

COREY COLLEGE SYLLABUS FALL SEMESTER 2009  
FRPG 187D

**COLDEST COLD WAR FLICKS:  
AMERICAN HISTORY, AMERICAN MOVIES, 1945-1963**

CLASS: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:10-11:40 Hepburn 21

JOCKEL SEMINAR: Wednesdays 13:40-15:10 Valentine 117

SCHWARTZ SEMINAR: Tuesdays 14:20-15:50 Carnegie 105

**INSTRUCTORS:**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will examine a sampling of American movies made during the earliest and coldest days of the Cold War, a period extending from the end of World War II in 1945 to the signing of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963. Movies are often more than just mindless escapism: the stories and texts continually recast by our culture not only entertain but also can provide a window into who we are, and were. Because films, like literature can reflect the time in which

they are produced, we can study history and film together to gain insights into values, issues, beliefs, hopes, fears, and historical experiences. In this course specifically we will be looking at how some of the motion pictures of the day reflected the major preoccupations of the early Cold War era: chief among them dealing with nuclear weapons, responding to the Soviet communist threat, and undertaking America's new responsibilities abroad, as well as enjoying prosperity and mobility at home in the new suburbs while spawning a generation which eventually would be called the "boomers." Special attention will be paid to the noir films of the 1940s and 1950s, family melodramas such as *Mildred Pierce* and *Rebel Without a Cause*, horror films of the 1950s such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and nuclear war films such as *On the Beach* and *Dr. Strangelove*.

### **MOVIE LIST:**

*The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946)  
*The Third Man* (1947)  
*Double Indemnity* (1944)  
*Mildred Pierce* (1946)  
*Rebel Without a Cause* (1955)  
*On the Waterfront* (1954)  
*High Noon* (1952)  
*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956)  
*Pickup on South Street* (1953)  
*The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956)  
*On the Beach* (1959)  
*Dr. Strangelove* (1963)  
*The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)  
*North by Northwest* (1959)

### **READINGS, AVAILABLE AT THE BOOKSTORE:**

David Halberstam. *The Fifties* (1993)  
Kenneth D. Rose. *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture* (2001)  
Diana Hacker. *A Pocket Style Manual* (2004)

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES**

Your grade in this course will be determined by five elements: the writing portfolio, oral presentations, reading quizzes, participation and attendance, and a final exam.

**Writing portfolio** (30% of grade). Tuesdays over the course of the semester each student will submit a paper, based on the film of the week. This will alternate weekly between an *essay* written in response to a question posed by the instructors, and a *reaction paper* in which the student may determine the focus of the paper, based on class discussions and assigned reading.

Another essay will require library research. These essays are due each Tuesday at the 10:10 plenary.

At the end of the semester, students will submit revised versions of two of their papers of their own choosing. Papers will be graded with check mark system; only the entire writing portfolio will be given a grade at the end of the semester. Students will need to remember to keep all their papers (originals and revisions) so that they can be re-submitted in the portfolio. In addition, the portfolio should include all written work from the semester, including in-class writing, quizzes, oral presentation notes, etc. Failure to turn in a portfolio will result in a failure for the course.

Except in extraordinary circumstances outside of a student's control, late papers will not be accepted. If you anticipate such an extraordinary circumstance, speak to your seminar instructor well in advance of the due date and time.

**Oral projects** (15% of grade) There will be two oral projects. First, each student will make a five-minute presentation to the entire class on the advice he or she would give to either a character in one of the films or a historical figure in the Halberstam book. Second, each seminar will write, rehearse, produce, and present a twenty to thirty-minute play on a theme of the course. There must be speaking parts for all students. This will be presented to the entire class.

**Reading quizzes.** (20% of grade) There will be short quizzes on Thursdays to test whether students have done the reading. To take the quiz you must show up on time at the start of class..

**Participation and attendance** (15% of grade with the further potential for a lowered grade). Students will be graded on the quality and quantity of their participation in the Tuesday and Thursday classes and in seminar. If you are not on time on either Tuesday or Thursday, you may be told at the door to wait outside.

Attendance is required in this course. Students may miss two classes without explanation or absence penalty, although if they miss a quiz under such circumstance it will, after the first missed quiz, be graded "0". Thereafter, each unexcused absence will result in a lowering of the final grade by 3%. Excused absences normally result from happenings beyond a student's control. They result in no penalty whatsoever. Speak to your instructor.

