**Decorative banner that says Birmingham-Southern College with the BSC logo.
**

**Media & Film Studies**

MFS 260 – African American Cinema

Fall 2022



**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Lectures/Screenings: Monday, 2:00 – 4:50 pm, Kennedy Art Center, 10

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Professor: Dr. Teddy Champion

Office: Humanities Center 121

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday, 12:30 – 1:30pm in person

Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 – 11:00am via Teams, and by appointment

Contact: [rtchampi@bsc.edu](mailto:rtchampi@bsc.edu)

205-226-7841

I will often send out email announcements or lecture supplements via email. Plan on checking your bsc.edu email account frequently during the semester. We may also use Moodle to send out class emails.

*OFFICE VISITS ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED!!*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This survey course covers the history of cinema produced by or featuring African Americans from the birth of filmmaking up to present day. As perhaps the most important art form in the past century, movies are especially useful in examining the persistent problem of race and racism in American society. Students will explore themes of exploitation. stereotypes, and image debates within the black community.

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

* be familiar with key African American filmmakers and films from the 20th century and today
* understand the importance of cinematic imagery and its effects pertaining to race
* engage with media using basic film analysis and cultural studies approaches and terminology
* express the ways in which films exist within a global framework and the various cultural, political, economic, and aesthetic influences that exert influence in their production

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

Bogle, Donald. *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*, 5th Edition. Bloomsbury, 2016.

Additional Readings on Moodle

**FILM SCREENINGS**

All films will be shown on DVD or Blu-ray discs in class. Most videos will remain on reserve at the BSC Library desk.

Some films and supplemental video material may be found free online or through streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime.

**GRADING**

Active and Informed Participation 10%

In-class Quizzes 10%

Short Written Responses/Reviews 40%

Exam 20%

Research Paper/Project 20%

**MAJOR COURSE ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

This course requires attendance and participation at every class session; reading assigned pages from the textbooks (and occasional handouts and articles online); in-class quizzes; short reflection papers, one exam, and a research paper.

**Active and Informed Participation** is a purely subjective grade based on your willingness to show enthusiasm in class and participate in class discussions. Diligent attendance is absolutely required, both in lecture and for the screenings. Tardiness is not tolerated. Absences, tardiness, sleeping, checking phones, etc., will all be noted and will affect your grade. Simply being present in class is not sufficient to receive an excellent participation grade. In addition to being present, you must also make informed, meaningful, and consistent contributions to class discussion. Watching and discussing films are group activities, and your conscientious participation will be factored into your final grade. *Come to every class with something to say, ready to raise your hand, and engage in dialogue.*

**In-class Quizzes** are designed to encourage preparation and participation. They are generally easy if you attend class and read the text pages before the assigned lecture date. You are allowed to drop your two lowest quiz grades. This policy therefore allows for two absences. No make-up quizzes are allowed.

**Short Written Responses** are designed to give you opportunity to express yourself, identify your strengths and interests, and start thinking about ways to approach your final paper or project. Writing assignments should be submitted on Moodle.

**The Exam** will be composed of multiple choice, matching, true-false, and short answer questions covering comprehensive material from lectures, screenings, assigned readings, and previous quizzes.

**The Research Paper/Project** is an independent project that you will undertake under my guidance. You will receive more specific guidelines in class, but in general the assignment will ask you to select an important filmmaker, film, or specific theme, based on assigned readings and films, and to situate that subject in context of African American cinema. If you chose to write a paper, it will be between 6 and 8 pages in length. Other potential project ideas include a video essay, a multimedia presentation, or a film production. You will be graded on the quality of your writing, the accuracy of your research, and, most importantly, the thoughtfulness and originality of your ideas.

**Late or Missed Assignments:** All assignments must be submitted when specified.

There will be no excused absences except for medical and family emergencies or official college events, such as athletic events.

Failure to take a weekly quiz or the exam will result in an automatic grade of zero. Make-up quizzes will be given only if arrangements are made in advance of class time. If for any reason you cannot be in class on the date and time scheduled, contact me at least 3 days before class and I will allow you to take the quiz ahead of time, but not after the class.

The student is responsible for coordinating with me and must provide the official and proper paperwork (e.g., medical notice, letter from student athletics).

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Adhere to the Honor Code at all times: “As a member of the student body of Birmingham-Southern College, I recognize my responsibility to the traditions of the institution, to my fellow students and to myself. I recognize the significance of the honor system. I pledge that I have read and understand the Constitution of the Honor Council, including the Honor Code, and agree to be bound by its provisions.”

Much of the work in this class will be collaborative in nature so it is expected that you will discuss assignments with your classmates. However, when you turn in work as your own, you need to ensure that what you have written is your understanding of the concept and not simply copied or paraphrased from another source. You must cite and reference all sources. If you are unsure how to do this properly, please reach out to me. If you are found in violation of the Honor Code by the Honor Council, you will receive no credit for the assignment, test, or quiz in question.

