

Misfits

Non-Conformism, Rebellion, and Disability in U.S. American Film and Television

Course number: 512.325

Room and time: Online, Wed, 11:45 - 1:15 p.m.

UniMeet link: <https://unimeet.uni-graz.at/b/bra-mnk-ppd-xuw>

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Office hours: Thur, 4-6 p.m. · <https://moodle.uni-graz.at/course/view.php?id=24980>

Course tutor: Volker Lang (volker.lang@uni-graz.at)

Short Description:

Join us for a captivating exploration of non-conformism, rebellion, and disability in U.S. American Film and Television. This seminar delves into the portrayal of characters who defy societal norms and expectations, and the impact of their stories on American culture. From classic films to modern television series, we will analyze important works that challenge the status quo and celebrate diversity.

Our journey begins with the iconic Disney animation *Dumbo* (1941), a tale of a courageous elephant challenging societal norms. We'll then delve into *Rebel Without a Cause* (dir. Nicholas Ray, 1955), featuring James Dean's legendary role in teenage rebellion. Next, we'll analyze the groundbreaking film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (dir. Milos Forman, 1975), exploring the lives of psychiatric patients challenging societal norms. Our exploration extends to diverse works, including *Breaking Bad*, *The Elephant Man*, *Glee*, *Avatar*, *The Shape of Water*, and *American Horror Story*, celebrating narratives that defy conventions and contribute to the rich tapestry of American culture.

Primary Works:

American Horror Story. FX Network, Created by Brad Falchuk. Teley-Vision, Ryan Murphy Productions, 2011.

Avatar. Directed by James Cameron, Twentieth Century Fox, Dune Entertainment, Lightstorm Entertainment, 2009.

Breaking Bad. Created by Vince Gilligan. High Bridge Productions, Gran Via Productions, Sony Pictures Television, 2008.

Dumbo. Directed by Samuel Armstrong et al., Walt Disney Animation Studios, Walt Disney Productions, 1941.

Glee. Created by Brad Falchuk. Teley-Vision, Ryan Murphy Productions, 20th Century Fox Television, 2009.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Directed by Milos Forman, Fantasy Films, N.V. Zvaluw, 1975.

Rebel Without a Cause. Directed by Nicholas Ray, Warner Bros., 1955.

The Elephant Man. Directed by David Lynch, Brooksfilms, 1980.

The Shape of Water. Directed by Guillermo del Toro, Double Dare You (DDY), Searchlight Pictures, TSG Entertainment, 2017.

Secondary Texts:

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---. *Portable Blackness: Marketing Ethnicities in American Popular Music from Elvis to Eminem*. University of Leipzig.

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Brown, Sonya C. “Body Image, Gender, Social Class, and Ethnicity on ‘Glee.’” *Studies in Popular Culture*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2014, pp. 125–47.

Charters, Ann. “Introduction.” *On The Road*, by Jack Kerouac, Penguin Books, 1957.

Cliff, Michelle. *Everything Is Now: New and Collected Stories*. U of Minnesota Press, 2009.

Collins, Marsha S. “Echoing Romance: James Cameron’s ‘Avatar’ as Ecoromance.” *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2014, pp. 103–19.

Davis, Lennard J. “The Ghettoization of Disability: Paradoxes of Visibility and Invisibility in Cinema.” *Culture – Theory – Disability*, edited by Anne Waldschmidt et al., Transcript Verlag, 2017, pp. 39–50. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1xxs3r.7>.

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