**Final exam** (20% of grade). The final exam will be in two parts. The first will focus on the last two films of the semester and the second will cover all the coursework.

## **THE WORD STUDIO**

The WORD Studio, in ODY Library, is a place to get feedback from peers on assignments in writing, oral communication, research, and design of visual projects. You can come for a consultation to plan a paper or presentation (you don't need anything but a blank piece of paper!); to find ways to improve the ideas, organization, and style of a draft; to videotape and review a presentation rehearsal; to practice a PowerPoint presentation, and more. Peer tutors are not proofreaders or editors who silently "fix" your work for you; instead, they are trained to have

a conversation with you about ways you can fix problem areas yourself and become better overall communicators. You may use The WORD Studio for consultations on assignments for any of your courses, although for FYP assignments you should first seek out our course mentor during his or her office hours.

The WORD Studio is open Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; and Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. You may also IM the Studio during regular hours with quick questions about grammar, citation, and style: *SLUword*.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

Note: each week, movies will be made available on the campus network the weekend and the evening before they will be discussed in class.

### ***The Best Years of Our Lives***

T, 1 Sep. Essay. Question: Is “*The Best Years of Our Lives*” really a good title for this movie? Why or why not? Provide evidence to support your point of view and (as in all papers to be written for this course) underline your thesis.

Th, 3 Sep. Reading: Halberstam, chapters 1-5

### ***The Third Man***

T, 8 Sep. Reaction paper.

Th, 10 Sep. Reading: Halberstam, chapters 6-10.

### ***Double Indemnity***

T, 15 Sep. Essay, question to be announced

Th, 17 Sep. Halberstam, chapters 11-15

### ***Mildred Pierce* (Note: this is an unusual week because of an all FYP meeting.)**

T, 22 Sep. Reaction Paper

Schwartz and Jockel seminars: Reading Halberstam, 16-20. There will be a quiz.

Th, 24 Sep. All FYP meeting.

***Rebel Without a Cause***

T, 29 Sep. Essay, question to be announced

Th, 1 Oct. Reading: Halberstam, 21-25.

***On the Waterfront***

T, 6 Oct. Reaction Paper

Th, 8 Oct. Reading: Halberstam, chapters 26-30

***High Noon***

T, 13 Oct. Research essay due. Details to be announced.

Th, 15 Oct. No class. Break.

***Invasion of the Body Snatchers***

T, 20 Oct. Reaction paper.

Th, 22 Oct. Reading: Halberstam, 31-35.

***Pickup on South Street***

T, 27 Oct. Essay. Question to be announced.

Th, 29 Oct. Reading: Halberstam, 36-40.

***The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit***

T, 3 Nov. Reaction paper

Th, 5 Nov. Reading: Halberstam, 41-44

***On the Beach***

T, 10 Nov. Essay. Question to be announced.

Th, 12 November. Reading: Rose, chapters 1 & 2

***Dr. Strangelove***

T, 17 Nov. Reaction paper.

Th, 19 Nov. Reading: Rose, chapter 3.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

***The Manchurian Candidate***

T, 1 Dec. No paper. There will be a question about *The Manchurian Candidate* on the final exam.

Th, 3 Dec. Reading: Rose, chapter 6 and Halberstam, chapters 45-46.

***North by Northwest***

T, 8 Dec. Turn in required revisions of earlier paper. There will be a question about *North by Northwest* on the final exam.

Th, 10 Dec. Plays to be presented.

## **Academic Honesty From the Academic Honor Cards**

**THIS SECTION PERTAINING TO THE ACADEMIC HONOR COUNCIL** is *not confidential*. Your signed acknowledgment of the code will be placed in your permanent student file. The Academic Honor Code cited below was designed by students and approved by the elected student government, the Thelomathesian Society, on February 26, 1992.

All students at St. Lawrence University are bound by honor to maintain the highest level of academic integrity. By virtue of membership in the St. Lawrence community, every student accepts the responsibility to know the rules of academic honesty, to abide by them at all times, and to encourage all others to do the same.

Responsibility for avoiding behavior or situations from which academic dishonesty may be inferred rests entirely with the students. Students should be sure to learn from faculty what is expected as their own work and how the work of other people should be acknowledged.

**Academic Dishonesty, according to the *Student Handbook*:** includes any dishonest conduct in connection with any academic (including research) course, program, or work.

