GE CLAS Core Proposal
CINE_1625_DI (Race, Gender, and Sexuality on Screen)

September 15, 2017

Dear General Education Curriculum Committee:

The Department of Cinematic Arts proposes CINE 1625: Race, Gender and Sexuality on Screen for General Education Status: the course is designed to provide an introduction to both historical and contemporary representations of racial, gender, and sexual identities in popular media, with the specific aim of equipping students with informed critical tools for the careful analysis of these often sensitive, controversial, and powerful images. This is a renumbered and reconceived version of the course currently (Fall 2017) being offered under CINE: 4603 Topics in Contemporary Cinema, subtitled Race, Gender, and Sexuality on the Screen. (The new course also expands and replaces an older course CINE: 1625 Gender and Film.) We are seeking GE status as a Diversity and Inclusion course. At this time we anticipate offering the course once each year, in the Fall semester, with a class size of 25 in order to allow for a discussion-based classroom, which we feel is best for a course centered around “difficult” topics. The first version of this course will be taught by Corey Creekmur, who has experience teaching in the areas central to this course (in part as a faculty member of the Department of Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies): however, this course is designed to draw upon skills shared by all of the current Film Studies faculty, as well as a future, anticipated hire; it is also a course we anticipate carefully selected and mentored Teaching Assistants may lead.

We plan to offer this course without prerequisites, welcoming diverse students with varied interests and experiences: the audience level we are anticipating consists of first and second year students, though we recognize that some third and fourth year students often delay completion of their GE requirements: whatever their level, we are designing the course to provide students with an introductory approach to the course topics, without assuming any prior coursework in media studies, film studies, critical race studies, or gender studies. Within the existing curriculum, the course provides an introductory approach to topics central to film and media studies at more advanced levels, and meets a frequent demand for “socially relevant” courses from both Cinema majors as well as students with a general interest in film and media. We will not require the course for the Cinema major or minor but will allow it to count as an elective course towards these degrees.

This proposal has the approval of Paula Amad, the DEO of Cinematic Arts, as well as Mike Gibisser, the Director of Undergraduate Studies. This proposal has been prepared by Corey Creekmur, Associate Professor and Director of Film Studies, in consultation with these colleagues. He can be contacted at: corey-creekmur@uiowa.edu. (At the moment I am serving as DEO of Cinematic Arts in Professor Amad’s absence, and thus adding my signature in that capacity.)

Sincerely,

Corey K. Creekmur
Associate Professor, Cinematic Arts
Head of Film Studies
PROPOSAL

REQUIRED GE COURSE ATTRIBUTES
In order to meet the required GE CLAS attributes, this course will include the following activities and assignments, all designed to serve multiple goals:

As early as the second and third week of class, students will be asked to consider and then write short accounts of their own (or their families’) experiences with media that includes stereotypical representations of racial, gendered, and/or sexual identities: this and a second writing assignment (with a somewhat tighter focus) will be designed to encourage students to situate their individual biographies within larger historical and cultural frames. As the course continues, these early, “personal” assignments will expand to incorporate research that allows students to more fully and deeply contextualize their own experiences. The distribution of these assignments across the semester will provide both early feedback as well as a vivid demonstration of progress through the course.

The course will also provide and draw upon adaptable models of written or audiovisual texts (including documentaries and video essays, the latter incorporating ongoing work by the course instructor) that encourage students to recognize the intersection of personal and public narratives centered upon questions of race, gender, and sexuality. Diverse samples will allow students to consider alternative models (veering from intensely personal to conventionally scholarly) for their own explorations of how personal and public accounts merge.

The course will rely upon a varied range of assignments and means of assessment, including short essays and exams, but also activities that require students to fully engage with their peers in group-created and team-evaluated work. A key component of this course will therefore include at least one collective activity: in this initial version of the course, an in-class dialog about a single key film will serve this function, but the course will easily allow for other such activities in future semesters.

