MEDA 355: Sundance Travel Class
Winter 2016
Instructors: Jennifer Hardacker Enie Vaisburd
e-mail: hard4535@pacificu.edu evaisburd@pacificu.edu
cell phone: 503 536 3989 503 8076251

Travel Dates: January 27-31

Pre-Travel Required Meetings:
Monday, September 14—Sundance ticket orientation and overview of a day at Sundance and what you need to know to plan your trip; Payment due
Wednesday, October 14—Sundance Student passes go on sale
Tuesday, January 5 (virtual meeting) Sundance online specific film selection
Monday, January 25 (on Forest Grove campus or virtual if traveling to Park City from elsewhere)—last minute questions, instructions, etc.

Course goals:
Students will...
  Deepen their understanding and engagement with films by/for underrepresented populations
  • Reflect on the ways that these films differently (or not) discussed in the press, how these films might address their intended audience differently (or not) than films made by an “over-represented” filmmaker;
  Engage with the business of films which include marketing, distribution, festival exposure and audience reception.
  • What are the conflicts between the art of the cinema and the commerce of cinema?
  Learn to differentiate between the different trends and styles of film. They will recognize voices from Independent, commercial and foreign filmmaking.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THIS CLASS: MEDA120 or MEDA220 is an important prerequisite for this class for laying a foundation in the understanding of film as an art, and how the constructed film image uses mise en scene, cinematography and sound to construct meaning, and a basic understanding of the film industry.

ASSESED STUDENT PROJECTS:
The academic goals of this class are that students reflect and synthesize their experiences at the festival.
Daily Journal: These journals will be collected at the end of the travel.
Students will keep a daily journal in which you reflect on:
The films (or new media works) you saw? Your impressions of these films/works?
What you heard about the buzz about films in the press?
The films you can’t you see at the festival that you heard about and will see when it comes out?
The people you meet?
Anything else you want to reflect on!
Essay: Due February 8, 2016
The Critical Inquiry Question that should drive this: Are independent films by filmmakers who identify as being part of a “Marginalized” (minority) group intrinsically different from independent films made by non-marginalized (white male) filmmakers. Marginalized cinemas may include (but are not limited to: films made by women, LGBT films, ethnically diverse films, racially diverse films, social-politically diverse films.)
Some different things that you can consider and address in your essay:

- Follow the buzz, news: who is the intended audience for the film? In the buzz around the film, is the director (or other key players’) race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation noted? When the film is discussed in the press (etc) who are the named players? (Is the focus on the director, screenwriter, producer, and/or actors?)
- In what ways (and to what extent) is the film about the race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation of the director of the film?
- Who are the main players in the films (directors, producers, screenwriters, and actors)?
- What do you notice about the way the story is crafted? Is there something in the style that is intrinsically connected to a particular culture? Does point of view also creates a different way of storytelling?
- Synthesize your answers to the above questions about each of the 3 films that you will be discussing in the essay. What kinds of conclusions can you make regarding the discourse(s) around these films is different than the discourses around films by white filmmakers?

LENGTH/FORMAT: The required length for this paper is 4–6 pages (2 and ½ pages does not equal 3 pages!), with 1” margins, 1” tops and bottoms, 12-point Times New Roman font, black ink on white paper, an appropriate citation format.

EXPECTATIONS TIME IN PARK CITY:
It is expected that you will see a minimum of 10 films while you are at the festival. 3 of those films should fall in the area of your chosen “underrepresented cinema.”
We will have a daily check in meeting at the house where we are staying early in the morning. Everyone is expected to attend this daily meeting.