

Reel History: The American South on Film

Last Updated: Sat, 08/02/2025

Course prefix: HTS

Course number: 2085

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
94441

Instructor First Name: Christopher

Instructor Last Name: Lawton

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

This course will consider a series of films about the American South to explore both the history of the region and its ever-changing role in American popular culture.

Our goal will be to learn to formally, thematically, and historically analyze the films we watch. Doing so will allow us to examine film vs. history, dominant-but-shifting myths of the South, and how and why successive generations of Americans have used the region's past as a way of trying to understand themselves and their present.

Course learning outcomes:

Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

- Recognize cultural history as an interpretive account of the human past
- Recognize the ambiguity that history –and historical inquiry– requires.
- Welcome contradictory perspectives and data
- Describe past events from multiple perspectives.
- Speak and write fluently about selected narrative films and documentaries using tools of formal, thematic, and historical analysis.

Required course materials:

None

Grading policy:

Theme #1 Response Essay: 25pts

Theme #2 Response Essay: 25pts

Theme #3 Response Essay: 25pts

Theme #4 Response Essay: 25pts

Group Research Paper: 50pts

Cumulative Final Exam: 35pts

Participation in Discussions: 20 pts

Attendance: 10pts

Attendance policy:

Regular class attendance is required, will be checked daily, and will be necessary to succeed in this course. You must be here for the entire class period to be counted as having attended for that day. Everyone is allowed two no-questions-asked absences. More than two absences without approved written documentation will adversely affect your grade.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion