

Envisioning America Through HBO's Westworld

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Fall 2018

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Classroom: CON 302

Monday and Wednesday: 4:00-5:20pm
Office Hours: By Appointment Only
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Course Description:

The HBO television show Westworld provokes conversations about our historical cultural understandings of image/representation, memory, nostalgia, fantasy, pleasure, technology, and the evolution of American culture from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.

While this class will engage in visual analysis of the show itself, it will be primarily focused on the underlying themes portrayed and avoided in the show and investigate the layered historical contexts and ideas that are connected to it.

At the heart of this course are conversations about American culture's relationship, construction, and remembrance of the past. As a class we will engage in conversations about how different ideas, images, moments, and visions of the past are remembered and then re-remembered. The focus would be on the west itself but will expand out to the larger historical questions about representation, displacement, frontiers, manifest destiny, fantasy, entertainment, pleasure, violence, our relationship technology, changing notions of gender and sexuality, who defines humanity, and freedom. It is about the evolution of ideas whose changing vision has continued to inform American culture. This show can act as a vehicle to engage with the ideas and what influenced their evolution.

This course is writing intensive.

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or contact odsnewark@rutgers.edu.

Readings:

All readings are posted on Blackboard.

You are required to read EVERYTHING that is listed on the schedule BEFORE you attend class.

It is essential that you bring each days reading with you to class.

Grading and Assignments:

You will have a total of six writing assignments of varying lengths and will be asked to lead one class discussion as part of a group. The details for each assignment will be provided on Blackboard.

Short Paper (1-2 pages) / Primary Source Analysis

Short Paper (1-2 pages) / Critical Reading Analysis

Medium Paper (2-3 pages) / Analytical-Argumentative Question

Medium Paper (2-3 pages) / Character Arcs

Short Paper (1-2 pages) / Detailed Outline for Final Paper

Final Paper (4-6 pages) Compare Course Readings and Series to Movie or Novel

The percentage breakdown for the course will be as follows:

Class Participation:	15%
Short Paper One:	5%
Short Paper Two:	10%
Medium Paper One:	15%
Medium Paper Two:	20%
Short Paper/Outline:	5%
Final Paper:	30%

Class Participation and Attendance:

Attending class is not optional. Class lectures not only include discussions on your assigned readings, but the material presented is what you will be writing about. In-class participation is essential to this discussion driven course. Any student who misses five or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and Cheating

Integrity is fundamental to the academic enterprise. It is violated by such acts as borrowing or purchasing assignments (including but not limited to term papers, essays, and reports) and other written assignments, using concealed notes or crib sheets during examinations, copying the work of others and submitting it as one's own, and misappropriating the knowledge of others. The sources from which one derives one's ideas, statements, terms, and data, including Internet sources, must be fully and specifically acknowledged in the appropriate form; failure to do so, intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes plagiarism.

Violations of academic integrity may result in a lower grade or failure in a course and in disciplinary actions with penalties such as suspension or dismissal from the College.

The university's policy on academic integrity is available at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Academic Integrity Pledge and the Rutgers Honor Pledge on each exam.

“On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination / assignment.”

Semester Schedule

September 5: *Introduction and Defining Frontiers*

September 10: *Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Thesis"*

September 12: *Mechanical Man and Henry Ford*

September 17: *Gender and Prostitution in the Gold Rush Era*

Assignment: Short Paper (1-2 pages) / Primary Source Analysis

September 19: *Representations of Indigenous Peoples at the Turn of the Century*

September 24: *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show*

September 26: *Walt Disney and Frontierland: Part I*

October 1: *Walt Disney and Frontierland: Part II*

October 3: *Representations of Indigenous Peoples Continued...*

October 8: *Evolution of Feminism on Screen*

October 10: *Entertainment Media in the 20th Century: Part I*

Assignment: Short Paper (1-2 pages) / Critical Reading Analysis

October 15: *Entertainment Media in the 20th Century: Part II*

October 17: *Evolution*

October 22: *Bicameral Mind & Consciousness*

October 24: *Dangers of A.I.: Part I*

October 29: *Dangers of A.I.: Part II*

October 31: *Episode One*

November 5: *Episode Two & Three*

November 7: *Episode Four & Five*

Assignment: Medium Paper (2-3 pages) / Analytical-Argumentative Question

***All Episodes Must Be Watched**

November 12: *Episode Six & Seven*

November 14: *Episode Eight & Nine*

November 19: *Episode 10*

Assignment: Medium Paper (2-3 pages) / Character Arcs

November 21: *No Class – Happy Thanksgiving*

November 26: *Television as Narrative: Part I*

November 28: *Television as Narrative: Part II*

December 3: *Westworld, 1973*

Assignment: Short Paper (1-2 pages) / Detailed Outline for Final Paper

December 5: *Wrap-Up*

December 10: *Peer Review Session*

December 12: *Writing Day*

December 19: Final Paper (4-6 pages) Compare Course Readings and Series to Movie or Novel