

Ant 305 (30005/10/15/20)  
MW 11:00 + sections  
Fall, 2010

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## Introduction to Expressive Culture

The purpose of this course is to introduce the concept of culture as a crucial dimension of human life. Because we tend to think of thought and action as stemming from individual impulses, we find the notion of a shared, highly variable, but influential force in our lives hard to fathom. Even if we speak of "society" as a familiar concept, we tend to make of it a uniform, oppressive force, some institution outside ourselves that we individually confront and oppose. Yet only if we can learn to recognize how deeply we share certain assumptions and inclinations with others--but only some others, and to varying degrees--can we appreciate the degree to which culture inheres within us and makes us who we are.

The course begins by considering the many inferences we draw, often unconsciously, when we look at people's faces and when we listen to them speak, that is, what implicit meanings we find in people's appearances and accents. Implicit meanings become particularly noteworthy in expressive genres, such as folklore and mass media. So we will turn our attention to the kinds of meanings, implicit and explicit, that analysts have found (or argued about) in fairy tales. We will then consider how similar kinds of analyses might be made of a number of films, including American, English, and Asian ones: how they, too, constitute something like fairy tales.

An introductory course cannot cover any single topic in great depth. My intention is to compensate for that fact by pointing to some of the many intriguing and timely issues that the subject of expressive culture opens up. My hope is that this survey will entice students into looking into these issues in greater depth in later coursework. More importantly, I hope that the course will enable people to analyze their own experience in cultural, rather than purely individual, terms.

### Reading and viewing assignments:

Readings will be available as pdf files on the Blackboard site for the course. The book, *Sleuthing the Alamo*, by James Crisp, is available in new and used copies at the University Co-op Bookstore. All reading is required.

The course includes a number of films that will be shown on Monday and Tuesday evenings (with the exception of Thanksgiving Week, see below) at 6 p.m. If you do not attend either of the screenings of a film arranged for the class, you are obliged to arrange to see it on your own time at the Audio-Visual Library in the Fine Arts Library.

Grading and exams: There will be two mid-term exams and a final essay. Each of the exams will be worth twenty-two points; the final essay will be worth twenty-four. The rest of a student's grade (32%) will be based on ten (out of a possible twelve) weekly comments students write on

the reading and/or viewing (each worth two points), and attendance and participation in section discussion (worth a total of twelve points). Each comment must be submitted through Blackboard before your section meets **and** as a hard copy you give to your TA in class. (No credit will be given unless you submit your comment in **both** formats.) No comments will be required during the first week, Thanksgiving week, or the final week of the semester. Assignments cannot be made up. No options for getting extra credit are available in this course except by submitting more than ten out of the possible twelve comments.

Classes will consist of both lecture and discussion. Students are expected to attend class and to be prepared to enter into discussion. Students are also expected to come to class punctually and remain throughout class. Consistent tardiness or frequent absence must be explained.

### **Schedule**

**Week 1            August            25-27            Introduction: What do we infer from looking at people's faces?**

Reading:

You are required to look at the pages at the following web site:

<http://homepage.psy.utexas.edu/homepage/group/LangloisLAB/maxims.html>

After reading the material on this page, read through the four other linked pages listed under "Our Research" on the left side of the page ("What makes a face attractive?," "Preferences for Attractive Faces," "Why do we prefer attractive faces?," and "Stereotype development").

If you are intrigued and want to know more about Dr. Langlois's research, you are encouraged to download the following article:

<http://homepage.psy.utexas.edu/homepage/group/LangloisLAB/META.PDF>

Although much of the article is technical, reading p. 390 to the top of p. 395, and pp. 404-408 will give you the gist of the study and results. This reading is optional but worthwhile.

**Week 2            August 30 – September 3            What do we infer from listening to people speak?**

Reading:

Murphy, Robert. *Cultural and Social Anthropology: an overture*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1989. Pp. 105-25.

GN 316 M87 1989

Required viewing:

*American Tongues* VIDCASS 5999 UGL AV Collection Reserves (56 min)

Monday, August 30, in JBG 2.216, and Tuesday, August 30, at 6 p.m., in.