GE COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING OUTCOMES
This course will meet the comprehensive learning outcomes of the GE CLAS Core in the following ways:

Since this course will explicitly incorporate the personal experiences of students, seeking to locate these within larger historical and cultural frames, the learning process will be directly addressed as students proceed through the course, and the pedagogical purpose of exercises and assignments will be stated rather than implicit. A key component of the course will emphasize that students are not just consumers, but are active creators of their cultures.

While this course will demand that students perform highly personal, self-reflexive forms of analysis, it will not sacrifice scholarly rigor: autobiographical accounts will build towards research-based assignments that (re)locate personal histories within appropriately documented contexts. Students will become familiar with and trained to employ key critical tools and theoretical contexts from the academic disciplines that have made race, gender, and sexuality central to the humanities generally and media studies specifically.
A notable component of this course will involve equipping students with a critical, formal vocabulary with which to analyze and understand texts and topics that are often discussed informally, and even in vulgar and offensive terms. While the classroom discussions for this course will demand the same level of decorum and respect as any other, the discourses of race, gender, and sexuality will be an explicit concern of this class: students will be asked to think very carefully about the role of language in this context, given the history of abuse and discrimination this course seeks to both confront and challenge. At carefully selected moments in the course, the language of race, gender, and sexuality – which includes language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, and transphobic – will be addressed directly and honestly, in a carefully monitored classroom context.

**GE AREA (Diversity and Inclusion) OUTCOMES**

This course will facilitate the following outcomes in the Diversity and Inclusion area, seeking overall to "develop students' recognition of their positions in an increasingly pluralistic world while fostering an understanding of social and cultural differences."

- Students will explore the historical and structural bases of inequality through focused study of the evolution of both media industries (including the American motion picture studio system) and popular images (including stereotypes) based on race, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality. Course materials will therefore range historically (emphasizing persistent links between past and present, as well as signs of progress), and frequently demonstrate the social or institutional rather than individual construction of inequality and discrimination.

- Students will learn about the benefits and challenges of diversity through texts and assignments that both celebrate diversity but also, importantly, acknowledge its difficulties: some films screened for the course, for instance, will encourage identification across conventional lines of race, gender, and sexuality, but these will be matched by works that question the ease of such movement, and challenge the abuses of some forms of cultural appropriation. Students, in other words, will be asked to consider possibilities as well as limitations to the achievement of diversity.

- Students will reflect critically on their own social and cultural perspectives in discussions and assignments explicitly tailored towards this goal: for instance, students will be asked to intersect and intertwine their own experiences (or those of their families) with "media events" or media texts experienced by millions of others simultaneously. A key component of this course will emphasize the ways and moments in which the consumption and reception of media can be both intensely personal and communal, or public.

- Students will increase their ability to engage with people who have backgrounds or ideas different from their own, ideally through classroom interactions, but certainly through engagement with texts (audiovisual as well as written) that demand alternative perspectives from every student in the class. The overall focus on race as well as gender and sexuality seeks to illuminate the “intersectional” quality of social identities, challenging the reduction of oneself or of others to a single form of identity.

(Note: these are more detailed summaries of goals and outcomes provided in more compact form on the syllabus included below.)
In order to allow the course instructor to more effectively assess student learning of these desired outcomes, the course will regularly include (perhaps anonymous) self-reflective, self-assessment exercises (ungraded), asking students to gauge and articulate their own progress through the course. For this course, instructors will strive to construct a classroom that welcomes and encourages respectful debate and discussion, with “rules” for class conduct and productive exchange made explicit.
APPENDIX

Note: comments in red below provide brief descriptions of assignments and activities for the General Education Curriculum Committee only: these will be more fully explained in both class and through handouts for students during the semester.

