

Binghamton University

The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB)

Comparative Literature Faculty Scholarship

Comparative Literature

Winter 2016

Course Syllabus (W16 Online) COLI 331: "Pulp Fiction and Quentin Tarantino"

Christopher Southward

Binghamton University--SUNY, csouthw1@binghamton.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://orb.binghamton.edu/comparative_literature_fac



Part of the [Applied Ethics Commons](#), [Comparative and Historical Linguistics Commons](#), [Comparative Literature Commons](#), [Continental Philosophy Commons](#), [Critical and Cultural Studies Commons](#), [Ethnic Studies Commons](#), [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#), [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Commons](#), [Other Film and Media Studies Commons](#), [Philosophy of Language Commons](#), [Social Justice Commons](#), [Visual Studies Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Southward, Christopher, "Course Syllabus (W16 Online) COLI 331: "Pulp Fiction and Quentin Tarantino"" (2016). *Comparative Literature Faculty Scholarship*. 20.
https://orb.binghamton.edu/comparative_literature_fac/20

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by the Comparative Literature at The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Comparative Literature Faculty Scholarship by an authorized administrator of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact ORB@binghamton.edu.

Credit Distribution Fulfillments:

This 3-week, 4-credit course fulfills the SUNY Binghamton General Education “Composition” and “Humanities” requirements. The University’s guidelines regarding these categories are as follows:

Category 1: Language and Communication: *Composition* (C) courses are courses in any of the departments or divisions of the University. They require a process of revision and a minimum of 20 pages of expository prose. At least 50 percent of the course grade is based on student writing.

Category 4: Aesthetics and Humanities: *Humanities* (H) courses enhance students’ understanding of human experience through the study of literature or philosophy.

Source: <http://www.binghamton.edu/human-development/current-students/general-education.html>

Course Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

Rejecting the standpoint of the passively entertained consumer, our shared objectives in this course will be, (1) to bring our selected cinematic and written texts into interaction in such ways as to produce high-quality scholarly writing. It is hoped that, by the end of the semester, each student’s active engagement with our course material should have enabled him/her, (2) to deepen and broaden his/her knowledge base concerning the social problematics we will have treated in such ways as to inform and encourage constructive social action.

We will view Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, *Reservoir Dogs*, and *Kill Bill, Vol. 1* and read selections of social criticism and linguistic theory from thinkers including Judith Butler, Louis Althusser, Angela Davis, Michel Foucault, Luce Irigaray, Eldridge Cleaver, and Edward Said in order to develop our own critical perspectives on questions of spectacular violence, the body, race/racism, sex, sexuality, and the discursive and concrete constitution of the subject. Students are required individually to secure access to the assigned films and purchase or otherwise procure Judith Butler's *GENDER TROUBLE*; all other written texts will be available on Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Syllabus Quiz (10% of final grade):

Each student is required to complete a short quiz as acknowledgement of key content elements of the syllabus and individual responsibility for the course. The quiz will include multiple choice, short answer questions on: (1) course objectives and expected course learning outcomes, (2) course requirements and grading, (3) expectations and responsibilities, (4) academic integrity, and (5) the reading and film viewing schedule. **The syllabus quiz is due at 11:59pm on January 4.**

Essays (40% of final grade):

Each student is required to write three (3) seven-page essays in response to one of three prompts provided by the instructor and posted to Blackboard each week. **Essays will be due at 11:59 pm each Friday of the semester: January 8, 15, and 22. Late submissions will not be accepted and will receive no credit.** These writing assignments are designed to enable students, (1) to recognize and respond to authors’ main and sub-arguments, (2) to generate questions and make observations to facilitate discussions and, (3) to gauge personal understandings of the texts and develop arguments. Papers are to be written double-spaced, using 11- or 12-point Times New Roman or Calibri font, 1-inch margins, and Modern Language Association citation conventions. Please include a header in the upper left-hand corner of only the first page, and page numbers in the lower right hand corners of each page of your documents.

Blackboard Discussion Forums (30% of final grade):

The purpose of the Blackboard discussion form is to encourage students to engage closely with our assigned readings and films and share critical observations on problematics presented in each. Each student is required twice weekly to respond to two of three discussion questions and to the responses of at least two peers. Responses should be clear, concise and professional and range 200-250 words per question answered. Each of your posts will be public and available to your classmates, so make sure that your questions and observations are pertinent to the readings and discussion topics.

