

Envisioning America Through HBO's Westworld

21:525:100

Fall 2021

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Classroom: ENG 301

Tuesday and Thursday: 10:00-11:20am
Office Hours: By Appointment Only
Office: ENG 219

Course Description:

The HBO television show *Westworld* lends itself to conversations about how different ideas, images, moments, and visions of the past and the future are created, fantasized, remembered, re-remembered, manipulated, and profited from. While this class will engage in visual analysis' of the show itself, it will be primarily centered on the underlying themes portrayed and avoided in the show and investigate the layered historical contexts and ideas that are connected to it. The focus will be on the concept of frontiers and the themes that emerge from it, such as nostalgia, representation, displacement, manifest destiny, fantasy, entertainment, colonization, pleasure, violence, technology, changing notions of gender and sexuality, definitions of humanity, and freedom. This course is about the evolution of frontiers, whose changing vision has continued to inform American culture. We will use the show *Westworld* to act as a vehicle to engage with what has influenced the evolutions.

Readings:

Readings and Assignments are posted Canvas

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. In a digital format is fine.

In order to watch the show, you will need to get HBO Max or borrow the DVD set from the library.

Grading and Assignments:

The percentage breakdown for the course will be as follows:

Assignment #1: Short paper	15%
Assignment #2: Short paper	16%
Assignment #3: Group presentation with short paper	17%
Assignment #4: Group presentation with short paper	18%
Final Paper: Medium sized paper	19%
Class Participation: Required	15%

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 four 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

As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Academic Integrity Pledge and the Rutgers Honor Pledge on all assignments.

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

Semester Schedule

September 2: *Introduction and Defining Frontiers*

September 7: *Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Thesis," Manifest Destiny and Myths*

September 9: *Indigenous Cultures, "Indian Wars" and Westward Expansion*

September 14: *Homesteaders, Prostitutes, Madams, and Statues: Defining Women*

September 16: *Laboring the West*

September 21: *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show*

September 23: *Frankenstein*

September 28: *Heroes and Villains: Western Movies and Musicals*

September 30: *The Power of Disney*

October 5: *Westworld, 1973*

October 7: *I, Robot and Jurassic Park*

October 12: *The Running Man and The Matrix*

October 14: *Utopia/Dystopia*

October 19: *Evolution – Man/Machine Hybrids*

October 21: *Robot Rights & Consciousness*

October 26: *Robot Dating & Sex*

October 28: *Presentations: Group A*

November 2: *Presentations: Group B*

November 4: *Presentations: Group C*

November 9: *The Music of Westworld*

November 11: *Dangers of A.I.*

November 16: *And You Thought Your Phone Listening to You Was Bad....*

November 18: *Enteral Life, The Replacements, and Rehoboam or Dangers of AI?*

November 23 and 25: *No Class – Happy Thanksgiving*

November 30: *Presentations: Group A*

December 2: *Presentations: Group B*

December 7: *Presentations: Group C*

December 9: *Television as Narrative*

December 16: **Final Paper Due**

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

- **Students with Disabilities:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact ODS, register, have an initial appointment, and provide documentation. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and documentation submitted) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided to the student. The student must give the LOA to each course instructor, followed by a discussion with the instructor. This should be completed as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.
- **Religious Holiday Policy and Accommodations:** Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule. The Division of Student Affairs is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed: (973) 353-5063 or DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu.
- **Counseling Services:** Counseling Center Room 101, Blumenthal Hall, (973) 353-5805 or <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/>.

- **Students with Temporary Conditions/Injuries:** Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate in their courses should submit a request for assistance at: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.
- **Students Who are Pregnant:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.
- **Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment:** Students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, should know that help and support are available. To report an incident, contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. To submit an incident report: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. To speak with a staff member who is confidential and does **NOT** have a reporting responsibility, contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: (973) 353-1918 or run.vpva@rutgers.edu.

Learning Resources:

- Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services)
Room 140, Bradley Hall
(973) 353-5608
<https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center>
- Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshops)
Room 126, Conklin Hall
(973) 353-5847
nwc@rutgers.edu
<https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center>