The University of Iowa
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of Cinematic Arts
Department Chair: Paula Amad, paula-amad@uiowa.edu, E210 AJB, 335-2827

Race, Gender, and Sexuality on Screen: CINE: 1625: 0001

Fall, 2018
Building: Room Number (TBA)
Some of the policies relating to this course are governed by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 120 Schaeffer Hall.

Instructor: Corey K. Creekmur, Associate Professor, Cinematic Arts
Office location and hours: W211 AJB [3 hrs min wk TBA] and by appointment
Phone: (319) 335-2824
Email address: corey-creekmur@

Description of Course

This course will examine intersections of race, gender, and sexuality as represented in American and transnational film and mass media. Beginning with the end of the classical Hollywood era, we will explore films regarded as key paradigm shifts in the evolution of diversity and representation in American and international cinema. We will also explore more recent examples of self-representation in films made by members of racial and/or sexual minorities. Students will be asked to consider African-American, Asian-American, and Chicana/o and Latina/o representations, as well as international identities and cultures, as they intersect with representations of and issues related to women and LGBTQ+ identities in popular, independent, and experimental cinema. Students will also be asked to consider the role of intersecting racisms and sexisms in both mainstream and independent cinema, the role of feminism, activism, and/or resistance in media, the role of social, political, and economic ideologies such as neoliberalism in American and transnational cinemas, and the role of contemporary queer culture along with new technologies in the evolution of radical filmmaking. As a General Education course, we will also explicitly pursue more general objectives and goals, summarized below.

Students are required to attend the class sessions and a film screening each week. Course work includes a midterm and final exam, three papers, active participation in an in class forum. Active participation in class and critical engagement with course materials is required. All reading materials will be made available online.

Objectives and Goals of the Course

This is a General Education course in the category of Diversity and Inclusion, with the following explicit objectives and goals:

• Students explore the historical and structural bases of inequality by examining intersecting racisms and sexisms in American and transnational cinema and media.
• Students learn about the benefits and challenges of diversity by engaging with works of cinema and media by under-represented and historically marginalized perspectives and identities.
• Students reflect critically on their own social and cultural perspectives through assignments that prompt students’ personal responses to course material, and illuminate their own connections to larger cultural and historical structures and events.
• Students increase their ability to engage with people who have backgrounds or ideas different from their own through facilitated class discussion and directed research.

**Texts**

All readings for this course are listed below on the weekly syllabus, and will be available on the course ICON site.

**Grading System and the Use of +/-**

The College recommends grade distributions according to the level of the course.

- An **elementary course** is broad and introductory; open to first-year students; lacking prerequisites; and numbered from 0000 to 1999.
- An **intermediate course** generally is not open to first year students and requires prerequisite(s) or assumes prior knowledge.
- An **advanced course** ordinarily is for students earning a major, minor, or certificate in the area; requires assumed prior knowledge or prerequisites; and focuses on a particular topic or specific area of knowledge within a discipline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>93% - 100%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67% - 69%</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90% - 92%</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 66%</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87% - 89%</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0% - 59%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83% - 86%</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>withdrawal</td>
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<td>U</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Repeat</td>
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The grading system listed below is used for all courses. Letter grades are used for transcripts.
Assignments and Percentage of Final Grade

1) Written Assignments: students will write two short (2-3 page) and 1 longer (5-7) essay on topics central to the course, with these building from more personal to more scholarly, research-based analysis. This sequence is designed to encourage you to build from direct experience to comments more fully grounded by your incorporation of terms, concepts, and materials from the semester as we move forward. The topics and format for all of your essays will be fully explained in class well in advance of due dates.

2) Midterm and Final Exam: these exams will be used to make sure that each student has a strong sense of key terms, concepts, and debates raised within the class. The format and material for both exams will be fully covered in class well in advance.

3) Attendance and Participation: This class is designed to involve active, even intense, class discussion, and thus your participation is weighed rather heavily and will be carefully documented. Missing class (or required screenings) will therefore significantly harm your overall performance in this class. For any absence to be excused, you should expect to provide a documented reason for missing class: if you miss more than 4 classes (that is, the equivalent of two weeks of the course), you should expect your final grade to be lowered.

