

UNIVERSITY STUDIES 410--IMAGES OF 'AMERICA' IN 'FOREIGN' LITERATURE AND ART

Fall 2004
MWF, 1:25-2:15
Section #88125
HSS 108

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TEXTS & COURSE MATERIALS

Bookstore:

America (Baudrillard)

Additional texts may be required

Hodges Library Reserve

Materials will be made available in hard copy and/or for electronic retrieval as the course develops. Besides the usual high culture texts (literature, theater, critical theory, art, philosophy, etc.), materials will issue from a wide variety of popular culture "texts," including films, TV programs, cartoons, comic strips, popular press, news media, songs, commercial advertisements, fashion, art, etc.

Course Description, Rationale, and Structure

In this 400-level team-taught seminar/research project, faculty and students will examine "texts" that emanate from national cultures outside the U.S. and that deal with any aspect of American culture--American society, individuals, traditions, customs, institutions, or other structures. These texts may come from a variety of historical periods, but their interpretations will directly address contemporary issues. We will focus primarily on literary and artistic texts (including fictional writing, performance, visual, and plastic arts), and secondarily, on critical and expository texts (including critical theory, sociopolitical writing, and language studies). Consequently, this class/project will bring together faculty representing a wide range of disciplinary fields, scholarly interests, and teaching methodologies.

Meeting on a MWF schedule, normally, on Mondays and Wednesdays there will be one 20-30-minute presentation (lectures, directed discussions, or other types of presentations or demonstrations), which will be followed by a 20-30 minute class discussion. The third day of each week normally will be devoted to a general review of the week's presentations and discussion of these in either group or plenary formats. Students will be required to do a short report on one or two of the presentations. These will be posted on the course website for review by all course participants. In addition to the more formal writing assignments (the "semi-formal" class reports, and the "formal" papers), periodically students will have the opportunity to write short "informal," critical responses to specific questions about course materials that have been reviewed and discussed in class and/or on Blackboard.

Students' work will be evaluated by the course director (and, when necessary, in consultation with participating faculty) for written work (short written exercises and reports, one midterm, and a final research paper) and the quality of their contributions to class discussions. English will be the lingua franca of the course; but students of foreign language are encouraged to read any text in its original language.

Grading: 2 short papers=20%; midterm paper=20%; final research paper=30%; class participation (including short report and short in-class writing exercises that contribute to one third of this grade)=30%.

Working Definitions, Questions, and Subtopics To Be Addressed

1. The course will focus on how individuals from other national cultures represent or misrepresent “America,” “Americans,” or more abstractly, the concept of “Americanness.” Thus the question of national culture will come to the forefront.

2. What do these “displaced” cross-cultural representations tell us not only about U.S. culture but also about the perceived strengths and weaknesses, qualities and deficiencies, desires and fears of the individuals or cultures producing these representations?

3. Today, “America” occupies a unique (privileged?) status among national cultures and in the consciousness of individuals from Canada to Cameroon, especially in view of and with respect to the world’s globalizing trend. Its special status affects both internal (homegrown) and external (foreign) imaginations of America, and the contrasts between the two.

4. As evidenced by the recent world crisis, not all dominant Western national cultures are created equal, and not all have the same take on American culture. We also could expect that non-Western and/or “postcolonial” cultures of Latin America, Africa, and Asia will manifest divergent attitudes toward “America.”

5. Last but not least, this course will explore the question of artistic representation. “America” has the potential to produce or enhance interesting literary and artistic imagery and narratives. How does the practice of art/literature resist the forces of a dominant culture and a mainstream view?

Why and how do foreign artists imagine, write, perform, or depict America?

Schedule

8/18: Introduction to the course.

8/20--8/27: Introduction to the concepts and practices of culture, national culture, and cross-cultural communication.

Selections from The Theory Toolbox. 8/20, chapter 5 “Culture” and 8/23, ch. 6 “Ideology” [Essif]. 8/25, “Variations in Value Orientations” (Kluckhohn, Rockwood, & Strodtbeck), “Understanding Cultural Differences” (Hall & Hall), and the “Geert Hofstede Analysis” [Arnold]. 8/27, discussion.

