

Where Dreams Come True – Walt Disney and American Cultural Identity

Room and time: Seminar Room (Attemsgasse 25, Top Floor), Wednesday, 3:15 - 4:45 p.m.

First session: October 11, 2017 · Course number: 512.313

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Description: The name 'Disney' is commonly employed to identify the 'shallow' and 'popular' aspects of the American way of life. It stands for an idealistic – perhaps even escapist – approach to culture that accentuates traditional values and embellishes the romantic dimensions of human (and oftentimes animal) relationships. Since the 1990s, the term 'Disneyfication' has been used by scholars to describe the transformation of society into a giant spectacle, consisting of theme parks and superficial entertainment. The spectrum of Disney films (and productions associated with or financed by Disney) is much wider than many movie-goers suspect; it includes animated cartoons (e.g., *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, 1937; *Fantasia*, 1940; *Mulan*, 1998; *Ratatouille*, 2007; *Up*, 2009; *Frozen*, 2013; and *Inside Out*, 2015), sci-fi flicks (*Tron*, 1982), musicals (*Mary Poppins*, 1964), as well as documentaries (*The Living Desert*, 1951) and even avant-garde films (*The Straight Story*, 1999). While looking at some crucial Disney productions, we will also examine archetypal characters such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck with regard to their development on screen/television, discuss crucial topics in Disney movies (e.g., race, class, gender, and nation) as well as scrutinize the phenomenon of 'Disneyland.'

Primary Texts (Chronological order)

Steamboat Willie. Produced by Walt Disney. 1928.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Produced by Walt Disney. 1937.

Fantasia. "The Sorcerer's Apprentice". Produced by Walt Disney and Ben Sharpsteen. 1940.

Pinocchio. Produced by Walt Disney. 1940.

Dumbo. Produced by Walt Disney. 1941.

Bambi. Produced by Walt Disney. 1942.

Saludos Amigos. Produced by Norman Ferguson. 1942.

The Fuehrer's Face. Produced by Walt Disney. 1943.

The Three Caballeros. Produced by Walt Disney. 1944.

Cinderella. Produced by Walt Disney. 1950.

Alice in Wonderland. Produced by Walt Disney. 1951.

The Living Desert. Produced by Walt Disney Productions. 1953.

Peter Pan. Produced by Walt Disney. 1953.

Lady and the Tramp. Produced by Erdmann Penner. 1955.

Sleeping Beauty. Produced by Ken Peterson. 1959.

One Hundred and One Dalmatians. Produced by Walt Disney. 1961.

The Jungle Book. Produced by Walt Disney. 1967.

The Aristocats. Produced by Winston Hibler et al. 1970.

Robin Hood. Produced by Wolfgang Reitherman. 1973.

The Black Hole. Produced by Ron Miller. 1979.

The Fox and the Hound. Produced by Ron Miller. 1981.

Oliver & Company. Produced by Kathleen Gavin. 1988.

The Little Mermaid. Produced by Howard Ashman et al. 1989.

Aladdin. Produced by Ron Clements. 1992.

Pocahontas. Produced by James Pentecost. 1995.

Mulan. Produced by Howard Ashman and John Musker. 1998.

The Jungle Book 2. Produced by Christopher Chase. 2003.

Ratatouille. Produced by John Lasseter et al. 2007.

What Would Jesus Buy?. Dir. Rob Van Alkemade. 2007.

The Princess and the Frog. Produced by Peter Del Vecho. 2009.

Up. Produced by John Lasseter et al. 2009.

Brave. Produced by Pete Docter et al. 2012.

Frozen. Produced by Peter Del Vecho et al. 2013.

Moana. Produced by Osnat Shurer . 2016.

Zootopia. Produced by Clark Spencer. 2016.

Secondary Texts

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