Additional information on the Honor Code and violations can be found in the Birmingham-Southern [Student Handbook](%20Student%20Handbook) and on the BSC website: [https://www.bsc.edu/campus/studev/honor-council/ index.html](https://www.bsc.edu/campus/studev/honor-council/%20index.html)

**INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Inclement weather or other events beyond the control of the College that might cause risk or danger to students, faculty, and staff may occasionally result in changes to normal College operations, including cancellation of classes or events; the calendar schedule may be adjusted.

**TECHNOLOGY**

Birmingham-Southern College uses the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). Students are responsible for checking Moodle for course readings, assignments, and announcements. Work that is submitted late because of not checking Moodle is the responsibility of the student.

**Logging into Moodle**

1. Log onto the BSC access point by going to: [moodle.bsc.edu](https://moodle.bsc.edu/).
2. Enter your BSC username and password.
3. The Moodle dashboard will open, and your courses will be displayed in the middle of the screen.
4. Select your course to begin.
5. The course welcome page will open. Read the welcome section and follow the instructions for getting started.

If you do not have your User Name, contact the IT Help Desk (see below)

This course (and most of your courses at BSC) will require the use of your **Student Outlook Email** account. All communication for this course should come through your BSC email account. I like to send updates via email, so please check regularly!

**Microsoft Office 365** is available for free download to all current faculty, staff, and students. This can be easily downloaded from the IT [Helpdesk](https://www.bsc.edu/campus/it/helpdesk.html) Webpage. You will need to sign in with your Birmingham-Southern User Name and Password to download and use this software.

It is expected all written assignments be completed with Microsoft Word since [Microsoft Office 365 has been provided](https://sites.google.com/view/bscmoodlehelpstu/office-365?authuser=0) to all members of the Birmingham-Southern community. **If you use another word processing application (for example, Pages on MacBook), you must convert your document into a PDF or Word document prior to it being uploaded to Moodle. *Otherwise, I cannot open your document!* Please convert photos to .pdf, as well!**

[IT Helpdesk](https://www.bsc.edu/campus/it/helpdesk.html)  offers telephone, email, and in-person support to all Birmingham-Southern students and employees. Please view the [Student Quick Guide](https://www.bsc.edu/campus/it/pdfs/StudentQuickGuide.pdf) for information on how to access BSC technology tools. Hours of operation are listed below.

Hours of Operation

Email: [helpdesk@bsc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@bsc.edu), Monday-Friday, 7:30 am – 4:00 pm

Phone: 205-226-3033

24/7 Hotline via Apogee: 1-877-478-8861

Web address: [www.bsc.edu/campus/it/helpdesk.html](http://www.bsc.edu/campus/it/helpdesk.html)

*Technology can be problematic: Internet connections can be slow or down; computers may malfunction; power outages can cause delays or the inability to connect. Technological issues are not acceptable excuses for late assignments. Be prepared and have a backup plan.*

**BSC RESOURCES FOR WRITERS**

Located in Humanities 102, the BSC Writing Center offers in-person and virtual peer-to-peer tutoring and quiet, supportive lab space to work on writing assignments. The Center’s tutors are students from a wide variety of majors on campus and have the range to address student writing needs with discipline specificity. Supervised and assisted by BSC Writing Center directors, the tutors provide one-on-one consultations for any student at any point in the writing process. The BSC Writing Center is open Sunday-Thursday 4pm-8pm. To ensure a full 30-minute tutorial time slot, students are encouraged to be mindful of assignment-heavy weeks, keep track of due dates, and visit the Writing Center at their earliest availability during open hours. Please contact Dr. MK Foster or Professor Laura Tolbert ([writingcenter@bsc.edu](mailto:writingcenter@bsc.edu)) with any questions or requests for virtual appointments.

**OTHER RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS**

BSC [Academic Resource Center](https://www.bsc.edu/academics/arc/index.html) (includes the Writing Center, the Math Lab, and tutoring)

BSC Counseling Services 205-226-4717

[Crisis Center of Birmingham](https://www.crisiscenterbham.org/) 205-323-7777

* Crisis line, rape response, and recovery resources

[Magic City Acceptance Center](https://www.magiccityacceptancecenter.org/)

* Great space for LGBTQIA2S+ adolescents that provide lots of resources

[YWCA](https://www.ywcabham.org/programs) 205-322-4878

* Homelessness aid
* Domestic violence aid

**ACADEMIC ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students with a disability that qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and require accommodations should be registered with BSC’s Accessibility Office. If you are registered for academic accommodations, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any accommodations that may be necessary. During this discussion you are not expected to disclose any details concerning your disability though you may do so at your discretion. If you have a disability but have not yet registered, please contact Dr. Sandra Foster, Assistant Director of Accessibility Services and Resources, at 205-226-7909 or [smfoster@bsc.edu](mailto:smfoster@bsc.edu), or visit Norton 228. Keep in mind that no accommodation will be made unless and until the instructor receives official notification from the College.

