

Dr. June H. Smith

Professor of Communication

Office: LB 312, Ph: 325-486-6088

Office Hours: 10-noon MWF;

2-4 pm Tues/Thurs & by appointment

This class will review significant feature films which portray heroism in contemporary film. We will explore the rhetorical message expressed by these films and how that message has changed over time. Both the heroic stereotype and "heroism" have long been portrayed in film, but the image of the "Hero/Heroine" has changed with our culture. The class will critically analyze some sample films, write and orally critique those films based upon a comparison of the portrayal of the "hero" in the film with outside writings of what makes up the "hero" in society.

Course Materials

Readings are on the "J" drive and in BlackBoard. Please read prior to the class to aid your ability to discuss the material. Students must *either* access these films on reserve in the ASU Library, *or* get Netflix (there is a *free* month online trial which will carry you through the course requirements, if you like). No textbook is required.

J: Classroom Work : Communication, Mass Media & Theatre : Smith : 1181 TX Heroism in Film

Course Objectives (IDEA)

- To observe and analyze film terminology and film criticism techniques
- To develop skills in analysis, speaking, and writing
- To apply some fundamental communication theories messages found in contemporary film

Course Objectives (CORE)

- Developing skill in expressing oneself orally and in writing (CS1 & CS2, assessed by final paper & panel presentation)
- Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems (University Resources)
- Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view (CT1, assessed by paper 2)
- *CONNECT! Social Responsibility req.:* SR3 engage in the three ASU campus community groups.

Honor Code Policy: Violations of academic integrity are *very serious* matters and are clearly documented in the ASU Student Handbook. The work a student submits in a class is expected to be the *student's own work and must be work completed for that particular class and assignment*. Plagiarism means intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. This may include your own previous work. Plagiarism includes quoting or paraphrasing from other sources without acknowledging/citing the source of your information or presenting quoted material as your own words. You must be *very clear* about attribution of sources and you must know *how* to cite sources in a paper. Please see full Honor Code Policy at <https://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/> page 25.

Academic Disability Statement: Angelo State University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact our Student Life staff at 942-2191. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

Grade Appeal Process. As stated in Angelo State University Operating Policy and Procedure (OP 10.03 Student Grade Grievances), a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see the Student Handbook online, page 49: <https://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/>

Attendance Policy: Be here to both view the film clips and to discuss. The Film evening showings are optional We only meet for 8 weeks, so plan on perfect attendance. You may have up to 2 absences for any reason on lecture days only (following those two absences, any further absences will result in a 2 point penalty on your final average). If there is some explanation for your need to be absent, please discuss this with me in my office prior to being absent from class, if at all possible. If you wish to observe religious holy days which fall during these class dates, please make arrangements with the professor prior to missing class to make special arrangements.

Syllabus:

August 24-26: Week 1: Introduction to film criticism and heroism (readings on Blackboard), Lectures over film elements & key characteristics of heroism. Introduction to the films to be seen this semester, and the reading list for the term.

Aug. 31 – Sept 2: Week 2: Film *The Butler* (2013)

Day 1: Clips from *The Butler* shown in class for lecture analysis & discussion. Day 2: Critical analysis paper due. Assignment: 1-page assessment of film technique characteristic of this film. Answer the question: How does this film technique encourage a characteristic of heroism as defined by Kendra Cherry's *Characteristics of Heroism* article?

Sept. 7-9: Week 3: **Labor Day Holiday on Monday!** *Star Trek: Into Darkness* 2013

Day 2: Short clips shown for discussion, with weekend writing assignment: Using Kendra Cherry's articles, *The Psychology of Heroism*, and *Teaching Heroism*, compare a character in *The Butler* with one from *Star Trek* to analyze.

Sept. 14-16: Week 4: *True Grit* (1969)

Day 1 Discussion of *True Grit*, and prep for Monday's field trip. Day 2: Discussion of Film Theories and short clips from the film shown for analysis in class.

Sept. 21-23: Week 5: *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (2013)

Connect!: Career development field trip. Meet in the classroom and we will go together to the University Center for a visit to the Career Development office. Day 2: Further analysis of *The Hunger Games* with the hero writings and film criticism articles assigned. Paper 2 due uploaded to BlackBoard by midnight 9/23.

Sept. 28-30: Week 6: *Defiance* 2008

Day 1: Analysis & discussion of the film with attention to the overall hero theme this term. Preparation for the oral presentations due next week on the films. Day 2: **CONNECT!** campus engagement: Library tutorial (Dr. Smith is at the TX Speech Comm. Assoc. convention & Mr. Mark Allen will conduct this tutorial).

Oct. 5-7: Week 7:

Speeches over each of the films in panels, as assigned. Be writing your final paper, due Oct 12 in class.

Oct 12-14: Week 8: Final Exam Week

Day 1: Final Paper Due in class. Review for the final. Day 2: Final exam. **Connect!** campus final reflection due.

Grading system:

- Paper 1: 10%
- Paper 1 resubmit (reviewed by the Writing Center): 5%
- Paper 2: 10%
- Paper 2 resubmit (reviewed by the Writing Center): 5%
- Panel 1 (film theories): 20%
- Final Exam: 30% (includes final reflection paper & questions on class CONNECT events.)
- Final Film Paper: Comparative analysis of two films not previously discussed in a paper using one film theory, and analyzing the heroic themes within the two films: 20%
- **Bonus:** 1-page paper on your CONNECT school event (see list) can gain you between 2-5 points added to your final grade.