

HSS-Cult Films: Counterculture and the Rise of Cinematic Revolution.
DAY S AND TIMES: Wednesdays and Fridays 10-11:20am
LOCATION: CKB 226
Fall 2025 Syllabus

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Instructor: Professor Grisele Gonzalez-Ledezma

Office: Cullimore 115G

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30-12:30pm and Wednesdays 11:30-1pm

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Course Description

HSS - Cult Films - Counterculture and the Rise of Cinematic Revolution Course focuses on the exploration of films that shaped and challenged the traditional standards of societal expectations through media or non media forms. In addition, the course analyses how cult films became known based on audience reception.

Please Note: The class is meant to educate students on the variety of films that push the boundaries and break away from traditional film media. As such, the films in the class are a different set of films that do not follow typical societal norms. It is important to note that the films chosen are crucial for our understanding of cult films. Lastly, some clips or films may contain rated R related content.

Prerequisites

Entrance is determined by Prerequisites: ENGL 102 with a grade of C or higher, and 6 credits at the 300-level History and Humanities GER with a grade of C or higher; 3 credits at the 300-level may be taken concurrently as a co-requisite.

Restrictions: Registration requires senior standing. The capstone seminars allow students the opportunity to work closely with an instructor in a specific area of the instructor's expertise. Students are required to bring together interests and skills developed in previous courses. Students make in-depth oral and written presentations. A list of capstone seminars is published each semester in the course registration bulletin. (Description taken by the NJIT course schedule informational board.)

Course Goals

During this course you will:

- Learn the historical development of cult films in the United States and other regions/countries
- Learn the aspects and impacts of cult films in society
- Learn the purpose of cult films and their current standing today

- Understand the characterization of cult films through design, media and performance
- Provide an in-depth analysis of the characterizations of cult films through observations of film scripts, short clips of films, and full length films.
- Provide in-depth discussion and analysis on the complex nature of the creation of cult films
- Write, view, analyze, and discuss the films assigned in class both in-person during lecture and in written format.

Required Texts

NO REQUIRED TEXTS!

This course makes use of books and resources found on <http://library.njit.edu> and other pdf and word document files provided by the instructor as well as Open Educational Resources (available for free online).

In addition, assigned films will be distributed as a list on the first day of classes so students can learn and complete the required assigned assignments in and outside class. In total, **five films** will be watched in their entirety. Furthermore, short clips of other films will be watched and analyzed in order to exercise and develop our knowledge of cult films. **Some films may require you to rent or purchase them to watch outside of class. Please note that some clips or films may contain rated R related content.**

Assignments & Assessment

Your grade breakdown is as follows:

Participation, in class writings, short assignments, and attendance: 30%

Your participation and attendance grade includes attendance AND your consistently active presence and performance in class alongside submission of all assignments on time. Class participation includes: regular attendance, engagement in class activities and discussions, reading, writing, critical thinking, discussing, interpreting, analyzing, synthesizing, asking questions and responding to one another. Your work on these short assignments and workshops are included in your participation grade. Level of engagement with the process and materials is often correlated with success on assignments. Classroom activities are designed to aid in students' understanding and developing a writing process of their own from their observations of the assigned cult films for the course.

Film Assignment #1 (2 pages minimum) 10%

Film Assignment #2 (2 pages minimum) 10%

Film Assignment #3 (2 pages minimum) and Presentation 15%

Film Assignment #4 (2 pages minimum) and Presentation 15%

Film Assignment #5 and #6 (3 pages minimum) and Presentation 20%

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| Participation includes discussion boards, group activities, short assignments, attendance including short presentations. | 30% |
| Film Assignment #1 (2 pages minimum) Week 4 | 10% |
| Film Assignment #2 (2 pages minimum) Week 6 | 10% |
| Film Assignment #3 (2 pages minimum) and Presentation Week 8 | 15% |
| Film Assignment #4 (2 pages minimum) and Presentation Week 10 | 15% |
| Film Assignment #5 (3 pages total minimum for both assignments) and Presentation Week 13 | 20% |

Individual and group work will be evaluated according to the university's grading scale.

University grading scale:

All assignments and other required work will be graded using the following scale:

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| A 100-90 | B+ 89-87 | B 86-80 | C+ 79-77 | C 76-70 | F 69-0 |
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Attendance

Students who expect to miss class for religious observances must submit to me a written list of dates that will be missed by 9/19/2025.