Because Blackboard has an activity time-out limit and because you might encounter networking problems while logged into the service, I recommend first composing your discussion response in MS Word or another word-processing program and then copying and pasting the response into the discussion thread after proofreading and spellchecking them for errors. Always confirm that your responses are recorded to Blackboard by logging out and then back into the service to check that they are there. Each student is solely responsible for the timely submission of his or her work. **Discussion forum postings are due by 11:59pm each Tuesday and Thursday of the semester—January 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, and 21. Late responses will not be accepted and will receive no credit.**

Essay Revision Portfolio (20% of final grade):

The instructor will respond to student essays with sets of recommendations for revision, and each student must substantively revise the first two essays, collect these and their drafts into a portfolio (e.g., a Microsoft Word folder) and submit this to the instructor; **the Essay Revision Portfolio is due at 11:59pm on January 25, 2016. Late submissions will not be accepted and will receive no credit.**

Expectations and Responsibilities:

Each student is expected to assume personal responsibility for his/her own academic success and to support that of their colleagues, thereby promoting the success of the course as a whole; active participation will facilitate these goals. All assignments are due as specified below; late submissions will not be accepted. Binghamton University grading standards require students to spend at least 58 (fifty-eight) hours per week on course-related work for 4-credit courses meeting fully online during the 3-week Winter session:

<https://www.binghamton.edu/academics/provost/documents/syllabus-credit-hours-0314.pdf>

*Please inform the instructor by email of any special learning needs you may have by the Course Add/Drop deadline.

A Note on Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism consists in the unacknowledged use of another person's work. Students enrolled in this course are required and expected to do their own work. Instances of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, will be punished in accordance with University policy. Students found to have engaged in plagiarism in this course will receive an F for the assignment(s) in question. Students in need of clarification of the University's policy on academic integrity should review it online at the following link, listed under the heading, "Rules Governing Academic Life":

http://buweb.binghamton.edu/bulletin/program.asp?program_id=103

Required Films:

Pulp Fiction (Dir. Quentin Tarantino, 1994)
Reservoir Dogs (Dir. Quentin Tarantino, 1992)
Kill Bill, Vol. 1 (Dir. Quentin Tarantino, 2003)

*A note on the films: Students are required to procure the required films on their own. Each of these is available from a number of internet movie services in DVD, stream, and downloadable formats. Possible sources include Netflix.com, Hulu.com, Applestore.com, and the Amazon Prime service at Amazon.com.

Required Text:

(Available for purchase and lease at the University Library and on 2-hour course reserve at Newcomb Reading Room): *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler, 1990

*A note on the readings: All scheduled readings are required and have been selected as critical accompaniments to the films. With the exception of Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, all readings will be available on Blackboard in the "Course Content" folder. *Gender Trouble* will be available on course reserve for 2-hour loan at Newcomb Reading Room and for purchase and lease at the University Bookstore.

Week 1 (January 4 – 8):***January 5: Course Add/Drop Deadline**

Key concepts: Interpellation; violence; race and racism; gender and sexuality; the body and the discursive/practical constitution of subjectivity; the politics of speech

Syllabus Test due 11:59pm Monday, January 4*M 01/04:**

Watch: *Pulp Fiction*

Read: Louis Althusser: "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*;

Etienne Balibar: "Racism as Universalism," in *Masses, Classes, and Ideas*;

Judith Butler: Introduction—"On Linguistic Vulnerability," in *Excitable Speech*

T 01/05:

Watch: *Pulp Fiction*

Read: Judith Butler: Ch. 1, "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire," in *Gender Trouble*;

Angela Davis: "The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework," in *Women, Race, and Class*;

Noel Manganyi: "The Body and Racism," in *Alienation and the Body in Racist Society*

W 01/06:

Eldridge Cleaver: "The Primeval Mitosis" and "Convalescence," in *Soul on Ice*

Discussion Forum Responses due 11:59pm Tuesday, January 5 and Thursday, January 7**Essay #1 due 11:59pm Friday, January 8**

Week 2 (January 11 – 15):

Key concepts: Interpellation; violence and the body; discipline; sexuality

M 01/11:

Watch: *Reservoir Dogs*

Read: Judith Butler: Ch. 1: “Burning Acts, Injurious Speech,” in *Excitable Speech*;
Judith Butler: Ch. 2: “Prohibition, Psychoanalysis, and the Production of the Heterosexual Matrix,” in *Gender Trouble*

T 01/12:

Watch: *Reservoir Dogs*

Read: Michel Foucault: Part 1, Ch. 1: “The Body of the Condemned,” in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*

W 01/13:

Mari Matsuda: “The Public Response to Racist Speech,” in *Words That Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*

***January 13: Course Withdrawal Deadline**

***Discussion Forum Responses due 11:59pm Tuesday, January 12 and Thursday, January 14**

***Essay #2 due 11:59pm Friday, January 15**

Week 3 (January 18– 22):

Key concepts: The act; violence and the body; sexuality; orientalism

M 01/18:

Watch: *Kill Bill, Vol. 1*

Read: Judith Butler: Ch. 3, “Subversive Bodily Acts” and Conclusion: “From Parody to Politics,” in *Gender Trouble*

T 01/19:

Watch: *Kill Bill, Vol. 1*

Read: Luce Irigaray: “Women on the Market” and “Commodities among Themselves,” in *This Sex Which is Not One*

W 01/20:

Read: Edward Said: Ch. 1, “The Scope of Orientalism,” in *Orientalism*

***Discussion Forum Responses due 11:59pm Tuesday, January 19 and Thursday, January 21**

***Essay #3 due 11:59pm Friday, January 22**

***Essay Revision Portfolio Due 11:59pm Sunday, January 24**