**TITLE IX**

Birmingham-Southern College is committed to the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment for students and the campus community. The College forbids any type of sexual or gender-based misconduct among its students, faculty, and staff. The College encourages all members of the academic community to report suspected sexual and gender-based misconduct to the appropriate authorities so that it can be investigated, remedied, and eliminated. Such misconduct is prohibited whether the actor is a student, faculty member, staff member, contractor, visitor, or another member of the College community. BSC forbids retaliation against any person who has opposed, reported or participated in an investigation concerning sexual or gender-based misconduct.

In accordance with federal policy, all College employees are required to report information related to discrimination and harassment which includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual harassment. For this reason, if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the Title IX coordinator. As a student, you can report allegations of sexual misconduct to officials in Student Development (Assistant Dean of Students, Dana Bekurs; Associate Dean of Students, W. David Miller; Vice President for Student Development, David Eberhardt), Campus Police, or confidential resources in Counseling Services, Health Services, and Religious Life. Please refer to the [Title IX section](https://www.bsc.edu/titleix/index.html) of the BSC website for more information on filing a report and available resources.

**STATEMENT OF INCLUSION & EQUITY**

My aim in all of my courses is to support an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized and respected. As outlined in the Birmingham-Southern mission, the College challenges students to engage in their community and the greater world, to examine diverse perspectives, and to live with integrity. Assignments outlined in the course syllabus will address diversity consideration for communities, why those communities exist, who they serve, and how their practices reflect their values.

**CLASSROOM POLICIES**

Our policies are in place in order to limit distractions and allow your fellow students to get the most out of our time together.

* No food is allowed in class.
* There should be minimal talking during our screenings. Students enrolled in this class deserve the best screening experience, so please be respectful.
* You may NOT use laptops, cell phones, or other electronic devices in lecture or in the screenings except during specific writing/research exercises. The temptation for distraction is simply too great. Write out notes, then retype them after class. Exceptions may be made with documentation from the Office of Accessibility.
* Student responses, questions, and dialogue are encouraged, but please refrain from interrupting your fellow classmates or the instructor.
* Respect the opinions of your classmates and instructor. Disagreements and debates may occur, but do not engage in personal attacks and argumentative tones, in or outside of class.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

September 5 – Labor Day Holiday (no class)

September 7 – Last Day to Add a Course, to Select “S/U”

September 14 – Last Day to Withdraw with Tuition Adjustment

September 21 – Last Day to Drop a Course Without a Grade

October 3 – Midterm Assessments Due

October 6-7 – Fall Break (no class)

October 12 – Last Day to Drop a Course With a Grade of “W”

November 23–25 – Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)

**COURSE CALENDAR**

\*Our Course Calendar is subject to change as instructor’s discretion. Please stay on alert for changes.

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| **WEEK** | **DATES** | **Class Subject & Objectives** |
| 1 | Aug. 29 | Course Introduction  Screening: *Classified X*, written/produced by Melvin Van Peebles (1998) |
| 2 | Sept. 5 | ***Labor Day holiday (no class)*** |
| 3 | Sept. 12 | Reading: Bogle Introduction and 1-104 (early cinema through the 1930s)  Screening: *Oscar Micheaux: The Superhero of Black Filmmaking* (2021, dir. F. Zippel) |
| 4 | Sept. 19 | Reading: Bogle 105-174 (1940s and 1950s)  Screening*: The Defiant Ones* dir. Stanley Kramer(1958) |
| 5 | Sept. 26 | Reading: Bogle 175-208 (The 1960s)  Screening: *In the Heat of the Night*, dir. Norman Jewison (1967) |
| 6 | Oct. 3 | Reading: Bogle 209-240 (The 1970s)  Screening: *Shaft*, dir. Gordon Parks (1971) |
| 7 | Oct. 10 | Reading: Bogle 241-292 (The 1980s)  Screening: *School Daze*, dir. Spike Lee (1988) |
| 8 | Oct. 17 | Reading: Bogle 293-333 (The 1990s)  Screening: *Devil in a Blue Dress*, dir. Carl Franklin (1995) |
| 9 | Oct. 24 | Reading: Bogle 333-388 (The 1990s)  Screening: *Set It Off*, dir. F. Gary Gray (1996)  (maybe Get Out screening this evening) |
| 10 | Oct. 31 | Reading: Bogle 389-477 (The 2000s)  Screening: *Love and Basketball,* dir. Gina Blythewood Prince (2000) |
| 11 | Nov. 7 | Reading: see articles on Moodle  Screening: *Meet the Browns,* dir. Tyler Perry (2008) |
| 12 | Nov. 14 | **IN-CLASS EXAM**  Reading: see articles on Moodle  Screening: *Mississippi Damned*, dir. Tina Mabry (2009) |
| 13 | Nov. 21 | Reading: see articles on Moodle  Screening: *Get Out*, dir. Jordan Peele (2017) |
| 14 | Nov. 28 | Reading: see articles on Moodle  Screening: *If Beale Street Could Talk*, dir. Barry Jenkins (2018) |
| 15 | Dec. 7  (Wednesday) | **Final Project Presentation**  (during Final Exam time) |