Every subsequent unexcused absence will result in the deduction of participation points. Regular participation in class activities and workshops (many are graded) are required to earn participation points. Not participating in the writing process and discussion boards in class will be met with further deductions. More than six unexcused absences (three weeks of the course) can result in failure of the course. Students who expect to miss class for religious observances should contact their instructor about these dates at the beginning of the semester (per university policy).

Assignment Submission

All assignments must be submitted on Canvas (which automatically assesses for plagiarism and AI generation using Turnitin). Please follow the specific instructions for each assignment. Assignments are due at the beginning of class and/or @11:59pm.

Late Assignments

Late Work is a deduction of 5 percent per day after the due date.

Masks:

Masks will continue to remain optional. We remind all community members that people can wear a mask based on individual preference, informed by personal level of risk.

Finals

There is NO FINAL for this course.

Technology

Canvas is NJIT's learning management system. Instructors share course materials, grade assignments, give feedback on drafts, participate in discussions while students read course material, view assignments, submit essays, write and create in discussion boards. There are no written exams in this course. Participation on discussion boards or other short essays or responses are regularly completed on Canvas and will count toward students' participation grade.

Students use their NJIT email as the primary method of communication and maintain an appropriate tone. Include an appropriate subject line and name in all emails for more efficient correspondence.

Students should not use cell phones during class unless needed for a specific activity. Resist the distraction and focus on one thing at a time - classroom lessons, activities and discussion. Active engagement in class leads to better outcomes in grading. Everyone should set phones to silent as a courtesy.

Laptops should only be used when we are drafting, researching, note taking or otherwise engaging in classroom activities requiring them. Students that practice professional, focused behavior now will be more prepared for the work world!

NJIT University Code on Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at:

<http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

All assignments submitted shall be considered "graded work" and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Code on Academic Integrity. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified.

Chat GPT

“Artificial intelligence usage is not permitted in this course. The expectation of this course is for students to work through the course without assistance from any type of artificial intelligence to better develop their own skills in this content area. As such, artificial intelligence usage is not permitted throughout this course.”

Turnitin evaluates all sorts of academic integrity violations. This tool detects unauthorized use of quotes and repurposed text (including borrowing of papers). Turnitin allows flags AI-generated text and use of “grammar” assistants that actually rewrite entire sentences. None of these tools are acceptable in student writing for this course. This includes Grammarly. Students in violation of the rules of academic integrity will be reported to the Dean of Students who will follow up with a meeting and a final determination of grade and status in the course. The determination will be as follows:

If a rough draft is found to contain 20-40% AI-generated or assisted written work, 15 points will be deducted from the student's final grade on that assignment.

If a final draft is found to contain 20-40% AI-generated or assisted written work, 30 points will be deducted from the student's final grade on that assignment.

If a rough or final draft is found to contain 41-100% AI-generated or assisted written work, the work will be reported to the Dean of Students who will meet with the student and determine the final grade on that assignment and if any further action needs to be taken.

If a student uses AI generation or assistance on both a rough and a final draft for one assignment, this is reported to the Dean of Students for determination of final grade. For our course, this section is based on the submitted assignment due on its specific day and the rewritten assignment for that same assignment.

Accommodations

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see me as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact Student Disability Services at 973-596-3420.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center (G17 Central King) is available for one-hour individual and group appointments with professional writing tutors both onsite and online. This resource is intended to help you improve your communication and writing skills. Tutors can help with planning assignments, improving your writing, refining an essay or multimedia project, or other communication-based needs. For more information, please visit: <http://www5.njit.edu/writingcenter/schedule-writing-center-appointment/>

HSS Course Schedule

Subject to change at instructor's discretion

| | | In Class Topic/Work | Work/Readings Due at the beginning of class unless specified otherwise |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1: | Wed 09/03/25 Friday 09/05/25 | Introductions/ Syllabus What is your knowledge of Cult Films? What are cult films? Discussion Board #1 <i>Assign Reading: TBD</i> | GET FAMILIAR WITH THE SYLLABUS AND READ |

