No late papers will be accepted except in cases of certified family or medical emergency.** The two papers will together count for approximately 20% of your final grade.

### **Exams:**

A take-home midterm will be distributed at the end of Week 4 and will be due at the American Studies program office (HAM 415) by 1pm on Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. The final examination for this course is currently scheduled 9am-noon on Monday, May 11th (this time will be confirmed later in the term). The midterm will count for approximately 20% of your final grade; the final exam will count for approximately 30% of your final grade. **No make-up exams will be scheduled except in cases of certified family or medical emergency.**

The final grade for the term will be computed roughly as follows: midterm (20%) and final exam (30%); papers (20%); attendance and participation in discussion sections (30%).

### **House rules:**

You are expected to arrive at lectures on time and leave only when the class period ends. Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before class begins. You may bring a beverage in a covered container to lecture but not food or snacks. Laptops are distracting for other students and the instructor; you should take notes by hand on paper. Exceptions will be made in cases when learning or other disabilities mandate the use of laptops.

**Academic integrity:** The instructors and the university take questions of academic integrity (and instances of plagiarism) very seriously, and penalties for infractions will be severe. You must be careful to cite your sources and avoid any suggestion of copying another person's work. Any language or other materials presented without quotation marks or citation in a paper or exam must be your own work. Please see the History department's statement on academic honesty online at: [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/history/ugrad/main/handbook/academic\\_honesty.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/history/ugrad/main/handbook/academic_honesty.html)

**Any student found to have plagiarized another person's work or in any other way engaged in academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade for the entire course and have his or her case turned over to the College administration, which may take additional action.**

**Schedule of assignments:**

**Week 1.                    Introduction**

**Jan. 21**

Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, available online at:  
<http://www.historyplace.com/lincoln/inaug-2.htm>

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter From a Birmingham Jail," online at:  
<http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst306/documents/letter.html>

Barack Obama, Inaugural Address

**Week 2.                    The Promise of American Life**

**Jan. 26**

Declaration of Independence, available online at:  
<http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/index.htm>

Seneca Falls Conference, Declaration of Sentiments, available online at:  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/senecafalls.html>

Walt Whitman, "Democratic Vistas," online at:  
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/Whitman/vistas/vistas.html>

Randolph Bourne, "Transnational America," online at:  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/16jul/bourne.htm>

W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," in The Souls of Black Folk, online at:  
<http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=DubSoul.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=1&division=div1>

Tu Film: *It's a Wonderful Life*

**Jan. 28**

*It's a Wonderful Life*

**Weeks 3 & 4.        The Frontier**

**Feb. 2**

Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," online at:

<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/frontierthesis.html>

Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life", online at:

<http://www.bartleby.com/58/1.html>

Owen Wister, The Virginian

Tu Film: *Stagecoach*

**Feb. 4**

*Stagecoach*

The Virginian

**Feb. 9**

Nathanael West, The Day of the Locust

Tu Film: *Chinatown*

**Feb. 11**

*Chinatown*

Vernon Shetley, "Incest and Capital in Chinatown"

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/mln/v114/114.5shetley.html>

**Week 5.                The Open Road**

**Feb. 16**

Woody Guthrie, Bound for Glory

Songs by Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, Tom Waits, and Bruce Springsteen

Tu Film: *The Grapes of Wrath*

**Feb. 18**

*The Grapes of Wrath*

**Feb. 20: Take Home Exam due****Weeks 6 & 7. War****Feb. 23**

Selection from Henry Luce, "The American Century"

Robert Westbrook, "Fighting for the American Family," in The Power of Culture, eds.

Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears.

George H. Roeder, Jr., "Censoring Disorder: American Visual Imagery of World War II," in The War in American Culture, eds. Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch.

Tu Film: *Casablanca*

**Feb. 25**

*Casablanca*

Robert Ray, "The Culmination of Classic Hollywood: Casablanca," in A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema.

Larry May, "Making the American Consensus: The Narrative of Conversion and Subversion in World War II Films," in The War in American Culture, eds. Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch.

**Mar. 2**

Chester Himes, If He Hollers Let Him Go

Robin D.G. Kelley, "The Riddle of the Zoot: Malcolm Little and Black Cultural Politics During World War II," in Kelley, Race Rebels.

Tu film: *Home of the Brave*

**Mar. 4**

*Home of the Brave*

John Nickel, "Disabling African American Men: Liberalism and Race Message Films" (available on JStor: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/3661171.pdf>)

**Weeks 8 & 9.            Home**

**Mar. 9**

Barbara Ehrenreich, The Hearts of Men, Introduction, chs. 1-5, 8.

Tu film: *To Kill A Mockingbird*

**Mar. 11**

*To Kill A Mockingbird*

Michael Wood, “Ceremonies of Innocence” in America in the Movies

**SPRING BREAK**

Film assignment: *All That Heaven Allows*

**Mar. 23**

Alison Bechdel, Fun Home

Tu Film: *Far from Heaven*

**Mar. 25**

*All That Heaven Allows*

*Far from Heaven*

**Week 10.            The Workplace**

**Mar. 30**

Frederick Winslow Taylor, The Principles of Scientific Management (excerpt), online at:  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1911taylor.html>

Excerpts from Studs Terkel, Working: Phil Stallings, Spot-Welder; Jim Grayson, Spot-Welder; Wheeler Stanley, General Foreman; and Gary Bryner, President, Lordstown Local, UAW.

Tu Film: *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*

**Apr. 1**

*The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*

David Reisman, Ch. 3, "A Jury of their Peers" in The Lonely Crowd

William H. Whyte, Ch. 14, "How Good an Organization Man Are You?" in The Organization Man

C. Wright Mills, Ch. 11, "The Status Panic" in White Collar

**Weeks 11 & 12.      The City****Apr. 6**

Jane Jacobs, Death and Life of Great American Cities, chs. 1-7, 15.

Robert Caro, The Power Broker, chs. 37-38.

Tu Film: *Naked City*

**Apr. 8**

*Naked City*

Joseph Miller, "Mazie" and "Hit on the Head with a Cow" in Up in the Old Hotel

**Apr. 13**

Paula Fox, Desperate Characters

Tu Film: *Dog Day Afternoon*

Apr. 15 *Dog Day Afternoon*

Damon Runyon, "Butch Minds the Baby" (1930) and "The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown" (1933)

**Week 13.                      American Utopia/Dystopia****Apr. 20**

Andrew Ross, Celebration Chronicles

Mike Davis, "Fortress L.A.: The Militarization of Urban Space," online at:  
<http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/~broglio/1101/davis.html>

Tu Film: *The Truman Show*

**Apr. 22**

*The Truman Show*

**Week 14.            The Market**

**Apr. 27**

Steve Fraser, Wall Street

Guest lecture by Steve Fraser.

Tu Film: *The Godfather II*

**Apr. 29**

*The Godfather II*

**Week 15.            American Character**

**May 4**

Barack Obama, Dreams From My Father, Introduction, Parts I-II.