

GEA 3173 – Third World in Film
Instructor: Dr. Phil Steinberg, Associate Professor of Geography
Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:00-3:15, Broward Hall 220
Tentative Screening Times: Tuesdays immediately after class and again at 7:30
Course Website: <http://campus.fsu.edu>

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Overview

This course introduces students to the "Third World": the world outside of North America and Europe where the vast majority of the world's population lives. To understand the Third World today, we will investigate how the Third World was "underdeveloped"; how its physical geography has influenced its history, cultural systems, and development prospects; how various attempts at development have met with success and failure; and how residents of the Third World have attempted to redefine the concept of "development."

Because most of us have little direct experience with life in the Third World, we will supplement readings with weekly, fictional, feature films. We will view the films at several levels: as documentary evidence of the Third World situation; as literary creations that present stylized depictions of historical or contemporary situations; and -- especially in the cases where the films are Third World-produced -- as indications of how Third World intellectuals are working through their own identities and those of their societies.

Objectives

By the end of the course, you should gain an understanding of the Third World, both as a region experiencing a set of development problems and choices and as a series of places where people experience the pains and joys of everyday life. You also should gain an appreciation for how these two sets of experiences are related to each other and to global-scale politics and economic processes.

Units

The course is divided into five units:

Introduction (August 24 – September 9)

The key concepts of the Third World and Difference are discussed. Additionally, two classes are spent discussing how films can be analyzed (and how they can express society's world-views). Specific attention is given to ways of writing about films, since the course's assignments center around analysis of each unit's films.

*Unit II: The Colonial Encounter and the Underdevelopment of the Third World
(September 14 – September 28)*

The focus is on how the Third World got to be "third" – that is how a certain part of the world became constructed (both in thought and in terms of material wealth) as different from and subordinate to the rest of the world. Although one could argue that this encounter sparked progress in previously "backward" societies, this process also involved disruption of societies in a process that was designed to benefit the colonizers. The unit's films look at how this encounter proceeded in three locales: Northern Canada (*Black Robe*), South America (*The Mission*), and the West African nation of Cameroon (*Afrique, Je te Plumerai – Africa, I Will Fleece You*). In this unit, we also revisit issues in the history of cinema, with a focus on uses and production of movies in Third World countries.

Unit III: The Primary Sector (September 30 – October 12)

This unit examines Third World societies whose economies have revolved around primary sector production (the extraction of raw materials from nature, such as the economic activities of agriculture, forestry, mining, and fishing). Frequently, Third World primary-sector production for the world-economy has been carried out on plantations, large tracts of land controlled by outsiders (or colonists) with large numbers of "locals" working the land. This model of primary sector production has been particularly prominent in the Caribbean, and both films for this unit depict this region; *Rue Cases Nègres - Sugar Cane Alley* takes place on the Caribbean island of Martinique while *Burn* takes place on the mythical Caribbean island of Queimada (a composite island whose history most closely resembles that of Haiti).

Unit IV: Beyond the Primary Sector (October 14 – November 9)

Because, in most Third World countries, primary sector production is associated with dependence on the First World and low levels of development and material well-being, development plans usually call for the extension of production to the secondary sector (manufacturing) and the tertiary sector (service activities such as tourism). These development strategies bring with them a whole new set of problems, however, ranging from overcrowding in cities, to the break-up of families and cultural values, to new economic problems as Third World countries incur debt and/or dependence on foreign corporations as they seek funds and technology to "jumpstart" their industrialization. This module's films consider some of the problems faced by Third World societies as they attempt to move beyond the primary sector. The films' locales range from a rural village of Burkina Faso, West Africa (*Zan Boko – Homeland*) to the slums of São Paulo, Brazil (*Pixote*), Mumbai/Bombay, India (*Salaam Bombay!*), and Ho Chi Minh City/Saigon, Vietnam (*Cyclo*).

Unit V: Contesting Development (November 11 – December 2)

This unit refers to the process of "contesting development" in three ways. First, there are contesting definitions of development, and various groups within Third World societies have very different visions of what a "developed" version of their country would look like. Second, the very concept of development is itself being contested, and some question whether it should be a goal at all. And third, the development process itself is a social contest, as various groups compete for its spoils and for the right to define the path to development. All of these "contestations" are reflected in the social turmoil that presently characterizes many Third World countries, as representatives of the state, capital, and civil society attempt to implement their views on the development question. This unit's films demonstrate this "contestation" in a number of locales, including an unspecified South American country that most closely resembles Guatemala (*Hombres Armados – Men With Guns*), the West African countries of Senegal (*Tableau Feraille - Scrap Heap*) and Guinea-Bissau (*Udju Azul di Yonta – The Blue Eyes of Yonta*), and a series of locations in Africa and Europe populated by displaced Africans (*Rostov-Luanda*).

