

FMS 270– Race and Gender in American Film Paper #2 Assignment:

In a 4-page paper you will critically analyze a film for the way it represents race and gender. You will choose ONE of the topics below to write on.

Topics:

1. Analyze the representation of race AND gender in one of the following Westerns: *The Searchers* (1956), *Dances with Wolves* (1990) or *The Proposition* (2006). In addition to your analysis of the film's narrative, be sure to include some analysis of how the movie uses formal film elements (cinematography, editing, sound, mise-en-scene) in its representative strategies.

You must use two scholarly sources in support of your argument. Only one can come from the course.

2. Critically analyze one of the following “interracial buddy films” in terms of the concepts from Lesson 9: *Trading Places* (1982), *White Men Can't Jump* (1994), or *Shanghai Noon* (2000). Your analysis should also include an argument about how gender is represented in the film. In addition to your analysis of the film's narrative, be sure to include some analysis of how the movie uses formal film elements (cinematography, editing, sound, mise-en-scene) in its representative strategies.

You MUST engage the chapters on interracial buddy movies from Hernan Vera and Andrew Gordon's book *Screen Saviors: Hollywood Fictions of Whiteness*; any paper that does not will not be considered for a grade.

The two chapters are linked under Lesson 9's Reading and titled “[Black and White Buddies I](#)” and “[Black and White Buddies II](#).”

3. Critically analyze one of the following films: *The Godfather* (1972) *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991), or *Gran Torino* (2008) for its attitude about multiculturalism and assimilation. Does the film you choose advocate for multiculturalism, advocate for assimilation, or something in between? Be sure to give specific examples from the film in supporting your argument.

After your introduction, but before your analysis, be sure to define multiculturalism, assimilation and any other terms that you use. Make sure that your definitions come from scholarly sources, not from dictionaries, encyclopedias or non-scholarly websites.

You must use two scholarly sources in support of your argument. Only one can come from the course.

4. In writing on this topic, be very careful that you are not simply summarizing plot or describing character actions and attitudes. Your paper is about how the *film* perpetuates an ideology *through* its plot and characters. In other words, what is the film's attitude about assimilation or multiculturalism? It may be very different than the characters' attitudes.

Format Guidelines

1. See the syllabus or web site for the due date. No late papers accepted without permission from instructor or a university approved excuse. Late papers will result in 10% deduction for each day late after class begins on the due date.
2. Paper must be no less than four pages and no more than five. Shorter or longer papers will result in a 10% deduction.
3. Your paper must be titled. Feel free to be creative as long as your title is relevant to your topic.
4. Your paper must be word processed in 12 pt, Times New Roman, double-spaced between lines but not between paragraphs. 1" margins all around. Failure to comply will result in a 10% deduction.
5. You must properly cite your source use and attach a bibliography. Any paper that does not use sources will automatically lose 25%.

Paper Guidelines

1. Your paper must include a **SHORT introduction** that concludes with a strong **thesis statement** or **question** that clearly asserts what you are going to argue or analyze in your paper. Especially because this is a short paper, this must be **specific!** Failure to include a strong, clear thesis and introduction will result in the loss of 10% of your paper grade.

Example: Despite the fact that *Casino Royale* demonstrates many traditional gender stereotypes, the movie is actually somewhat progressive in representing women. In this paper, I will argue that *Casino Royale* challenges traditional representations of gender, and in doing so resists dominant gender ideology in which men are represented as the superior gender.

2. Your analysis must include several of the **concepts** from the course so far.
3. You must back up your argument with **evidence** and **examples**.
4. Do **NOT** become bogged down in **plot summaries, definitions, long explanations of concepts,** or anything else that takes away valuable space for analysis and individual thought. While it is necessary to set context, you need no more than a few sentences to do this.
5. Make sure that you add a short **conclusion** that summarizes your overall argument or point or that answers the question you have asked.
6. Watch your writing. Excessively poor spelling and grammar will result in a loss of 10%. This means take the time to **revise**.

Grading Rubric

- Strong thesis/introduction – 10%
- Incisive critical/analytical thinking/writing 20%
- Use of evidence/examples to support your points, including elements of film form 20%
- Use of sources 15%
- Argument is strongly woven throughout paper 10%
- Organization/clarity – 15%
 - Organized into clear paragraphs and subtopics
 - Sticks closely to stated topic/argument
 - Writing is lucid, economical and clear
- Adequate length – 5%
- Grammar, spelling, punctuation, formatting – 5%