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
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<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Essay 3</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Part.</td>
<td>20</td>
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TOTAL 100 points

Statement on Collaboration: A number of activities in this course will encourage and require collaboration, especially the in-class discussion that will take place in Week 13. However, all written work and exams will be the individual work of each student.

Resources for Students

1. **Writing Center**- 110 English Philosophy Building, 335-0188, [https://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/](https://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/)
2. **Speaking Center**- 410, 412, 414 English Philosophy Building, 335-0205, [https://speakingcenter.uiowa.edu/](https://speakingcenter.uiowa.edu/)
3. **Mathematics Tutorial Laboratory**- 125 MacLean Hall, 335-0810, [https://math.uiowa.edu/math-tutorial-lab](https://math.uiowa.edu/math-tutorial-lab)
4. **Tutor Iowa**- [https://tutor.uiowa.edu/](https://tutor.uiowa.edu/)

**WEEKLY SYLLABUS**

**UNIT I: HOLLYWOOD AND THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION**

**Week One: The Intersections of Race, Gender, and Sexuality on Screen**
Screening: *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (Stanley Kramer, 1967, 108m)
M (8/21): Introduction to the Course and Key Terms
W (8/23): Anne Perrin, “*Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*: The Web of Racial, Class, and Gender Constructions in late 1960s America” (2012)
Week Two: Confronting Stereotypes
Screening: Ethnic Notions (Marlon Riggs, 1987, 56m) and Picturing Oriental Girls (Valerie Soe, 1992, 15m)
W (8/30): In-class exercise on media stereotypes

Note: this exercise will require students to interact in order to critically assess a range of historical and contemporary popular images that may or may not be identified as stereotypical, and to explore their own cultural assumptions about how racial, gendered, and racial identities might be represented offensively and respectfully in popular media.

UNIT II: FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MAINSTREAM: MINORITY SELF-REPRESENTATION

Week Three: African American and Lesbian Self-Representation
Screening: The Watermelon Woman (Cheryl Dunye, 1996, 90m) NOTE: Students should watch film on their own
M (9/4): LABOR DAY: NO CLASS

Note: the first essay will stem from the previous week’s group exercise, and ask students to provide a personal or autobiographical account of their own encounter with forms of media stereotypes: the aim of this essay will be to begin to have students link their own experiences to larger structures and historical phenomena, and towards recognizing the cultural basis of identity categories.

Week Four: Asian American Self-Representation
Screening: Chan is Missing (Wayne Wang, 1982, 76m)
M (9/11): Peter X. Feng, “Being Chinese American, Becoming Asian American: Chan is Missing” (2002) and Sarah Moon Cassinelli, “‘If we are Asian, then are we funny’: Margaret Cho’s All-American Girl as the first (and last?) Asian American sitcom” (2008); In-class clips from All-American Girl (1994) and Fresh Off the Boat (2015-present)

Week Five: Gay Black and Lesbian Jewish Self-Representation
Screening: Tongues Untied (Marlon Riggs, 1989, 55m) and Treyf (Alisa Lebow & Cynthia Madansky, 1998, 55m)

Week Six: Identity and/as Performance
Screening: Paris Is Burning (Jennie Livingston, 1990, 78m)
In-class clips from RuPaul’s Drag Race (2009-present)

UNIT III: TRANSNATIONAL AND GLOBAL SEXUALITIES ON SCREEN

Week Seven: Sexuality and South Asian Cinema
Screening: Fire (Deepa Mehta, 1996, 108m)
M (10/2): In-Class Midterm
Week Eight: Sexuality and African Cinema
Screening: *Moolaadé* (Ousmane Sembene, 2004, 120m)

UNIT IV: THE CULTURAL WORK OF GENRE

Week Nine: Comedy and the Risk of Offense, or Who Gets to Tell a Sexist or Racist Joke?
Screening: *The Big Sick* (Michael Showalter, 2017, 124m)
W (10/18): In-class clips from Richard Pryor, Chris Rock, Margaret Cho, and Hasan Minhaj

Note: the second essay will be designed as a transition between the first “personal” essay and the final research-based essay: it will ask students to engage with a carefully chosen example in order to critically employ at least one of the key terms or concepts raised by the course up to this point, with the explicit goal of sharpening each student's analytical skills, even as they maintain their own position on the material they examine.

