



RSP 489.001
COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer II, 2014

Instructors: Dr. Ricky Dobbs
Days/Times/Locations: By appointment
Office Location: OSS 141 (Dobbs)

Office Hours: MW 3-4 PM
TR 1-3 PM
or by appointment

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COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

You are responsible to have watched and answered responses to four films by the due dates supplied below. Those films are:

The Quiet American (2002) with Michael Caine and Brendan Fraser.
The Mission (1986) with Robert DeNiro and Jeremy Irons.
The Bridge on the River Kwai (1957) with Alec Guinness and William Holden.
Lawrence of Arabia (1962) with Peter O'Toole.

You watch these films independently. For each you write a response following a format that will be included later in the syllabus.

Course Description:

This course is intended as a capstone experience for Regents' Scholars prior to completing their degrees. It typically follows a Regents' Scholar's study abroad experience. It is intended to tie together experiences gained during study abroad and explore issues of intercultural difference and conflict in literature/film.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1.) **Critical Thinking.** Students will be able to form substantive and evidence-driven arguments to propose solutions to problems or explain phenomena.

2.) **Communication.** Student communication will follow conventions of grammar and syntax appropriate to the audience, purpose and message.

3.) **Diversity/Cultural Awareness.** Students will be able to connect/explain the interaction two or more cultures historically or in context, acknowledging power structures and other larger factors influencing that interaction.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

Instructional Methods: Class consists primarily of independent viewing of films, written response to the films, and discussion.

Assignments: Students must complete all assignments listed below. The descriptions given are brief, and additional information will be forthcoming.

Film Responses: Each student must write a 3-5 page response for each film, following a specific format offered below and answering questions specific to each film. This portion is worth 300 points or three-quarters of your grade.

Discussion: We will meet formally once for this course on a date/time/place to be agreed between all participants. Once that date is set, you need to be present. We will discuss the films and our experiences with them. I will provide the questions, and you all will provide the discussion. This portion is worth 100 points or a quarter of your grade.

Grading

Students' course grade will be calculated according to the following scale:

A = EXCELLENT	360-400 Points
B = GOOD	320-359 Points
C = AVERAGE	280-319 Points
D = POOR	240-279 Points
F = FAILURE	less than 240 Points

Failure to attempt an assignment will result in failure for the course.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

RSP 489.001 requires that students obtain and/or watch, through appropriate means. They must supply written responses to those films in electronic format via email.

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course. [List those technologies needed for your course.]
- Internet access/connection – high speed recommended (not dial-up)

- Headset/Microphone (if required for synchronous sessions in an online course)
- Word Processor (i.e. MS Word or Word Perfect)
- [List other related hardware or software necessary for your course]

Additionally, the following hardware and software are necessary to use eCollege:

Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0).

Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

It is strongly recommended that you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login in to eCollege, click on the 'myCourses' tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

My preferred form of interaction is in person during office hours or during the minutes just before and after class. I invite you to contact me by e-mail to make appointments if you cannot come to office hours.

I can be reached more easily by e-mail than by phone.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Cheating: Plagiarism, appropriating or otherwise using the work of others, avoiding or aiding others in avoiding class requirements or other activities that contravene ordinary standards of academic integrity will not be tolerated. Students who cheat will be punished one or more of the following: point penalty, failure of the assignment in question or failure for the course. If you are in doubt about whether or not your conduct constitutes cheating, you had better ask the instructor. Do not find out the hard way. There are *no excuses*.

Research Expectations: Students will go beyond simply watching films and writing papers. They will do some independent research into the film, its topic and other important factors that contribute to their understanding the film. These efforts need to reflect an understanding of the varied quality of available source material and good judgment in its selection and use. Bad decisions can make one's work less impactful, affect your grade, and perhaps lead to your violating the policy above. If you have questions, ask before you make a mistake.

Slacker Clause: **Failure to attempt an assignment will result in failure for the course.**

University Specific Procedures:

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Schedule of Meetings and Important Dates—Below see class meetings by date, topic, and reading assignment. Days on which major assignments come due are in **bold**.

Friday	July 18	<i>The Mission</i> response due via e-mail.
Friday	July 25	<i>Lawrence of Arabia</i> response due via e-mail.
Friday	Aug 1	<i>Bridge on the River Kwai</i> response due via e-mail.
Wednesday	Aug 6	<i>The Quiet American</i> response due via e-mail.
Thursday	Aug 7	Possible final discussion meeting
Friday	Aug 8	Possible final discussion meeting

Requirements and Questions for Response Papers:

Each paper will follow a standard format. Papers should be 3-5 pages long, double-spaced. Papers should be your best written work, and consequently, grammar and other errors will result in a deduction. Papers should be left-justified, written in twelve-point font, and include at least three references.

References will be evaluated for their value/reliability. Wikipedia is on the “low” end of acceptable. Your paper should be primarily your words. It should not parrot your references nor should it re-tell the story of the film. Answer the questions, and where you are asked to take a position—take one and argue it showing evidence to support your viewpoint.

Values for various aspects of the papers are as follows: Grammar, spelling, and punctuation (20%); Source quality—i.e. three or more reputable sources (20%); Quality of content and thought (40%); Argument/logic and cohesion—i.e. does your paper make sense and does it reflect expectations for a college senior? (20%).

Questions for your movies:

The Mission: Explain the controversy surrounding the Jesuit missions established among the Guaraní (brief summary that highlights issues present in film). To what extent can the governments of Spain and Portugal, the Church administrative hierarchy (the bishop from Rome), and the Jesuit Order be described as having their own “culture” as institutions? How did the Jesuits cross cultural boundaries to engage and then gain the confidence of the Guaraní?

Lawrence of Arabia: Can we really ever embrace another culture to a point where we are changed? Did Lawrence do so, and if so, how successfully? (The film and research will give you support for your answers.) Briefly explain links between Lawrence’s actions and the modern situation in the Middle East. (Again, you must research and think. If you passed through the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, you were close then.)

Bridge on the River Kwai: There are three different cultures at odds here—identify each and based upon the characters of Nicholson, Saito and Shears explain the values of the three cultures as portrayed in the film. Now for the fun part: this movie came from a French novel. Research the career and life of author Pierre Boulle. What does a French writer bring to what is really a story of British prisoners and Japanese captors? (Not a clear answer, but you ought to be able to hazard an intelligent suggestion.)

The Quiet American: This movie will make little sense unless you know a little bit about the origins of the war in Vietnam—before the US became involved, so roughly 1945-1954. Look into it then watch. Are Americans naturally idealistic and optimistic? Why do you think so? This film (and the novel on which it is based) show the collision of those American traits with a complex culture and geopolitical situation. It is told from the perspective of a British journalist (Fowler). Between Fowler and Pyle (the quiet American), who is the better man? Why? Who is better equipped to face the reality of Vietnam in the 1950s? Why?