French and Franco-European Points of View Toward American Culture

8/30: Baudrillard’s America, 1-26; 9/1, 27-74; 9/3, 107-28.

9/6: *Labor Day*, no class.

9/8: “The Theatricality of American ‘Un-culture’ in French Drama” (Essif).

9/10: September 11, 2001 by Michel Vinaver.

9/13: “The Paradoxes of Anti-Anti-Americanism in France: Several Different Perspectives” (Jean-Francois Revel, Bernard Henri Levy, André Glucksman and the dialogue between Jean-Marie Colombani and William Wells) [Levy]

9/15: “American Feminism: The French Perspective” [McAlpin].

9/17: Discussion.

9/20: Short paper due. (see “Supplement 2” for guidelines)

Anglo-Australian

9/20: “From the Bush and the Outback to Harvard and Smith” [Brady].

9/22: “Special Relations: Britain in the American Age” [Garner]. W. Churchill’s “The Sinews of Peace”

9/24: Discussion.

Latin American and Chicano Cultures

9/27: “America Viewed by ‘Other’ Americans: Whose America Is It, Anyway?” [Handelsman]. José Martí’s “Our America.”

9/29: “U.S.A. and Spain: Three Moments: 1898, 1952, 3/11/04” [Ayo].

10/1: Discussion

10/4--6: “Inside and Out: Chicano Perspectives on US Culture” [Gimmel].

10/8: “The Caribbean Region as America’s Backyard: Economic Dependency and Ideological Resistance” [Duke]

Germano-European

10/11: “The Janus Faces of US Politics and Culture in Contemporary Germany” [Hoeyng]

10/13: US Culture in Weimar Berlin” [Hoeyng].

10/14--16: Fall Break and MIFLC Conference. On Thursday, 10/14, 3:30-5:00, there will be a conference session on the topic of this multidisciplinary course: “Designing an Interdisciplinary Course for Intra-Departmental Cooperation: American Images in ‘Foreign’ Literature and Art”

10/18: “Frank Castorf and the Volksbuhne--Berlin” [Van den Berg]

10/20: “German Media” [Ohnesorg].

10/22: Discussion.

10/25: Midterm paper due (see Supplement 4 for guidelines). *Talk by Nadeau & Barlow: “Sixty Million Frenchmen Can’t be Wrong (Why we love France and not the French).”*

The Far East

10/25: “Japanese Perceptions of America” [Horiguchi].

10/27: “China and the U.S.: Post WW2” [He].

10/29: Discussion.

11/1: “America in the Eyes of the Frankfurt School” [Dunn]

U.S. Elections: The Whole World’s Watching--and Wondering

11/3: Round table discussions on foreign coverage and perceptions of the elections.

11/5: Discussion. Reading to be determined.

Danish- and Germano-European Film

11/8: “Cowboys in Lederhosen: The German Fascination with the American West” [Lee].

11/10: “Euro Takes on Our Town: Dogma Does Dogville” (Danish director Lars von Trier) [Holmlund].

11/12: Assignment pending. Discussion.

11/15: Short paper due (see Supplement 5 for guidelines).

‘Foreign’ Music and Art

11/15: “African American Music in Denmark” [Gay].

11/17: “The Guggenheim: Perspectives from Abroad” [Lyons]

11/19: Discussion.

11/22: “Russia and the U.S.” [Blackwell]

11/24: Assignment pending. Discussion.

11/25--11/28: Thanksgiving Recess.

11/29: Concluding discussion.

Monday, 12/6, 12:30-2:30 : Final Exam (see Supplement 7 for guidelines): Presentation and discussion of outlines for final research paper. Final paper due: 12/10

“IMAGES OF AMERICA” COURSE--UNIV. STUDIES--FALL ‘04--

PROGRAM SUPPLEMENT 1 (8/30)

Assignments of Short Class Reports

Students will prepare and submit short (ab. 500 words) critical summaries of the presentations of readings and other materials in this course. These will serve to establish a running record of the course for all participants, including those faculty who would like to get an idea of how their presentation will fit into the wider field of topics being presented. The analytical component of the exercise will widen the critical envelope of the class. In addition, these reports will contribute to the class participation grade of the reporting student.