**Week 3      September 6 – 10      What do we learn from fairy tales? Psychological and sociological perspectives.**

No class Monday, September 6, Labor Day.

Reading:

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment*. New York: Knopf, 1977. Pp. 3-19, 159-66.  
GR 550 B47 1989

Zipes, Jack. *Happily Ever After*. New York: Routledge, 1997. Pp. 39-60.  
GR 550 Z58 1997

**Week 4      September 13 – 17      What else do we learn from fairy tales? Feminist perspectives.**

Reading:

Warner, Marina. *From the Beast to the Blonde*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1994. Pp. 200-40.  
GR 550 W38 1994

**Week 5      September 20 – 24      How do people imagine themselves as members of communities?**

**Monday, September 20: First mid-term exam. Bring blue books.**

Reading:

Wilson, William A. Herder, Folklore and Romantic Nationalism. *Journal of Popular Culture* 6:819-35 (Spring, 1973).

**Week 6      September 27 – October 1      How do communities differ?**

Reading:

Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. Pp. 1-14, 263-307.  
GT 95 I58 1992

**Week 7      October 4 – 8      Does history consist of stories?**

Reading:

Crisp, James E. *Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett's last stand and other mysteries of the Texas Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. 1-102.  
F 390 C79 200

**Week 8      October 11 - 15      How do we like to represent ourselves?**

Reading:

Crisp, James E. *Sleuthing the Alamo*. Pp. 103-98.  
F 390 C79 200

Required viewing:

*The Alamo*, directed by John Wayne. DVD 3377 (162 min.)  
Monday, October 11, and Tuesday, October 12, at 6 p.m. in.

**Week 9      October 18 - 22      How do we represent ourselves when representing others?**

Reading:

Lutz, Catherine A., and Collins, Jane L. *Reading National Geographic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. Pp. xi-xiv, 87-117.  
G 1 N275 L88 1993

Required viewing:

*Pocohantas*, by Disney. DVD 3376 (81 min)  
Monday, October 18, and Tuesday, October 19, at 6 p.m. in.

**Week 10      October 25 – 29      Others representing themselves.**

Readings:

Himpele, Jeff et al. Visual Anthropology. Review Essays. *American Anthropologist* 105(4):820-38.

Required Viewing:

*The Fast Runner (Atanarjuat)*. DVD 1344 (161 min)  
Monday, October 25, and Tuesday, October 26, at 6 p.m. in.

**Week 11      November 1 – 5      Other others representing themselves.**

**Monday, November 1: Second mid-term exam. Bring blue books.**

Reading:

Hamilton, Annette. Rumours, Foul Calumnies and the Safety of the State: Mass Media and National Identity in Thailand. Ed. Craig J. Reynolds, *National Identity and Its Defenders: Thailand, 1939-1989*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1991. Pp. 341-78.

Required viewing:

*Ong-Bak: the Thai Warrior*. DVD 4260 (105 min.)

Monday, November 1, and Tuesday, November 2, at 6 p.m. in .

**Week 12      November 8 – 12      Diasporic South Asians representing themselves.**

Reading:

Derné, Steve. *Movies, Masculinity, and Modernity: an ethnography of men's filmgoing in India*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000. Pp. 61 – 88.

PN 1993.5 I8 D47 2000

Required viewing:

*Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*. DVD 4306 (189 min)

Monday, November 8, and Tuesday, November 9, at 6 p.m. in.

**Week 13      November 15 – 19      More diasporic South Asians representing themselves, differently.**

Reading:

Required viewing:

*Bend it like Beckham* DVD 1933 AV Library (112 min)

Monday, November 15, and Tuesday, November 16, at 6 p.m. in

**Week 14      November 23 – 25**

“Frontline: Behind Taliban Lines” will be shown in class.

**Week 15      December 1 - 5      Conclusion: What have you learned in this course?**

No additional reading. No additional viewing.

**The final essay topic will be made available in class on Wednesday, December 1. It will be due at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, December 8.** You must submit your final essay on Blackboard.