Readings

All readings except where noted are from the class' two assigned texts:

Philip W. Porter and Eric S. Sheppard, *A World of Difference: Society, Nature, Development* (Guilford, 1998).

Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film, 5th Edition* (Pearson Longman, 2004).

Both of these books are on sale at the University Bookstore.

There are also a number of additional readings, each of which can be found can be accessed via the "Readings" section of the class' Blackboard page. They are listed here in the order that they will be read:

Untitled paper on Dziga Vertov published on the website of Vertov Industries, <http://vertov.freeservers.com/almanac/vertovreport.html>.

Gerald M. MacDonald, "Third Cinema and the Third World" in *Place, Power, Situation, and Spectacle: A Geography of Film*, Stuart Aitken and Leo Zonn, eds., Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994, pp. 27-45.

Jean-Marie Teno, "Imagining Alternatives: African Cinema in the New Century," published on the website of California Newsreel, <http://www.newsreel.org/articles/teno.htm>.

Patricia Aufderheide, "Zan Boko," published in the American University Cross-Cultural Film Guide, 1992, <http://www.library.american.edu/subject/media/aufderheide/zanboko.html>.

Wolfgang Sachs, "Introduction" in *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*, W. Sachs, ed. (Zed, 1992), pp. 1-5.

Gustavo Esteva, "Regenerating People's Space" in *Alternatives*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (January 1987), pp. 125-152.

John Holloway & Eloina Pelaez, "Introduction" in *Zapatistas! Reinventing the Revolution in Mexico* (Pluto, 1998) [reprinted at <http://korotonomedia.net/chiapas/intro.html>].

Films

September 7: *Black Robe* (1991) dir. Bruce Beresford (Canada/Australia). English, Algonquin, Iroquois, and Huron with English subtitles. 101 minutes. In 1634, a French Jesuit Priest and his assistant venture into northern Québec to establish a mission among the Hurons. Along the way, missionaries and Native Americans confront issues of conflicting faiths and views toward nature. From the director of *Breaker Morant* and *Driving Miss Daisy*.

September 14: *The Mission* (1986) dir. Roland Joffé (United Kingdom). English. 126 minutes. Based on a true story from the mid-18th century, Robert DeNiro and Jeremy Irons attempt to save a successful mission in a remote region near what is now the border of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. Their greatest enemy is not their potential converts but rather the scheming of the superiors in the Church and the Portuguese and Spanish monarchies. From the director of *The Killing Fields*, this film was nominated for seven Academy Awards (including Best Picture and Best Director) and won the award for Best Cinematography. Starring Robert DeNiro, Jeremy Irons, and Aidan Quinn.

September 21: *Afrique, Je te Plumerai (Africa, I Will Fleece You)* (1992) dir. Jean-Marie Teno (Cameroon). French and German with English subtitles. 88 minutes. This film is a semi-fictional "mockumentary" in which the director blends autobiographical anecdotes, on-screen interviews, original footage of contemporary occurrences, and old newsreels to explore why Cameroon – the only African country colonized by three European powers – is in its present situation today. The complex format leads one to look critically not just at the subject matter (i.e. colonialism and its legacy in Cameroon) but also the medium by which the story is presented (i.e. "objective" representations of Third World history and culture).

September 28: *Burn* (1969) dir. Gillo Pontecorvo (Italy/France). English. 112 minutes. Marlon Brando plays a mercenary sent by mid-19th century English sugar barons to incite a slave revolt on the mythical Caribbean island of Queimada. Brando's dilemma is to encourage the slaves to revolt against their Portuguese masters while still keeping them in economic servitude to the British rulers of the world sugar industry. From the director of *The Battle of Algiers*.

October 5: *Rue Cases Nègres (Sugar Cane Alley)* (1983) dir. Euzhan Palcy (France). French with English subtitles. 103 minutes. Set in Martinique in the 1930s, an 11-year-old orphan boy attempts, with the help of his grandmother, to rise above a life of manual labor in the cane fields. Winner of French César Award for Best First Film. From the director of *A Dry, White Season*.

