

PSYC 0160 - PSYCHOLOGY AND FILM

Catalog Description

Formerly known as PSYC 60

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: Analysis of a selection of modern and contemporary films that have played a critical role in shaping and reflecting cultural assumptions and fears about psychology and psychological states. Examination of how motion pictures depict mental illness, relationships, and other psychologically relevant issues, as well as how films depict the field of psychology itself. Topics include universal themes, the psychological value of filmmaking and viewing, application of theories and concepts, accuracy in the depiction of psychological variables, and psychological impact. (CSU, UC)

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Evaluate a classic psychological research study and evaluate how accurately the psychological phenomenon was evidenced in the film under scrutiny.
- CSLO #2: Analyze feature films for psychological constructs.
- CSLO #3: Evaluate the repercussions of euphemistic language for mental illness.
- CSLO #4: Assess the levels of resilience evidenced in the protagonist. Contrast these qualities of resilience with attributes that could be also considered pathology.

Effective Term

Fall 2022

Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

Contact Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Student Learning Hours

162

Course Objectives

1. Describe how psychological themes are significant in works of film.
2. Describe how film can be used in therapeutic, healing, or educational ways.
3. Describe what psychology says about film and what film says about psychology.
4. Compare and contrast examples of characters who embody different psychological attributes and how they may illustrate theories.
6. Describe ways in which film has a powerful impact on stereotyping in the area of culture, gender, ethnicity and (dis)ability.

General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
 - AA/AS - Behavioral Sciences
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
 - CSUGE - D9 Psychology
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)
 - IGETC - 4I Psychology

Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable
- UC Transferable

Methods of Evaluation

- Essay Examinations
 - Example: 1. Select a book from the assigned reading list and present a six-page written analysis of its relevancy to one of the films by incorporating all the appropriate materials covered throughout the semester. Rubric grading. 2. Consider three principal characters from three different films shown this semester. Write a detailed behavioral description of each character. Using only behaviors directly seen on screen or equivalent information given within the film, write an argument for (or against) that character being classifiable under DSM as antisocial personality disorder. Justify your argument with concrete examples including both behaviors and neurological evidence (if possible). Rubric grading.
- Objective Examinations
 - Example: 1. Respond to 50 objective questions designed to test your knowledge and understanding of basic psychological concepts as applied to films used throughout the semester. 2. Weekly Quiz Example 1. Not everyone agrees that opening the Stasi files was a good idea. Discuss why it may not have been for Georg. 2. The Stasi, as a means to obtain information, often used relationships. According to the reading, which of the following were not used a. husbands/wives b. parents c. neighbors d. coworkers e. all of these were use 3. What were the charges against the writer, Frederic Pryor? a. low artistic integrity b. treason c. espionage d. all of the above 4. What turned Weisler from disembodied spying? a. he fell in love with Christine Marie b. he loved Georg's work c. the playwright's suicide d. finding "art" e. all of the above
- Projects
 - Example: 1. Students are assigned to small groups and choose a film to analyze for psychological constructs. After viewing, the groups create a pictorial analysis of the film narrative and justify the trajectory of that narrative with as many relevant psychological concepts possible studied in this course with a minimum of ten concepts. Define each concept and articulate how the concept was evidenced in behavioral sequences in the film. Present your findings to the class in the form of a panel discussion. Rubric grading. 2. Students are asked to create a single "poster-board" research project exploring pathology and resilience of two characters from two different films watched in class this semester. Consider how these individuals are influenced by their particular social structural situation, their local culture and their personal psychology. Your project can take on any graphical presentation you would like but you must fully explain using evidence from behaviors depicted by your chosen

character and citing relevant support from reading assigned this semester (cited properly with footnotes). Your board must, at a minimum, include these categories for each character: A. FILM Character A Pathology: Structural/Culture/Individual Resilience: Structural/Culture/Individual B. FILM Character B Pathology: Structural/Culture/Individual Resilience: Structural/Culture/Individual

Repeatable

No

Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. Instructor will assign two opposing view journal articles discussing psychopathy/APD. Instructor will lead a lecture/discussion on the diagnostic evolution of psychopathy. Students will break into small groups and assess the assigned film character's potential diagnosis based upon various temporal contexts.
2. Instructor will present a selected feature commercial film. After the film viewing, instructor will facilitate discussion on whether the "character" was identifiable as experiencing PTSD. Students will be assigned to create and justify an argument for or against the classification of the character as diagnosable using the DSM
3. Students will meet the following week with their written "diagnosis" and work in small groups to analyze similarities and differences in their diagnoses.

Distance Learning

1. Online instructor lecture and discussion on social and cognitive psychology, followed by students identifying principles of social and/or cognitive psychology to explain behavioral trajectories of characters within the film narratives. Student post reports for review and comment by other students and the instructor.

Typical Out of Class Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read an assigned chapter and take notes on the neurological symptoms, frank behaviors, and the context within which these phenomena take place. View the associated film and identify the commonalities in the psychological disorders presented pursuant to the psychological literature. Analyze how well the film depicted a complex issue with emphasis on performance and narrative. 2. Read an assigned set of journal articles, and carefully take notes while assessing how a social psychological phenomenon has multiple explanations for causality. View the assigned film dealing depicting complex social issues to see how these theoretical elements transferred to the screen. Explain how the film adequately justified its narrative arch based upon your analysis.

Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

1. Write a short essay of 5-7 paragraphs explaining why, or why not, depicting mental illness might be more difficult than the depiction of social psychological phenomenon in film. 2. Read the Rosenhan article "On Being Sane in Insane Places." In what ways are some of the patients in One Flew Over Cuckoo's Nest similar to the patients in the Rosenhan

study? Consider the dynamics within the hospital, choose one patient and describe how he exemplifies the issues Rosenhan brings up. Actually describe behaviors and the responses within the hospital context.

Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

Term Project: Students are asked to create a single "poster-board" research project exploring pathology and resilience of two characters from two different films watched in class this semester. Consider how these individuals are influenced by their particular social structural situation, their local culture and their personal psychology. Your project can take on any graphical presentation you would like but you must fully explain using evidence from behaviors depicted by your chosen character and citing relevant support from reading assigned this semester (cited properly with footnotes). Your board must, at a minimum, include these categories for each character: A. FILM Character A Pathology: Structural/Culture/Individual Resilience: Structural/Culture/Individual B. FILM Character B Pathology: Structural/Culture/Individual Resilience: Structural/Culture/Individual

Required Materials

- Characters on the Couch: Exploring Psychology through Literature and Film
 - Author: Dean Haycock
 - Publisher: Greenwood
 - Publication Date: 2016
 - Text Edition:
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- People Like Ourselves: Portrayals of Mental Illness in the Movies
 - Author: Jacqueline Noll Zimmerman
 - Publisher: Scarecrow Press
 - Publication Date: 2013
 - Text Edition: 1st
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Movies and Mental Illness: Using Films to Understand Psychopathology
 - Author: Danny Wedding
 - Publisher: Hogrefe Publishing
 - Publication Date: 2014
 - Text Edition: 4th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Positive Psychology at the Movies: Using Films to Build Character Strengths and Well-Being
 - Author: Ryan M. Niemiec and Danny Wedding
 - Publisher: Hogrefe Publishing
 - Publication Date: 2013
 - Text Edition: 2nd
 - Classic Textbook?:

- OER Link:
- OER:
- Psychology at the Movies
 - Author: Mary Banks Gregerson
 - Publisher: Wiley
 - Publication Date: 2012
 - Text Edition: 1st
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:

Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.

Students may need to purchase access to films