

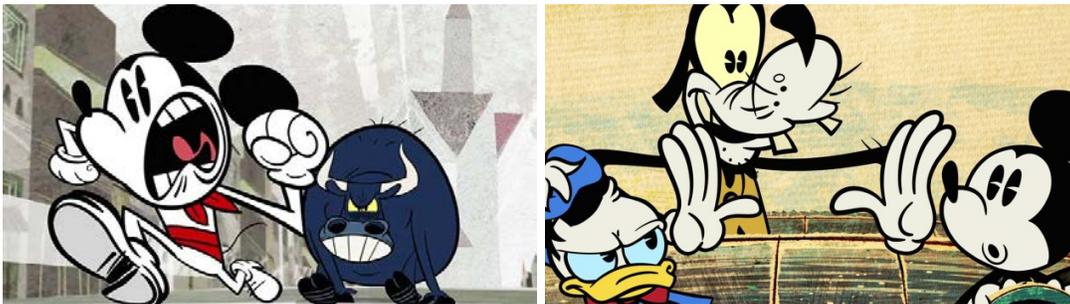
Department of English & Writing Studies
Film Studies Program

Film 2159B (650)
Disney Dream Factory
Winter 2024

Instructor ZOOM Office Hours: Fridays
2:40 pm-3:40 pm

Course Day/Time: Asynchronous Online

View films on your own time online using links provided in announcements each week
Read posted Screening Intros, Lecture Notes, and Assigned Texts
Visit OWL FORUM Online Discussion Board
Complete and upload assignments



Course Objectives:

Benjamin Barber in *The New York Times* argued “whether Disney knows it or not, it is buying much more than our leisure time. It has a purchase on our values, on how we feel and think, and what we think about.” This course offers a closer look at Disney as one of America’s most long-standing “dream factories,” examining the cultural narratives, industrial strategies, fantasies and ideologies that fuel Disney’s global impact in the 20th and 21st century. In addition to analyzing key Disney animated features, we will also look at the studio’s early cartoons, educational and advertising films, nature documentaries, live action films and propaganda shorts. We will study Disney’s relationship to art, politics and ecology and also examine the “invention” of childhood, notions of “family” entertainment and constructions of race, class and gender in Disney filmmaking. Films include *Bambi*, *Wall-E*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Steamboat Willy*, *Fantasia*, *The Lion King* and *Frozen*.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to critically analyse the techniques and formal structure of Disney's filmmaking, identify cultural and social themes in Disney's oeuvre and also reflect on the role reception, fandom and marketing play in shaping Disney's screen culture. In this course, students will hone independent research skills (utilizing the proquest historical newspaper database). A close analysis of archival sources and primary source material such as lobby cards, press books, posters, stills and reviews will also promote a deeper awareness of film historiography and film-industry publicity and marketing strategies. By the end of the course, successful students will be able to demonstrate how film relates to wider economic, cultural and social contexts and issues.

Course Materials

Required Textbooks (available in the University Bookstore):

* Janet Wasko *Understanding Disney: The Manufacture of Fantasy* (2nd Ed., Polity, 2020) [UD]

* Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Hass, Laura Sells (Ed.) *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture* (Indiana University Press: 1995) [MtM]

* Other required readings will be available on our course webpage on OWL

Optional Textbook (available in the University Bookstore):

Mindy Johnson, *Ink and Paint: The Women of Walt Disney's Animation*

Methods of Evaluation

- Class Participation - A minimum of 12 thoughtful posts to our WEEKLY FORUM discussion board on OWL. Please note that students may post FORUM responses at any point during the term. You do not need to email your instructor or TA for an extension to post a FORUM response. If possible, post FORUM responses by Friday, 5pm each week. [25%]
- Historical newspaper database assignment/Short Essay] [25%]
- Online Group Presentation [20%] Small groups will be assigned by instructor and assignment details provided in an email]
- Creative-Critical Final Project– Many Options!! Topics: Disney Storytelling, Children's Media, Live Action Remakes, Special Effects, Participatory Fan Culture, Fanvids, Fanfiction or Fanart, Disney/Ecology/Nature, Global Disney, Disney+ [30%]