



Holiday Films Undergraduate Course Information Guide

Course Number: CCA 216, 2 credits, 5 Weeks
Delivery Formats: Online Async

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Course Description

This course uses the holiday genre to introduce students to a range of perspectives from which to interpret and analyze films and other popular media. Using a selection of screenings and accompanying readings, students will identify the characteristics of the holiday genre, paying particular attention to the role of tradition and to the relationship between the individual and the community. They will also consider the broader cultural contexts of these films, analyzing them from historical, business, and ideological perspectives. By the end of this course, students will have gained confidence in employing critical approaches to media analysis, while interpreting and appreciating a diverse selection of holiday films and "very special" TV episodes.

There will be no required textbook for this course, but students will be asked to rent films and/or view them on a subscription streaming service like Netflix.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Analyze holiday films and TV episodes from the perspective of genre, history, ideology, and the film industry
- Distinguish between semantic and syntactic characteristics of film genres
- Utilize the concept of cultural hegemony in film analysis
- Consider other pop culture objects, like songs or advertising campaigns, in terms of the holiday genre

Learning Strategies and Resources

Some learning activities, assignments and deadlines will vary depending on the delivery format of the course and may differ slightly from what is presented in this document.

Required Readings

All readings for this class will be available on D2L, often via DePaul's library. Students will need to log in using their DePaul credentials to access these articles.

Students will be responsible for accessing the course screenings on their own. These include:

1. One of the following:
 - a. Almost Christmas (\$4 rental or view with FXNOW with a cable subscription)
 - b. The Shop Around the Corner (HBO Max or \$3 rental)
 - c. The Muppet Christmas Carol (Disney+ or \$4 rental)
 - d. National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (\$4 rental)
2. Christmas in Connecticut (1945 version, HBO Max or \$3 rental)
3. Each of the following:
 - a. The Nanny, "The Hanukkah Story" (Tubi, PlutoTV, HBO Max)
 - b. The Goldbergs, "A Christmas Story" (Hulu or \$2 purchase)
 - c. Everybody Hates Chris, "Everybody Hates Kwanzaa" (Hulu, Peacock, Paramount+, CWTB, or \$2 purchase)
4. A Hallmark movie of the student's choice (\$4 rental, Peacock, the Hallmark Channel)
5. A holiday movie of the student's choice

Additional readings may be available on Electronic Reserve, at the [DePaul Library](#). Login to Ares Course Reserves and select the course. Log in using your Campus Connect User ID and password. You will then get a page listing the courses in which you're enrolled that have readings posted in Ares. Click on the title of this course and the list of our electronic reserve readings will be displayed.

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Learning Deliverables

1. Four discussion board posts that respond to the screenings and readings each module, and a final discussion board post introducing the student's film for their final submission. Students will provide overall thoughts about the films/episodes, but will also respond to specific questions regarding the theme of the module — genre, history, ideology, industry (learning outcome 1).

2. A "Bingo" card filled with the defining qualities of the holiday film genre, separated by semantic and syntactic elements, (learning outcome 2). Students will then submit a completed Bingo card, using the film screening (learning outcome 1, genre)
3. A short ideological analysis of a holiday song, commercial, banner advertisement, store window, or other non-film text, (learning outcome 4).
4. A short ideological analysis of a Hallmark movie that considers the film as a product of hegemony, and that describes dominant and oppositional interpretations, (learning outcome 3).
5. A 1000 to 1200-word paper about a holiday film of the student's choice, structured as a proposal for a final screening in this class, (learning outcome 1). A proposal identifying the chosen film.

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Assessment of Student Learning

Distribution of Grade Points

Graded Assignments	Percentage of Final Grade
Discussion Board Posts	20%
Bingo Card	10%
Short Ideological Analyses	30%
Final Screening Proposal	40%

Grading Scale

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

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Course Schedule

Week and Module Title or Theme	Readings / Activities	Graded Assignments
Module 1: Defining the Holiday Film Genre	Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre" View one of the following: National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, The Shop Around the Corner, The Muppet Christmas Carol, or Almost Christmas View or Read Lectures	Discussion Board Post Create Bingo Card
Module 2: Frameworks for Interpreting Films	Sigler, "'I'll Be Home for Christmas': Misrule and the Paradox of Gender in World War II-Era Christmas Films"; primary sources about Christmas in Connecticut View Christmas in Connecticut View or Read Lectures	Discussion Board Post Submit Proposal for Final Project Continue Bingo Card
Module 3: Ideological Perspective of Television and Pop Culture Texts	Gitlin, "Prime Time Ideology: The Hegemonic Process in Television Entertainment" View one of the following: The Nanny, "The Hanukkah Story"; The Goldbergs, "A Christmas Story"; Everybody Hates Chris, "Everybody Hates Kwanzaa" View or Read Lectures	Discussion Board Post Submit Ideological Analysis of Non-film Text
Module 4: Contributing Factors to the Formation of a Genre	Jurgensen, "How the Hallmark Channel Became a Christmas Movie Machine"; Dorsa, "Candace Cameron Bure Wants to Put Christianity Back in Christmas Movies"; Metz, "A Hallmark of the Classical Holiday System, or Meeting Two Christmas Queens";	Discussion Board Post Submit Completed Bingo Card

	Hirose, "How Hallmark Christmas Movies Get Made"; St. James, "How Hallmark Takes Over Your TV Every Christmas" View a Hallmark Christmas movie View or Read Lectures	Submit Hallmark movie Ideological Analysis
Module 5: Integrated Film Analysis		Discussion Board Post Final Project: Holiday Film Proposal

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Course Policies

For access to all SCPS and DePaul University academic policies, refer to the following links:

[SCPS Student Resources Website](#)

[DePaul Student Handbook](#)

The [D2L Course Website](#) for this course.

Course Syllabus

The official syllabus for this course that includes course dates, instructor information and quarter specific details will be provided by the course instructor by the start of the course and available on the course D2L website.

Course Registration

To find out when this course will be offered next, you can go to the [SCPS Registration website](#) for details on how to register for the course.

For information on how this course can apply to your program, contact your academic advisor.

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