

Common Course Outline
AASD 211
Black Representation in American Film
3 Semester Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description

AASD 211 – 3 Credits – Black Representation in American Film presents an overview of the African American tradition in Hollywood films. There is an analysis of the relationship between American film creation and members of the Black community as an expression of an evolving consciousness of race and ethnicity in America. The course examines the role of African Americans in the film industry both as creators and as consumers of cinema. Students will view and analyze landmark full-length feature films chronologically starting in 1915 as a means of studying conventional race relations and stereotypes during the time period in which the film was produced.

Prerequisite: HIST 116 or AASD 101 or permission of the program coordinator.

Overall Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. identify and critique the evolution of stereotypes pivotal to the construction of Black identity;
2. discuss how film and the film industry depict, describe and define Blackness;
3. identify how and why racial images are constructed in film;
4. research the ethical, economic and political aspects of the creation of racial difference through film;
5. examine how the depiction of Blacks in film influence Black identity, morality, equality and community;
6. compare personal viewpoints and biases concerning race and ethnic relations in film and society with those of others;
7. debate the impact of stereotypes on various racial and ethnic communities in the United States and on concepts of race and ethnicity;
8. outline the historical development of Black communities and their connection to cinema representations;
9. analyze counter-movements of representation used to empower black communities;
10. assess course readings to explore the major periods of Black film;
11. characterize racial issues present in contemporary media, and
12. examine the relationship between storytelling/oral tradition in African derived cultures and storytelling via films.

Major Topics

- I. Definitions of Race, Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity Politics
- II. Foundations of Common African American Stereotypes Depicted in Popular Culture
- III. African American History and Culture
- IV. The Art of Film Story Making
- V. Moving From Passive Viewer to Critical Interpreter of Film
- VI. Use of Perspective in Popular Culture Expression
- VII. The Intersection of Gender, Race, and Class

Course Requirements

Grading/Exams: Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member, but will include the following:

1. One five-page research paper
2. A minimum of five one-page reaction papers
3. At least one exam (mid-term or final) with an essay component
4. A minimum of one group project (i.e. debate, skit, PowerPoint presentation, etc.)
5. Class participation including group discussion