October 12: *Zan Boko (Homeland)* (1988) dir. Gaston Kaboré (Burkina Faso). Mori and French with English Subtitles. 94 minutes. An African village is absorbed by Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso's capital city, revealing the transformation of an agrarian, subsistence society into an industrialized, commodity economy. There is a focus on television, as both a force and a reflection of this transformation; television is also a domain of struggle, as a television journalist who attempts to expose corruption in the displacement of a peasant farmer comes into conflict with government officials.

October 19: *Pixote* (1981) dir. Hector Babenco (Brazil). Portuguese with English subtitles. 122 minutes. A homeless 10-year-old boy in the slums of Brazil finds a "family" among a gang of older criminals, including drug dealers and prostitutes. Filmed with actual children from the slums of São Paulo, the protagonist, Fernando Ramos da Silva, died a few years later in a police shoot-out. From the director of *Kiss of the Spider Woman* and *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*.

October 26: *Salaam Bombay!* (1988) dir. Mira Nair (India). Hindi and English with English subtitles. 114 minutes. In this film by the director of *Monsoon Wedding*, *Mississippi Masala*, and *Kama Sutra*, a young boy is abandoned by the circus troupe with which he's working, and finds his way to Bombay (Mumbai), the center of India's film industry. Adopted by a family that runs a brothel and has a hand in the drug trade, the protagonist desperately saves money in the hope of returning back to his village. Increasingly, however, this goal seems as remote as gaining a part in one of Bombay's famed musical extravaganzas.

November 2: *Cyclo* (1997) dir. Tran Anh Hung (Vietnam). Vietnamese with English subtitles. 120 minutes. The protagonist in this film is a young man who makes his living driving a bicycle taxi. When his bicycle is stolen, he ends up getting involved with the extreme violence of the Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) underworld (one reviewer described the film as *The Bicycle Thief* meets *Taxi Driver*). The plot gets more complicated when the protagonist's sister begins to date (and work as a prostitute for) the leader of the gang. From the director of *The Scent of Green Papaya*.

November 9: *Hombres Armados (Men With Guns)* (1997) dir. John Sayles (United States). Spanish, Italian, English, Nahuatl, Maya, Tzotzil, and Kuna with English subtitles. 127 minutes. A physician in the capital of a Latin American country seeks to honor his own legacy by visiting former students who had gone to practice medicine in the hinterland. Although his journey through the jungles is ultimately futile (his students have all been "disappeared" by "men with guns") along the way he hooks up with some very interesting traveling companions, all idealistic refugees from a world in disarray.

From the director of *Sunshine State*, *Lone Star*, *Passion Fish*, *City of Hope*, *The Secret of Roan Inish*, *Limbo*, *Eight Men Out*, and *Matewan*.

November 16: *Tableau Ferraille (Scrap Heap)* (1997) dir. Moussa Sene Absa (Senegal). French and Wolof with English subtitles. 85 minutes. Daam is a well-intentioned but vacillating European-educated politician who tries to make everybody happy. In the process, he alienates everyone: his first wife, a dignified village woman dedicated to husband, family, and community; his second wife, a beautiful, well-connected, Western-educated woman who wants Daam to use his power to accumulate personal wealth; and his corrupt cronies from his village, who plan to use their connections with Daam to fund their businesses and enrich themselves. The naïve Daam is the victim of intrigue between corrupt locals and his upwardly-mobile second wife, and the film ends by raising some serious questions about Africa's future.

November 23: *Udju Azul di Yonta (The Blue Eyes of Yonta)* (1991) dir. Flora Gomes (Guinea-Bissau). Portuguese creole with English subtitles. 90 minutes. Vicente is a beleaguered, hard-working veteran of Guinea-Bissau's independence war who now manages a fish warehouse and works for the development of his country against all odds. He is so despondent that he fails to recognize the attentions of Yonta, the daughter of two of his comrades from the struggle and in many ways a beneficiary of the liberation for which Vicente had fought. Yonta, meanwhile, is unaware of the attentions of Zé, a poor, but optimistic student from the countryside. Past, present, and future thus simultaneously look at each other and miss each other as Guinea-Bissau stumbles into the 21st century.

November 30: *Rostov-Luanda* (1997) dir. Abderrahmane Sissako (Mauritania/Angola/France/Germany). Portuguese, French, and Russian with English subtitles. 58 minutes. A "mockumentary" like *Afrique, Je te Plumerai*, the Mauritanian director Sissako searches for an Angolan whom he had met while studying in the early 1980s in the Soviet Union. Like Doctor Fuentes in *Men With Guns*, Sissako's quest leads him to encounter a range of Angolans who reflect on the status of their country, and these reflections lead Sissako to reflect on his own identity as an individual who, like Africa itself, has a history of having been shaped by European rivalries.