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| Week 2 | Wed 09/10/25 | <p>What are Cult Films? Part 2</p> <p>Discussion Board #2</p> <p>Introducing Cult Films through the 90s</p> <p>Short Clip #1 - <i>The Fifth Element</i></p> <p>What makes this film a cult film classic?</p> | |
| | Fri 09/12/25 | <p>Discussion Board #3</p> <p>Introducing Cult Films through the 90s</p> <p>Short Clip #2 - <i>Trainspotting</i></p> <p>Introducing the Film - <i>The Crow (1994)</i></p> <p>Assign: Introduce Assignment #1 (10%)</p> | |
| Week 3 | Wed 09/17/25 | Introducing the Film - <i>The Crow (1994)</i> | |
| | Fri 09/19/25 | <p>Counterculture of Cult films in the 80s through different genres</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Short Clip #3 <i>Hairspray</i> (1988) 2. Short Clip #4 TBD <p>Discussion Board #4</p> | |

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| Week 4 | Wed 09/24/25 | Introducing <i>Cinema de Paraiso</i> (1988) Introduce Assignment #2 (10%) Discussion Board #5 Assign: Finish Watching <i>Cinema de Paraiso</i> out of class | Film Assignment #1 (2 pages minimum MLA double spaced film review) 09/22 |
| | Fri 09/26/25 | Discuss <i>Cinema de Paraiso</i> (1988) Discussion Board #6 | Film due before class |
| Week 5 | Wed 10/1/25 | New lens through visuals and storytelling in cult films in the 2000s | |
| | Fri 10/3/25 | 1. <i>Short Clip # 5 & 6 TBD</i> 2. <i>Short Clip #7 Shaun of the Dead</i> Discussion Board #7 & 8 Short Assignment #1 | |
| Week 6 | Wed 10/08/25 | How cult films divert from traditional film making; visuals, set and costume design and other elements part 1 Introducing <i>The Fall</i> (2006) Assign : Introduce Assignment #3 (15%) | Film Assignment #2 (2 pages minimum MLA double spaced film review) 10/6 |
| | Fri 10/10/25 | cont. Introducing <i>The Fall</i> (2006) Discuss The Fall Short Assignment #2 | |

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| Week 7 | Wed 10/15/25 | Discuss film <i>The Fall</i> (2006) Discussion Board #9 How cult films divert from traditional film making Part 2 Discussion Board #10 1. <i>Short Clip #8 Paris, Texas (1984)</i> 2. <i>Short Clip #9 Full Metal Jacket (1987)</i> 3. <i>Short Clip #10 A Clockwork Orange (1971)</i> | |
| Week 8 | Wed 10/22/25 | Cult Films Today - How have Cult films evolved through time? Introducing- <i>Scott Pilgrim vs. The World</i> (2010) Assign : Introduce Assignment #4 (15%) | Film Assignment #3 (2 pages minimum) and Presentation Due 10/24 |
| Week 9 | Wed 10/29/25 | Presentations | |

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| Week 10 | Wed 11/5/25 Fri 11/7/25 | Introducing - <i>Night of the Living Dead</i> (1968) Introducing Assignment #5 (20%) <i>cont. Introducing - <i>Night of the Living Dead</i> (1968)</i> | Film Assignment #4 (2 pages minimum) and PresentationS Due 11/7 |
| Week 11 | Wed 11/12/25 | Presentations | |
| | Fri 11/14/25 | Presentations | |
| Week 12 | Wed 11/19/25 | Cult Films that further break societal norms | |
| | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Short Clip #11 Eraserhead (1977)</i> 2. <i>Short Clip #12 The Rocky Horror Picture show (1975)</i> | |
| | | Discussion Board #12 | |
| Week 13 | Wed 11/26/25 | Thursday classes meet on 11/25 Friday classes meet on 11/26 | |
| | | (<i>cont.</i>) Cult Films that further break societal norms | |
| | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. <i>Short Clip #11 Eraserhead (1977)</i> 4. <i>Short Clip #12 The Rocky Horror Picture show (1975)</i> | |
| | | Discussion Board #12 | |
| | | Thanksgiving Break 27-30 | |
| | | | Film Assignment #5 (3 pages minimum) and Presentation Due 11/30 |

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| Week 14 | Wed 12/3/25 | Presentations Presentations | |
| Week 15 | Fri 12/5/25 | Presentations NO FINAL for this class! Good Luck on your Finals! Dec 11th Last Day of Classes! Reading Day December 12th-13th | ALL REWRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS DUE ! <u>Each</u> assignment can be rewritten <u>once</u> for a better grade. Note: Assignments that were never submitted before the closing date of assignment will not be considered as a rewritten assignment for a better grade. |

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| Week 16 | | FINALS WEEK 12/14-12/20 | |
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