

Pomona College, History 129 Spring 2018  
**Hollywood Nation: Film, War and Empire**

Professor Victor Silverman

Tu-Th 2:45-4:00  
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Office Hours:

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Film evolved at the same time as nationalism, imperialism, and global wars. This course introduces students to the evolution of motion pictures about these cataclysmic events, with an emphasis on US films and filmmakers. Beginning with silent films showing historic tableaux through the propaganda films of World War II to anti-war films of the 50s and 60s to controversial political documentaries of today, students will consider both the history of film and the history presented by film. As a final project, students research and propose their own historical film dealing with the US role in the world.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Students will develop an understanding of the practical and theoretical issues involved in the ways the film industry has functioned as part of US empire and national identity. Individual assignments are: preparation of a rough draft and final film proposal (1500-1750) words, the presentation of two in-class pitches (2 minutes and 5-10 minutes) and the writing of log lines and synopses. Students will also participate on boards that will develop proposal requirements, evaluate proposals, and give feedback to fellow students. There will be additional required outside events, particularly the Ena Thompson Lectures and seminar by Andrew Bacevich on March 20, 21, & 22.

**Grading Proportions:**

Log lines & Synopses	20%
Rough draft of Film proposal	10%
Pitches 1 & 2	10%
Film Proposal	35%
Class Attendance and Participation	10%
Board Participation	10%
Outside Event	5%

**You must have my permission to turn in a late paper or other assignment.** Unexcused late work will lose 1 whole grade (10%) for each day they are late.

**Attendance in class is required.** You are allowed 1 unexcused absence. Each absence beyond that will result in the overall grade for the course being reduced 1 whole grade (10%).

**The Writing Center** provides Pomona students and 5C students in Pomona courses a community of experienced readers and writers, offering free, one-on-one consultations at any stage of the writing process - from brainstorming ideas to fine-tuning a draft. Consultations are available by appointment, which students can make online at [writing.pomona.edu](http://writing.pomona.edu). The Writing Center also offers drop-in hours Sundays through Thursdays from 8-10pm.

**Identity, names and pronouns:** If there is an issue you would like me to be aware of, please let me know -in private is fine if you prefer.

**Policy on electronic devices:** Please turn off cellular phones as well as other electronic devices, including laptop computers or recorders before entering class. If you need an accommodation for this policy, please contact me.

**To request academic accommodations** due to a disability please contact

<http://www.pomona.edu/administration/dean-of-students/disability-accommodations/>

If you attend another Claremont College, please contact your home college's disability officer. If you need assistance with projects or accommodations, please me before the assignment is due

**Useful Web Resources:**

[Columbia Film Glossary](https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/term/) <https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/term/>

[Sample log lines and Synopses](#)

[James Burbidge, Tips for writing a logline](#)

[How to write a film proposal](#)

**Note on locations of films:**

[Kanopy = Streaming through the Claremont Colleges Library website](#)

[Swank = Streaming through the Claremont Colleges Library website](#)

Honnold = Honnold Mudd Reserve Desk

Video47 = on Sakai through class site

Linked = linked through syllabus

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## Weekly Assignments

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**Week 1: 1/16, 1/18: Main Themes**

[Raising Old Glory Over Morro Castle \(1899\) \(linked; Sakai\)](#)

[Call of the Wild \(1909\) \(linked; Sakai\)](#)

[White Fawn's Devotion \(1910\)\(linked; Sakai\)](#)

*Birth of A Nation* (1915) (Kanopy)

Reading: On Sakai: Benjamin, "Work of Art secs XI, XV, & epilogue; Nietzsche, On History, Sec II-III

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**Week 2: 1/23, 1/25: WWI**

*The Big Parade* (1925)

[Smash up in China \(1919\) \(link\)](#)

Reading: On Sakai

[Log line due Thursday](#)

**Recommended films:**

*All Quiet on the Western Front* (Honnold)

*The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921)

*Wings* (1927)

*Hells Angels* (1930)

*A Farewell to Arms* (1932)

