

Race: Film Response Assignment

Submit by email by the end of day, Friday March 26

Worth 5 points toward your final grade

500-800 words

This assignment is an opportunity you to select a film—one you've seen, one you've heard of, one you've been wanting to see, or one that I recommend—that depicts issues related to race. You should provide a summary of how some aspect of race is presented in the film and then provide a personal response, including supporting reasons for your view of the film's content.

Points will be given as follows: a clear discussion of how the film presents a specific issue (1 point), with reference to at least two scenes/episodes from the film that support this claim (2), then a clear statement of a personal view on the film (1) with supporting reasons (1).

Here are some sample questions you may want to answer and reflect on in your response (I would recommend choosing one set of questions, or two at the very most):

- How is race portrayed in this film? Does it speak to one of the theories or historical episodes that we have discussed? Does it reaffirm or to point to flaws in these views? Does it complicate some of the popular assumptions that are made about race or about these historical episodes? How?
- How are the interactions between racial groups portrayed? Do they present aspects of racism? Which aspects? Do they show specific ways that racial groups can be brought into conflict? Into harmony? Do they show ways that racist beliefs or attitudes can be formed or combatted? How?
- What issues related to racial identity are portrayed in the film? What points of commonality or difference within and between identities are brought to light? Does it point to factors that contribute to the formation of racial identity? Things that challenge it? Which ones?
- Does the film address any of the broader social structures or institutional factors that affect race-related issues? How so? How do these work in the film?

An effective way to structure the personal response part would be to provide an evaluation of the film with respect to the issue you discuss (Was its portrayal of this aspect of race successful? Revealing? Flawed? Overly simplistic? Too complicated? Why or why not?). You should give reasons to support your evaluation.

Here is a hopelessly incomplete list of films that revolve around themes of race, racism, and racial identity. If you'd like other options, there are a variety of Wikipedia and online lists for these as well, if you'd like to browse further. Another strategy would be to look at other films by some of the directors listed here.

NARRATIVE

- Do the Right Thing (Spike Lee)
- El Norte (Gregory Nava)
- La Haine (Mathieu Kassovitz)
- Smoke Signals (Sherman Alexie)
- My Beautiful Laundrette (Hanif Kureishi)
- American History X (Tony Kaye)
- Stand and Deliver (Ramón Menéndez)
- The Joy Luck Club (Wayne Wang)
- Beloved (Jonathan Demme)
- Rabbit-Proof Fence (Phillip Noyce)
- Walkabout (Nicolas Roeg)
- The Hate U Give (George Tillman Jr.)
- Caché (Michael Haneke)
- Code Unknown (Michael Haneke)
- Killer of Sheep (Charles Burnett)
- Bush Mama (Haile Gerima)
- Watermelon Woman (Cheryl Dunye)
- Mississippi Masala (Mira Nair)

- The Battle of Algiers (Gillo Pontecorvo)
- Amreeka (Cherien Dabis)
- Malcolm X (Spike Lee)
- Nowhere in Africa (Caroline Link)
- Viceroy's House (Gurinder Chadha)
- Ali: Fear Eats the Soul (Rainer Fassbinder)
- Red Doors (Georgia Lee)
- This is England (Shane Meadows)
- Powwow Highway (Jonathan Wacks)
- Skin (Anthony Fabian)

DOCUMENTARY

- Something relevant from Folkstreams.net
- Black Power Mixtape (Göran Olsson)
- Hollywood Chinese (Arthur Dong)
- The Whiteness Project (Whitney Dow)
- I Am Not Your Negro (Raoul Peck)
- Mixed Blood (Valerie Soe)
- No Más Bebés (Renee Tajima-Peña)
- Broken Rainbow (Maria Florio and Victoria Mudd)
- Imagining Indians (Victor Masayesva Jr.)
- White Right (Deeyah Khan)
- The House I Live In (Eugene Jarecki)
- The Canary Effect (Robin Davey and Yellow Thunder Woman)
- Cesar's Last Fast (Richard Ray Perez and Lorena Parlee)
- The Slanted Screen (Jeff Adachi)
- Dolores (Peter Bratt)
- Bengal Shadows (Joy Banerjee and Partho Bhattacharya)
- The Chinese Exclusion Act (Ric Burns and Li-Shin Yu)
- The Pruitt-Igoe Myth (Chad Freidrichs)
- Real Bad Arabs (Sut Jhally)
- LA 92 (Daniel Lindsay and TJ Martin)