1. It is assumed that all work submitted for credit is done by the student unless the instructor gives specific permission for collaboration.
2. Cheating on examinations and tests consists of knowingly giving or using, or attempting to use unauthorized assistance during examinations or tests.
3. Dishonesty in work outside of examinations and tests consists of handing in for credit as original work that which is **not** original, where originality is required.
4. Falsifying research methods, data, and/or results constitutes academic dishonesty.

**The following constitute examples of academic dishonesty:**

a) *Plagiarism*: Presenting as one's own work the work of another person—words, ideas, data, evidence, thoughts, information, organizing principles, or style of presentation — without proper attribution. Plagiarism includes paraphrasing or summarizing without acknowledgment by quotation marks, footnotes, endnotes, or other indices of reference (cf. Joseph F. Trimmer, *A Guide to MLA Documentation*).

b) Handing in false data, reports or results in connection with any research project or experiment.

c) Handing in a book report on a book one has not read.

d) Falsification of attendance records of a laboratory or other class meeting.

e) Supplying information to another student knowing that such information will be used in a dishonest way.

f) Submission of work (papers, journal abstracts, etc.) which has received credit in a previous course to satisfy the requirement(s) of a second course without the knowledge and permission of the instructor of the second course.

g) The above list is not exhaustive. In the event there is a question as to whether alleged conduct falls within the scope of the Academic Honor Code, the vice president and dean of academic affairs' determination shall be final.

## First-Year Program Philosophy and Goals 2009-10

A residentially-based, interdisciplinary first-year program is an ideal environment for beginning the four-year process of developing the complex intellectual and social skills that are at the heart of a liberal education and the habits of considered values and engaged citizenship that such an education should produce. The First-Year Program (FYP) and First-Year Seminar (FYS) are the core of our institutional commitment to improving your ability to engage in critical inquiry and research, to design and deliver written, spoken and/or visual texts that demonstrate rhetorical sensitivity, and to be sophisticated readers, listeners, and viewers of the texts of others. We believe that these same competencies can help develop your ability to communicate across differences (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, political views) as you find ways to live and learn together in the residence halls and as engaged and ethically reflective citizens both during and after your college years. These goals should be understood as the first step in our work with you over a four-year process of helping you to meet the University's Aims and Objectives.

We hope to help you see that writing, speaking, research, and interacting with others are rhetorical endeavors. Effective communicators are, by definition, rhetorically sensitive. Rhetorical sensitivity means understanding that all communication, whether formal or informal, involves having to make choices about your messages, whether written, spoken, or visual. To become an effective communicator, you need to recognize that the creation of a meaningful and powerful message involves both a creator and an audience, and that therefore the voice you adopt in your communication, and the audience you imagine yourself communicating to, matter a great deal in creating your message. The choices you make in writing and speaking are central in determining how people read and hear your voice. Becoming conscious and reflective about those choices, and their ethical dimensions, is a central goal of the FYP and FYS.

Working with you so that you become more rhetorically sensitive means that you should be increasingly able to assess the requirements of a particular task and make intentional decisions about which mode or modes of communication and inquiry would be most effective in addressing it. To do so, you must develop specific writing, speaking, research, and technological competencies. To accomplish these goals, the FYP and FYS will present you with assignments that ask you to engage in a process that involves **recognizing** the rhetorical situation, **planning** communication strategies to address the task at hand, **composing and presenting** the message, and then engaging in **critical assessment** of your own work and that of others. The results of that assessment process will allow you to rethink, restructure, and revise your work. We further recognize that this process is not linear and that the effective creation of texts requires that you move back and forth among these four elements of the message creation process. This is why we require that your writing and speaking assignments be "projects" that include preparatory exercises and multiple drafts or rehearsals, all of which ask you to continue to reflect critically on the choices you have made in constructing your message.

This process of increased rhetorical awareness and skill development is at the heart of the philosophical and pedagogical perspectives that inform the work of the FYP and FYS. Because this process both transcends and integrates a variety of specific skills, the program has a philosophical commitment to designing assignments that ask you to integrate various modes of communication in furtherance of the higher-level rhetorical goals in which they are situated.

To ensure that the program is meeting its stated goals, all FYP and FYS syllabi are read by other faculty in the program to determine if they include a variety of assignments that forward the writing, speaking, research, and literacy goals of the program. All FYP and FYS courses have to be approved by faculty in the program before they are offered.