Class-by-Class Outline of Films, Reading Assignments, and Writing Assignments

The following table presents a class-by-class outline of assigned readings, film viewings, paper assignment due dates, and class lecture/discussion topics. Class sessions will be used to discuss films as well as topics from the readings. White and gray bands on the table divide the five units. "P/S" refers to the Porter & Sheppard book.

The instructor reserves the right to add, subtract, or move an element of the table if the class gets off schedule. Assigned readings are to be read *before* the class for which they are assigned.

	Tuesday Class	Tuesday Film	Thursday Class	
Unit I: Introduction	8/24: Introduction: Why the Third World? Why Film?		8/26: What is the Third World (and Why is it “Third”)? P/S Chapter 1	
	8/31: Difference and Development. P/S Chapter 2		9/2: Difference, Culture, and Everyday Life. P/S Chapter 3	
	9/7: Watching a Film. Corrigan Chapters 1&2	9/7: <i>Black Robe</i>	9/9: Writing about Film. Corrigan Chapters 3&4	
Unit II: The Colonial Encounter and the Underdevelopment of the Third World	9/14: Institutions of Inequality. P/S Chapter 4	9/14: <i>The Mission</i>	9/16: History of Conquest. P/S Chapter 14	Distribute Unit II paper assignment 9/28. Due 10/5.
	9/21: History of Colonialism. P/S Chapter 15	9/21: <i>Afrique, Je te Plumerai (Africa, I Will Fleece You)</i>	9/23: Documentary, Fiction, and Political Cinema. Vertov	
Unit III: The Primary Sector	9/28: Third World Cinema as Resistance. MacDonald, Teno	9/28: <i>Burn</i>	9/30: Agriculture, Green Revolution, and Biotechnology. P/S Chapter 10	Distribute Unit III paper assignment 10/12. Due 10/19.
	10/5: The Promise of Free Trade in Primary Commodities. P/S Chapter 16	10/5: <i>Rue Cases Nègres (Sugar Cane Alley)</i>	10/7: The Failure of Free Trade in Primary Commodities. P/S Chapter 17	
Unit IV: Beyond the Primary Sector	10/12: Film, Land and Traditional Culture. Aufderheide	10/12: <i>Zan Boko (Homeland)</i>	10/14: Organizing Development. P/S Chapter 5	Distribute Unit IV paper assignment 11/9. Due 11/16.
	10/19: Questioning Development. P/S Chapter 6	10/19: <i>Pixote</i>	10/21: Industrialization. P/S Chapter 18	
	10/26: Export-Oriented Industrialization and the Newly Industrialized Countries. P/S Chapters 20 & 21	10/26: <i>Salaam Bombay!</i>	10/28: Debt. P/S Chapter 23	
	11/2: Urbanization. P/S Chapter 19	11/2: <i>Cyclo</i>	11/4: Tourism. P/S Chapter 24	
Unit V: Contesting Development	11/9: Representing Third World Urbanization (no reading)	11/9: <i>Hombres Armados (Men With Guns)</i>	11/11: No Class (Veteran’s Day)	Distribute Unit V paper assignment 12/2. Due 12/9.
	11/16: Rethinking Development. Sachs; Esteva	11/16: <i>Tableau Ferraille (Scrap Heap)</i>	11/18: A New Politics? Holloway & Pelaez	
	11/23: No Class	11/23: <i>Udju Azul de Yonta (The Blue Eyes of Yonta)</i>	11/26: No Class (Thanksgiving)	
	11/30: Rethinking Difference. P/S Chapter 25	11/30: <i>Rostov-Luanda</i>	12/2: Finding the Third World (no reading)	

Evaluation

The main form of evaluation in this course will be four essays, one at the end of each unit (not including the introductory unit). Essays will be due a week after the end of each unit. Thus essays will be due on the following dates:

Unit II – Tuesday, October 5

Unit III – Tuesday, October 19

Unit IV – Tuesday, November 16

Unit V – Thursday, December 9

Each essay should be in the range of 5-10 pages (typed, double-spaced) and focus on an analysis of the unit's films, in the context of that unit's readings and in-class discussions. For each essay, an assignment sheet will give you a choice of two or three essay topics. Essays will be graded using the grading guide that appears in the “Assignments” section of the class website. You may use any citation style, so long as you are consistent throughout your paper.

