

Online at <http://jpc.uaa.alaska.edu/~crich/movies/syllabus.html>

Mirrored on Blackboard



JPC 313 – Movies and the First Amendment

Fall 2006– Online course

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Office Hours: 9-11 a.m. Monday, Wednesday

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

This course is a study of how movies portray journalists in popular culture and how these films deal with the First Amendment and ethical issues. You will be required to view movies from the list below, complete the assigned readings for specific movies linked to the Web site and do the quizzes on Blackboard. **The first eight movies, which are starred and in boldface type, are required.** You may choose any two other movies from the list – for a total of 10 movies. All of these movies should be available from Blockbuster, a local movie rental store or from Netflix or other online movie rental system. Some of these movies are also available without charge from the Loussac Library. In addition, you will be required to write two topic papers based on the directions in the assignments page in this syllabus and also on Blackboard.

Important Note: After you enroll or prior to the start of the semester on Aug. 28, please go to Blackboard and check your e-mail. If you prefer to use a personal e-mail, make sure that you forward your UAA e-mail on Blackboard to your preferred e-mail address. (You may

forward your Blackboard e-mail by going to directory update at <http://idm.uaa.alaska.edu/idm/user/login.jsp>). If this does not work for you, contact me by e-mail and send me your phone number and preferred e-mail address. Send it to crich@jpc.alaska.edu.

Goals:

- To analyze trends in popular culture as portrayed in movies about the media
- To discuss whether portrayals of journalists are accurate or stereotypical in movies
- To understand the role of journalists in movies during the 20 th century to the present time
- To analyze ethical issues presented in movies about media
- To gain awareness and appreciation of the First Amendment rights pursued by journalists in movies

Outcomes

- Develop critical thinking skills to analyze how journalists are portrayed in movies
- Ability to analyze the role of journalists in society
- Ability to develop awareness of ethical issues raised in movies
- Gain an understanding and appreciation of how journalists guard their First Amendment rights
- Develop awareness of skills used by investigative journalists
- Develop awareness of how movies portray stereotypes and public attitudes about journalists

Materials – You need to access this course on Blackboard for the quizzes and topic paper assignments.

Textbook: None

Assigned readings linked to the the assignments page on Blackboard and the course assignments Web page on <http://jpc.uaa.alaska.edu/~crich/movies/>

Quizzes/Papers: Listed on Blackboard under Assignments for specific movies. You must take the five quizzes on the required movies and two others from the list of optional movies for a total of seven quizzes. In addition you must write two topic papers on the subjects detailed in the assignments page.

Warning: You can only take a Blackboard quiz one time. After you have accessed the quiz, you can't return to it later or change your answers, so make sure you have viewed the movie and done the readings before you take the quiz for a specific movie.

Course Content

The following movies are on the recommended and required list; the first eight movies that

are starred and listed in boldface type are required. You must choose two others from this list.

- ***“Shattered Glass”** – required with readings and a Blackboard quiz.
- ***“The Insider”** – required with readings and a Blackboard quiz.
- ***“Wag the Dog”** – required with readings and a Blackboard quiz.
- ***“All the President’s Men”** – required with readings and a Blackboard quiz.
- ***“Good Night and Good Luck”** – required with readings and Blackboard quiz.

The next three movies are required but have no Blackboard quizzes. They must be analyzed in Topic Paper #1.

- ***“Broadcast News”** - required
- ***“Network”** - required
- ***“The Paper”** - required

Choose any two of the following movies and take the quizzes on Blackboard for the two movies you choose.

- “Absence of Malice” - optional with Blackboard quiz.
- “Up Close and Personal” – optional with readings and Blackboard quiz.
- “Citizen Kane” – optional with readings and Blackboard quiz.
- “The Killing Fields” – optional with readings and Blackboard quiz.
- “Live from Baghdad” – optional with readings and Blackboard quiz.

