

**CMST 3013: Topics in Film Genres
Camp, Kitsch, and Trash**

Spring 2013, Section 1

TTH 3:00-4:20 PM, 111 Coates Hall

Thursdays 6:00-9:00 PM, 151 Coates

Final Exam: Wednesday May 7, 7:30-9:30 AM

John LeBret, PhD

Office: 216 Coates Hall

Office Hours: TTH 1:00-3:00 PM

Contact: jlebre1@lsu.edu 578-6812

Required Course Materials

Mathijs, Ernest and Xavier Mendik. *The Cult Film Reader*. 2008.

Feil, Ken. *Dying for a Laugh: Disaster Movies and the Camp Imagination*. 2005.

Course Description

"Cultural history, structure, rhetoric, and performance of particular film genres." (LSU *General Catalog*). Camp, Kitsch, and Trash are evaluative terms that function as genres in their own right but are applied to films from all genres, thus marking them as meta-generic ideas that circulate amongst audiences and change over time.

Goals

By the end of this course you should have:

- 1) Developed an awareness and understanding of the history and value of camp as a style and a critical perspective.
- 2) Developed an appreciative and critical capacity for watching films whose aesthetic values are performed rather than exhibited.
- 3) Discovered your personal camp sensibility and applied it as generative film criticism of a film or film genre.
- 4) Gained an understanding of cultural artifacts and their meanings both in and out of historical contexts.

Course Citizenship -

This is a 4 hour course that includes a lab component; your enthusiastic attendance at all scheduled meetings including Thursday night screenings is expected. Members of this course form an audience whose shared experiences watching and discussing the various films that are scheduled for screening during the semester as well as the assigned readings. Students who miss films during the scheduled lab and students who are not present for class discussions impoverish the conversation for everyone else. Please come to class prepared to engage with the material and contribute to our ongoing investigation. Similarly, please attend the scheduled screenings and give them you undivided attention. Texting and/or IM'ing during class or screenings is unacceptable.

Also, please note that much of the course material will be communicated during lectures and class discussion. Presentation notes will not be made available to students who miss class unless they present documentation excusing their absence in accordance with the university's policies. Similarly, missed work can only be made up in cases of an excused absence.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a Coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letters, please meet with me during the first two weeks of class to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a violation of the fundamental principles of intellectual property. If you fail to give proper citation for the direct quote or paraphrase of another's idea, you are engaging in plagiarism. Claiming someone else's ideas, sentences, essays, or speeches as your own is plagiarism. Please consult the Code of Student Conduct for information about the serious sanctions that will result from plagiarism or any other academic misconduct.

Screening responses

Immediately following screenings of full films I ask that you write a short and immediate response to the film in question. These cannot be made up; you must be present at the screenings to complete these assignments.

Reading Responses -

On days that readings are assigned, students should come to class having already completed the readings. Students will be given writing prompts at the beginning of class and asked to write an informal response designed to start class discussion and demonstrate their grasp of the material. Students who are unable to complete the task or who turn in responses that indicate the reading was unfinished will not receive credit for that day.

Context Reports -

Each student will select one of the six time periods corresponding to the films screened during the first half of the semester and prepare a brief presentation (4-6 minutes) that

offers an historical cultural context for each film. Students who are working on the same time period should coordinate to avoid unnecessary repetition of information. Also, should students wish to collaborate on their presentations, they may do so with the understanding that a longer and more elaborate presentation will be expected.

Critic's review & performance - A detailed assignment for this project is forthcoming.

Grading

This class is graded using a 1000 point scale:

900-1000 points	= A	800-899 points	= B	700-799 points	= C
600-699 points	= D	below 600 points	= F		

Point Distribution:

Screening Response	-	150 pts
Reading Responses	-	100 pts
Context Report	-	100 pts
Critic's Review - script/prop	-	150 pts
Critic's Review - performance	-	200 pts
Midterm Exam	-	150 pts
Final Exam	-	150 pts

Total = 1000 pts

These are quality points you may earn for completing assignments, assessed by the following qualities: "A" work indicates achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet the requirements of the assignment. It reflects near-perfect technical execution and creativity that exceeds expectations. "B" work indicates achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet the requirements of assignment. "C" work meets, but does not exceed, the requirements of the assignment in every way. "D" work is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet the requirements of the assignment. "F" work fails to meet the basic parameters of the assignment.

Course Calendar subject to change to meet the demands of the course

1/16 - Welcome & Introductions
1/16 - Screening in 151 - *Pulp Fiction*

- 1/21 - Reading: The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction (pg. 29-40)
 - Cultural Context Report '90 - '98
- 1/23 - Taste & Value in Cultural Consumption
 1/23 - Screening in 151 - *The Stepford Wives*
- 1/28 - Reading: Notes on Camp (pg. 41-52)
 - '71 - '75 Cultural Context Reports
- 1/30 - Parody & Satire in the Post-Modern condition
 1/30 - Screening in 151 - *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*
- 2/4 - Readings: Casablanca: Cult Movies (pg. 53-66) The Obscene Seen (pg. 186-199)
 - '58 - '63 Cultural Context Reports
- 2/6 - Nostalgia: Remember, Revise, and Repurpose
 2/6 - Screening in 151 - *All About Eve*
- 2/11 - Readings: Uses of Camp (pg. 53-66) "Trashing" (pg. 100-118)
 - '49 - '56 Cultural Context Reports
- 2/13 - Irony, Excess, and the Public Spectacle
 2/13 - Screening in 151 - *Strait-Jacket*
- 2/18 - Readings: Subcultural Studies (pg. 403-418) Beaver Las Vegas! (pg. 472-481)
 - '65 - '70 Cultural Context Reports
- 2/20 - Camp & performing the Critical Position
 2/20 - Screening in 151 - *Mommie Dearest*
- 2/25 - Reading TBA
 - '80 - '86 Cultural Context Reports
- 2/27 - Po-Mo Pop! Homo
 2/27 - Screening in 151 - *Die Mommie Die!*
- 3/4 - Mardi Gras!
 3/6 - '99 - '03 Cultural Context Reports
 - Blood & Puberty, or I <3 Slasher Trash
 3/6 - Screening in 151 - *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*
- 3/11 - Midterm Review & High Camp wrap-up
- 3/13 - Midterm Exam
 3/13 - Screening in 151 - *The Poseidon Adventure*
- 3/18 - Reading: Dying for a Laugh intro & Chap. 1 (pg. ii-30)
- 3/20 - Hurts so good - celebrating bad movies
 3/20 - Screening in 151 - *The Swarm*
- 3/25 - Reading: Dying for a Laugh Chap. 2 (pg. 31-58)
- 3/27 - Homage, Allusion, and making a buck
 3/27 - Screening in 151 - *The Black Hole*

- 4/1 - Reading: Dying for a Laugh Chap. 3 (pg. 59-93)
- 4/3 - Taste - the good, the bad, and terrible
- Critic's review scripts/proposals due
4/3 - Screening in 151 - *Flash Gordon*
- 4/8 - Reading: Dying for a Laugh Chap. 4 & 5 (pg. 94-141)
- 4/10 - Taboos and you
4/10 - Screening in 151 - *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*
- 4/14 - 4/19 Spring Break!
- 4/22 - Critic's reviews, Group 1
- 4/24 - Critic's reviews, Group 2
4/24 - Screening in 151 - *Pink Flamingos*
- 4/29 - Critic's reviews, Group 3
- 5/1 - Critic's reviews, Group 4
5/1 - Screening in 151 - *Rocky Horror Picture Show*
- 5/7 - Final Exam