

Dr. Todd Boyd
Mad Men (CTCS 469)
Wednesdays 1:00-5:50, SCA 108
Spring 2014
(Draft Syllabus)

This course is interested in studying the popular, critically acclaimed television program *Mad Men* (2007-present). From its inception this program was noted for, among other things, a sophisticated, though specific historical representation of the activities centered in a Madison Avenue advertising agency of the 1960s. Using the characters, themes, and overall milieu of the program, the course will engage a number of films and books from the 1950s/60s that influenced *Mad Men*, as well as other texts that are directly referenced in the program. In focusing on *Mad Men* and history the course will use the program to analyze the larger social, political, and cultural issues that defined Cold War America at mid-century. The historical figures, events, and issues in question—the 1960 JFK/Nixon presidential election and the JFK assassination, the Civil Rights movement, Marilyn Monroe, Muhammad Ali, Vietnam, among other examples—will assist in providing a context for understanding and appreciating both what is represented within *Mad Men*, as well as what is excluded from this representation. The course will endeavor to unpack several of the numerous references “sampled” in *Mad Men*, as well as those cultural references inspired by the program. The unpacking of these references will take place as the course explores the nostalgia inherent to a contemporary cultural style that foregrounds themes such as retro and vintage in its representation. Finally, the course is interested in using the success of *Mad Men* to discuss the altered landscaped of television in the digital era.

Screening Schedule

Jan 15

The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit (Nunnally Johnson, 1956)

Jan 22

Sweet Smell of Success (Alexander Mackendrick, 1957)

and

Charles & Ray Eames: The Architect and the Painter (Jason Cohn/Bill Jersey, 2012)

Jan. 29

Revolutionary Road (Sam Mendes, 2008)

Feb. 5

The Apartment (Billy Wilder, 1960)

Feb. 12

The Spy Who Came in From the Cold (Martin Ritt, 1965)

Feb. 19

The Hustler (Robert Rossen, 1961)

Feb 26

La Notte (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1961)

March 5

Freedom Riders (Stanley Nelson, 2010)

March 12

Four Little Girls (Spike Lee, 1997)

March 19

No Screening (Spring Break)

March 26

Love Marilyn (Liz Garbus, 2012)

April 2

Executive Action (David Miller, 1973)

April 9

Ali (Michael Mann, 2001)

April 16

Platoon (Oliver Stone, 1986)

April 23

Planet of the Apes (Franklin Schaffner, 1968)

April 30

Final Lecture (No Screening)

Books

The Revolution Was Televised: The Cops, Crooks, Slingers, and Slayers Who Changed TV Drama Forever, Alan Sepinwall

Difficult Men: Behind the Scenes of a Creative Revolution: From The Sopranos and The Wire to Mad Men and Breaking Bad, Bret Martin

The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism, Thomas Frank

1959: The Year Everything Changed, Fred Kaplan

The Organization Man, William Whyte

The Fire Next Time, James Baldwin

The Feminine Mystique, Betty Friedan

A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America, Lizabeth Cohen

Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past, Simon Reynolds

The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead, Timothy Leary

Mad Men, Mad World: Sex, Politics, Styles and the 1960's, Lauren Goodland, Lilya Kaganovsky, & Robert Rushing