PSYC 4390.001
Psychology and Film
Summer I 2014 (June 2-July 3)

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Phone: 361-825-2390
Class Location: MTWR 10a-11:55am (OCNR-259)

Office Hours (BH 318):  M-Th 9a-945a/1215p-1230p  and by appointment

Course Description: Despite the fact that most people watch movies as a means of entertainment, there is no denying the influence Hollywood has on the typical movie-goer. Psychology and Film will explore the power of American film and understand its dynamic relationship with American culture through the eyes of psychological theory. Students will gain a broader understanding of the ways psychological principles are communicated to a mass audience as well as assist in provoking thought and analysis of psychological theory and research.

Disclaimer: Every attempt has been made to select films and film clips that minimize offensive content. If given the choice between two similar films, I have always chosen the one that would generally be found as least offensive. That said, the films and clips chosen may contain content that some people may find offensive and that content has not been edited out. Offensive features may include sensitive story lines, graphic language, violence, sexual themes, and drug/alcohol/illegal behavior portrayals or references. There are plenty of references available online for you to read up on the film prior to coming to class – the best of which is the Internet Movie Data Base (www.imdb.com) in the section they have for each film for Motion Picture Rating and Parents Guide. Please review the list of films I propose to show and decide whether or not you think your participation in this class will be impacted by the films selected. Your decision to not attend/view a particular film(s) will not excuse you for understanding how it fits in with the particular unit.

Course Description Student Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes for this course will include the students’ ability to:

1. Identify examples of psychological principles in film
2. Critically analyze film for psychological content
3. Compare and contrast multiple portrayals of psychological content
4. Apply course materials both to both film scenarios as well as “real life”
Note: While many of these films, and all of the discussion will take place in class there will be an expectation that certain films be viewed on your own time. You will know about them well in advance and they will be movies easily obtainable.

Required Materials:


Part I: From the Couch to the Cinema: An Exploration of Mental Illness and Psychiatric Hospitalization in Film

By looking at film and its portrayal of mental illness and hospitalization, we can not only learn something about the mystery of mental illness, but can learn a little bit about ourselves and our culture in the process. Using selected feature films, documentaries and film clips spanning the 1940’s through the modern day, we will watch the evolution of the portrayal of mental illness and treatment over time. Feature films may include the viewing of The Snake Pit (1948), One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest (1975), Shock Corridor (1963), and Its Kind of a Funny Story (2010).

Part II: Function and Dysfunction in the American Family

A dysfunctional family is one where conflict, misbehavior, and often abuse on the part of individual family members occurs regularly leading to other members behaving in ways that accommodate those actions. Clearly this dynamic is perfect fodder to explore in film and we will look at how film reflects the cultural and social norms over time. Feature films may include Arsenic and Old Lace (1944), Rebel Without a Cause (1955), Ordinary People (1980), The Royal Tennenbaums (2001), American Beauty (1999), and Husbands and Wives (1992).

Your Grade:

Below is a list and a description of how you will be graded this semester. It is expected that with the papers that they are to be handed in ON the day they are due, and handed in during the class period. Late work will be subject to a significant penalty of ½ of a letter grade (5 points) per day for each day it is late. Your grade in this course will be the average of the following:

Attendance and Participation (10%):

Your attendance in class to view the films shown is essential. Watching it on your own may give you access to the story but not to the rest of the experience.
Additionally, the quality of this class is largely based on the quality of the discussions – which you are expected to participate in.

Quizzes/Assignments (15%):

These will be random quizzes given at the beginning of class designed to make sure you are doing the reading and/or independent viewing. Not coming to class prepared negatively impacts the quality of the discussions we are able to have, and much of the learning in this class comes from those discussions. These are not meant to be difficult and if you do the assignment you will have no problem getting full credit for this portion of your grade. These quizzes cannot be made up. Additionally both out of class and in class assignments will be given. Out of class assignments are expected on the due date or will be subject to the late penalty. In class assignments cannot be made up.

Functional Family Paper (25%):

This will be a paper of approximately 5-7 pages in length in which you will explore the elements of what makes for a functional family. This is a research paper and as such, your sources should be credible and scholarly. This paper will form the basis of which you will compare many of the films and clips shown to differentiate functional from dysfunctional. You will be graded not only on the content of the paper, but style and quality of your sources. This paper will be due on June 19th.

Midterm/Final Exam (25% each):

The midterm and final exams will be based on content from the assigned readings, class discussions, and film/film clips shown in class. It is recommended that you take notes as you do your readings.

Grading Scale:
90-100% = A
80 - 89% = B
70 - 79% = C
60 - 69% = D
less than 60% = F

Expectations

Class will start on time every day, and you should expect it to run the full period. Please avoid disturbing other students (by arriving late, leaving early, talking with a neighbor, etc.). Make sure that your electronic devices are turned off. I expect students to make every effort to attend each class. Should you find it necessary to miss class, please note that you will be held responsible for all material covered during the missed class. It will be your responsibility to speak with a classmate about the course content you missed.
Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a zero for the assignment or exam.

Dropping a Class

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. May 23rd is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Classroom/professional behavior

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Grade Appeals
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean's office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost.

**Disabilities Accommodations**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.
Tentative Course Schedule: These include tentative film selections based upon previous semesters. There may be some variation in the selections.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>In Class Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Work Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2</td>
<td>Introduction to Film, Psychology and Culture</td>
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<td>June 3</td>
<td>Film, Culture, and Psychology (cont)/Introduction to the Portrayal of Mental Illness/The Snake Pit (1948)</td>
<td>Wahl (2003) Chapters 1,2; Tesser, Millar &amp; Wu (1988);</td>
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<td>June 4</td>
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<td>June 5</td>
<td>Discussion of Snake Pit/Film and Psychiatric Hospitalization</td>
<td>Wahl (2003) Chapter 3; Rosenhan (1973);</td>
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<td>June 10</td>
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<td>June 11</td>
<td>Film and the Portrayal of Therapy/Good Will Hunting (1997) or Antoine Fisher (2002) or People Say I'm Crazy (2003)</td>
<td>Penn, Chamberlin, &amp; Mueser (2003); View Ordinary People</td>
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<td>June 12</td>
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<td>June 16</td>
<td>Discussion: Public Images of Mental Illness - Madness and Stigma Everywhere</td>
<td>Young, Boester, Whitt, &amp; Stevens (2008);</td>
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<td>June 17</td>
<td>Its Kind of a Funny Story (2010)</td>
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<td>June 18</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>June 19</td>
<td>Introduction to Function and Dysfunction of the American Family.</td>
<td>Functional Family Paper Due.</td>
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<td>June 23</td>
<td>Portrayal of a Functional Family</td>
<td>Mares, Oliver, &amp; Cantor (2008); Simonton, Graham, &amp; Kaufman (2012)</td>
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<td>June 24</td>
<td>Arsenic and Old Lace (1944)</td>
<td>Till, et al. (2011); Plucker, et al. (2009)</td>
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<td>June 25</td>
<td>Rebel Without a Cause (1955)</td>
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<td>June 26</td>
<td>Discussion of Arsenic and Rebel</td>
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<td>July 1</td>
<td>TRT's (con't)/The Changing notion of Functional Families</td>
<td>Final Paper Due View Ordinary People</td>
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<td>July 2</td>
<td>Course Reflection</td>
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<td>July 3</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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