Each of these essays will count for 25% of your final grade. In addition, your grade can be increased by up to 10% for class participation and can be decreased by up to 10% for poor attendance and/or disruptive behavior in class.

Viewing and Researching Films

Although the schedule may change depending on students' availability, the current plan is for there to be two organized viewing sessions every Tuesday to view that week's film. Tentatively, these are scheduled for immediately after class (at 3:15) and again at 7:30. These times are negotiable and may be moved so as to find times when all of the class can attend. These viewings will be held in the Broward Hall classroom. After the Tuesday evening viewing, the videotape/DVD will be returned to the media lab in the basement of Strozier Library, and it can be viewed there on your own time.

Feel free to bring guests to film viewings, so long as there is space in the room.

While you are not required to do any research outside the required readings, when writing your essays you likely will find it useful to consult some outside sources. At the least, outside sources can be useful for getting the names of key characters so that you can write about them. Film reviews also can be useful for plot summaries and for sparking ideas that you then incorporate into your essay. Several resources for film research are provided in the “Resources” section of the class website. Others can be found in Chapter 6 of the Corrigan book.

The Blackboard Website

Portions of this class will utilize a course website on Florida State University's Blackboard system. To enter the course website, just type the URL **<http://campus.fsu.edu>**. You then will be asked to enter your username and password. Enter the username and password from your FSU e-mail account (this is case-sensitive; your username is the part of your e-mail address that appears before the "@" symbol, such as "akc04d"). If you don't yet have an FSU computer account follow the indented instructions:

*Go to any computer and enter the following into a browser such as Netscape or Microsoft Internet Explorer: **<http://register.acns.fsu.edu/CARS/studentreg.html>**. To complete your request for a computer account, you will need to enter your 16-digit FSU-Card number and your social security number. If you regularly use an e-mail account with another provider (e.g., America On Line), you can set your FSU account to automatically forward to your other account. To do this, go to **<http://register.acns.fsu.edu/CARS/forward.html>**.*

Once the computer knows who you are, it will know that you're registered for this course and a link for Third World in Film will appear on your screen. Click on the link and you'll enter this course's website.

When in the Blackboard system, there will be a constant frame on the left side of the screen. Buttons on this left frame may be clicked on at anytime to navigate as follows:

- **Announcements:** Only the instructor may post announcements. The course homepage automatically displays any announcements that were posted within the past two weeks. Older announcements can be viewed by clicking on the "Announcements" button.
- **Syllabus:** Click on this button and you will find a link to the syllabus.
- **Readings:** Click on this button and you will find links for all of the readings not found in the Porter/Sheppard or Corrigan books. Some of these links will take you to web pages and some will open files with scanned readings.
- **Assignments:** Click on this button and you will find links for downloading the assignment sheet for each essay. There's also a link for the Grading Guide, which is a set of guidelines used for grading your essays.
- **Resources:** Click on this button for links to a series of film-specific websites that you may find useful when writing your essays.
- **Staff Information:** Click on this button for biographical and contact information for your instructor.
- **E-Mail:** Click on this button, and then click on the "Send E-mail" link that appears in the main frame, to e-mail your instructor and/or one or all of the other students in this class. Once you click on the "Send E-mail" link, you'll have three choices: Click "All Users" to send an e-mail to all students in the class *and* the instructor; click "All Instructors" to send an e-mail only to the instructor; click "Select Users" and you'll then be able to choose exactly who your e-mail goes to (one or more students in the class and/or the instructor).

- **Student Tools:** Click on this button and you will have a choice of two links to follow. “Student Manual” opens an instructional manual for the Blackboard program. “View Grades” lets you see how you’re doing in the class.
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Honor Code

Students are expected to abide by the Academic Honor Code. The Academic Honor System of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility to:

1. Uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student’s own work;
2. Refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the University community; and
3. Foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the University community.

For a full statement, of the FSU Academic Honor Code, visit the webpage <http://www.fsu.edu/Books/Student-Handbook/codes/honor.html>.

ADA Requirements

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should:

1. Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC).
2. Transmit a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating that you need academic accommodations. This should be done within the first week of class.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, and the rights and responsibilities of disabled students, see the SDRC’s webpage, <http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability>.

Other Student Issues

For other policies concerning your rights and responsibilities as a student, see the “Codes and Policies” section of the FSU Student Handbook, <http://www.fsu.edu/Books/Student-Handbook/codes/index.html>.