Class Policies

Attendance: This is a Web course so in-class attendance is not required. There are no excused absences. All assignments must be submitted on Blackboard. If you do not know how to use Blackboard, you can access instructions on the system’s main page <http://technology.uaa.alaska.edu/blackboard/>. Several training workshops are available for students throughout the year. If you are having problems with Blackboard or with your e-mail, send me an e-mail message at crich@jpc.alaska.edu or my alternate e-mail address on the UAA server: (afcjr2@uaa.alaska.edu).

Deadlines: You must submit assignments on Blackboard by the deadlines listed on the assignment page. **You may submit the assignments in any order as long as you meet deadlines.** (See assignments page for additional instructions). After you have viewed the movie you chose and have done the readings, take the quiz for that movie on Blackboard. Your topic papers may be posted as attachments in the assignments area on Blackboard. Directions are listed under the assignment in Blackboard. Do not post them in the Digital Dropbox on Blackboard, which is unreliable. **Any assignments posted after the specific deadlines will be not be accepted and will receive an F.**

Academic dishonesty (plagiarism): Plagiarism is defined as “presenting as their own the ideas or works of another person without proper acknowledgement of sources” and it is

grounds for failure in this course. (This includes information from online resources.) All information on the Web is copyrighted just as it is in print. Do not use any online information without attribution or permission. You may also face additional penalties from University administrators or face judicial review procedures. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct in the course catalog for further explanation.

Special Needs: Students with disabilities or special needs should notify the instructor and accommodations will be made. Students needing assistance for disabilities should contact Disability Support Services in Room 105 of the Business Education Building. The university provides tutors, testing accommodations and other services for students who require such assistance.

Assignments (see assignments page for details)

- Quizzes on seven of the required movies and readings. Each movie and the attached readings center on how movies portray journalists, ethical problems and First Amendment issues. There is no midterm or final examination.
- Most of the movies have required readings, which are indicated next to the name of the movie on the assignments page.
- Write two topic papers on the subjects as directed on the assignments page. Topic Paper #1 is required and you may choose to write your second paper on either Topic Paper #2 or #3. Post your papers in the assignments area of Blackboard. If you are having trouble posting your papers on Blackboard, you may e-mail me and attach the papers to your message to me at crich@jpc.alaska.edu.

Grading

- Quizzes on five of the required movies and two of your free-choice movies are each worth 10 percent of your final grade for a total of 70 percent.
- Your topic papers are each worth 15 percent of your final grade = 30 percent.
- **Grading scale:**
 - 90-100 points = A
 - 80-89 points = B
 - 70-79 points = C
 - 60-69 points = D
 - Below 60 points = F
- **Final grade totals:** Blackboard quizzes on the seven movies will total 700 points. Your two topic papers will total 300 points. Total points are as follows;
 - 900 – 1,000 points = A
 - 800 – 899 points = B
 - 700 – 799 points = C
 - 600 – 699 points = D
 - Below 600 points = F.

Grading criteria: The Blackboard quizzes are multiple choice and true-false questions. The quizzes are designed to give you instant feedback and the grades. After I read your topic papers, I will post your grades on Blackboard.

Your topic papers will be evaluated according to standards of publishable quality as defined by JPC policy. The criteria are as follows:

- A = Outstanding work of publishable quality; minimal editing required. (Excellent content, ideas, writing, research and adherence to Associated Press or Chicago Manual style.)
- B = Very good work of publishable quality; some editing required to meet professional standards. (Good content and writing skills and adherence to AP or Chicago Manual style.)
- C = Average work; substantial revision needed to meet professional standards. (Requires additional information or major rewriting including correction of numerous style errors).
- D = Poor quality; fundamental problems that fail to meet professional standards. (Assignment has weak content, serious writing flaws.)
- F = Unacceptable work: late, plagiarized, not submitted or failure to follow instructions. Plagiarism will result in an F for the course and possible additional penalties from the department and the university.

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