Week Ten: Horror and/or Race
Screening: *Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2017, 104m)

UNIT V: COMING OF AGE AND COMING OUT

Week Eleven: The Black (Lesbian) Coming of Age Narrative
Screening: *Pariah* (Dee Rees, 2011, 86m)

Week Twelve: Latina Sexuality and Popular Culture
Screening: *Mosquita y Mari* (Aurora Guerrero, 2012, 85m)

Week Thirteen: Black, Queer, and Oscar-Worthy: A Critical Debate
Screening: *Moonlight* (Barry Jenkins, 2016, 111m)
M (11/13): In-class dialog
W (11/15): In-class dialog

Note: This week will feature a carefully staged dialog between small student groups, each employing specific critical tools and embodying different perspectives encountered earlier in the semester to engage in critical commentary centered on a key film within recent discussions of the representation
of race, gender, and sexuality on screen. While earlier class discussions and activities will also require small-group work, this week will be devoted to a full and semi-formal group interaction.

THANKSGIVING BREAK 11/19-11/26

UNIT VI: DOCUMENTARY AND FICTION AS POLITICAL AND CREATIVE ACTS

Week Fourteen: The Power of Documentary as a Political and Creative Act
Screening: Portrait of Jason (Shirley Clarke, 1967, 105m)

Note: the final essay will require research while also building upon the previous, more "personal" essays: in addition to the focused topics of the final essays (based upon student interests), the aim of this essay will be for students to fully integrate their own experiences and perspectives with the evidence of scholarship and careful argument. This overarching goal of the assignment (and trajectory of the course as a whole) will be presented explicitly to students.

Week Fifteen: The Power of Fiction as a Political and Creative Act
Screening: Tangerine (Sean Baker, 2015, 88m)
M (12/4): no readings
W (12/6): Course Wrap-up and Final Exam Preview

Final Exam TBD

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Important Policies and Procedures

Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook.

Electronic Communication
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondence (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11).

Accommodations for Disabilities
The University of Iowa is committed to providing an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (which include but are not limited to mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related conditions). A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor’s office to make particular arrangements. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between the student, instructor, and SDS. See http://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/ for information.

Academic Honesty
All students taking CLAS courses have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of
others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty.” Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The date and time of every final examination is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. **No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes.** All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of the final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

Understanding Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather
In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety website.

*These CLAS policy and procedural statements have been summarized from the web pages of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and The University of Iowa Operations Manual.

Your Responsibilities: Your responsibilities to this class, and to your education as a whole, include attendance and participation. This syllabus details specific expectations that the instructor may have about attendance and participation. You have a responsibility to help create a classroom environment where all may learn. At the most basic level, this means you will respect the other members of the class and the instructor and treat them with the courtesy you hope to receive in return. Specifically, racist, sexist, homophobic or other discriminatory language or behavior will not be tolerated.

Plus-Minus Grading: All the department's instructors can append plus or minus grades to the letter grades they assign for the course. If the instructor does not specifically indicate in the syllabus that he or she will not assign plusses or minuses, students should assume that this form of grading will be used.

Homework Expectation: For each semester hour of credit that a Cinematic Arts course carries, students should expect to spend approximately two hours per week outside of class preparing for class sessions. That is, in a three-credit-hour course, instructors design course assignments on the assumption that students will spend six hours per week in out-of-class preparation.