*Duck Soup* (1933)

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**Week 3: 1/30, 2/1: Empire**

*Real Glory* (1939)

Reading: On Sakai

**Recommended films:**

*Red Dust* (1932)

*King Kong* (1933) (Honnold)

*A Message to Garcia* (1936)

*The Plow that Broke the Plain* (1936) (video47)

*Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) (Honnold)

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**Week 4: 2/6, 2/8:**

**[Why We Fight \(1945\) \(linked\)](#)**

Reading: On Sakai

**[750 word film synopsis and logline due Thursday](#)**

**Recommended films:**

*Sergeant York* (1941)

*Miracle of Morgan's Creek* (1943)

*Casablanca* (1942) (Swank; Video47)

*Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942)

*The Story of G.I. Joe* (1945)

*The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946) (Honnold)

*The Men* (1950)

*To Hell and Back* (1955)

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**Week 5 2/13, 2/15: Korea**

***The Steel Helmet*** (1951) (Kanopy)

Reading: On Sakai

**Recommended films:**

*Kiss me Deadly* (1950) (Swank)

*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956)(Honnold)

*The Quiet American* (1958) (video47)

*Pork Chop Hill* (1959) (video47)

*The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) (Honnold)

*M\*A\*S\*H* (1970) (Honnold)

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**Week 6: 2/20, 2/22: *The Empire of Guilt***

***The Searchers*** (1956) (Honnold)

Reading: On Sakai

**Recommended films:**

*Flying Down to Rio* (1933)

*The Alamo* (1960)

*Magnificent Seven* (1960) (Honnold)

*Apache Rifles* (1964)

*Sand Pebbles* (1966)

*The Gringo in Mañanaland* (1995) (Honnold)

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**Week 7: 2/27, 3/1: *Annihilation and Revolution***

***Dr. Strangelove*** (1964) (Honnold)

Reading: On Sakai

**[Practice Pitch due in class](#)**

**Recommended films:**

*Fail-Safe* (1964)

*Goldfinger* (1964)

*The Glass Bottom Boat* (1966)

*Planet of the Apes* (1968)

*The Spook Who Sat By The Door* (1973)

**Week 8: 3/6, 3/8: Vietnam war film**

*Hearts and Minds* (1974) (video47)

Reading: On Sakai

**Form Boards**

[750 word film synopsis and logline due Thursday](#)

**Recommended:**

*The Green Berets* (1968)

*The Boys in Company C* (1978)

*Heroes* (1977)

*Apocalypse Now* (1979) (video47)

*The Killing Fields* (1984)

*Platoon* (1986)

*Fog of War* (2003) (video47)

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**Spring break:** 3/13, 3/15

**Week 9: 3/20, 3/21: Ena Thompson Week**

*Attend Ena Thompson Lectures and write responses. Extra credit for attending the Wednesday seminar*

**Week 10: 3/27, 3/29: Recovering from Vietnam**

*Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985)

Reading: On Sakai

**Board Guidelines due Thursday**

**Recommended films:**

*Red Dawn* (1984)

*Missing in Action* (1984)

*Delta Force* (1986)

*Top Gun* (1986)

**Week 11: 4/3, 4/5: Humanitarian Intervention**

*Three Kings* (1999)

**Practice pitches**

**Recommended films:**

*Starship Troopers* (1997)

*The Siege* (1998)

*Saving Private Ryan* (1998)

*Blackhawk Down* (2001)

**Week 12: 4/10, 4/12: Endless War**

*Taxi to Dark Side* (2007) (Honnold);

[Proposal Rough Drafts Due](#)

**Recommended films:**

*Why We Fight* (2005)

*United 93* (2006)

*Inglourious Basterds* (2009)

*Zero Dark Thirty* (2012)

*American Sniper* (2014)

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**Week 13: 4/17, 4/19: Pitches**

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**Week 14: 4/24, 4/26 Pitches**

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**Week 15: 5/1 Film at the end of empire?**

**Board decisions due; Film proposals due**