Each report should contain the following three parts: 1) a one-paragraph synopsis of the topic, including, at the writer’s discretion, the primary points of view presented, key argument(s), and, if expressed, the presenter’s thesis with respect to the topic/materials; 2) a short critique (critical analysis) of the topic (materials presented) and/or one or two of its major arguments, premises, or positions, relating these to the course as a whole and to other course materials; and 3) one or two questions raised by the new material.

Reports are due by the first class session following the presentation. Please send them by attachment (Word) to essif@utk.edu

NB: Please don’t stress on this assignment! It’s not a “formal” paper, and the overall tone can be casual, dialogic, inquisitive.

9/8: “Baudrillard’s America”:

9/10: “Am. ‘Un-culture’ in Fr. Drama”:

9/13: “Vinaver’s 9/11”:

9/15: “Anti-Anti-Americanism”:

9/17: “Am. Feminism”:

9/20: SHORT PAPER DUE

9/22: “Outback to Harvard”

9/24: Britain/Special Relations:

9/29: “‘Other’ Americans”:

10/1: “Hispanic cultures”:

10/8: “Chicano Perspectives”:

10/13: “Contemporary Germany”:

10/18: “Weimar Berlin”:

10/18: MIFLC Conference Session:

10/20: “Frank Castorf”:

10/22: “German Media”:

10/25: MIDTERM PAPER DUE

10/27: “Japanese Perceptions”:

10/29: “China”:

11/3: “Frankfort School”:

11/5: “U.S. Elections: Round Table”:

11/10: “Cowboys in Lederhosen”:

11/12: “Dogville”:

11/15: SHORT PAPER DUE

11/17: “African Am. Music”:

11/19: “The Guggenheim”:

11/24: “Russia”:

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PROGRAM SUPPLEMENT 2 (9/7)

Assignment of Short Paper: Due 9/20/04

Two-three pages, typed (800-1000 words)

1. May apply a critical methodological “tool” (excerpts from “Theory Toolbox,” any of the readings presented by Dr. Arnold, or another critical approach with which you are familiar) to one aspect, argument, subtopic, or idea contained in the materials studied and treated in class.

2. Focus on one particular aspect of the material. For example, in America, Baudrillard discusses many different features and characteristics of American culture, and he proposes (or claims to propose?) a variety of points of view: in-difference, un-culture, desert-like, utopian, solitude, aseptic, stupidity (not individual but mass or collective), speed, hysteresis, simulation (what kind of simulation?), and so on. (Consider further development of questions raised in class.)

3. Compare one text, one source, one material, or one point of view by one author (or authors from one “national culture”) with another. Show (subtle?) differences and propose an explanation for these. Critical tools will help here as well.

4. Review the “Working Definitions, Questions, and Subtopics To Be Addressed” section of syllabus for ideas.

5. See the “Conclusion” to Essif’s article (“Theatricality of American Un-culture”) for ideas.

6. **FOCUS** your paper and provide a concrete, substantive title to demonstrate this focus.

7. Develop your thesis, providing evidence in the form of clear references to materials and citations of text. Unless otherwise expressed or indicated, the writing and ideas must be your own.

8. Define your terms.

9. Try to take pleasure in articulating your ideas, responding and contributing to this super-rich topic of discussion: Give me an “A!” Give me an “M”!....

10. There’s no number ten.

**IMAGES OF AMERICA" COURSE--UNIV. STUDIES--FALL '04--PROGRAM
SUPPLEMENT 3 (9/22)**

Activities for Friday, 9/24

1. Presentation by our resident graduate artist, James Green, on his project-in-progress for this course: "Valuistics and the New Bottom Line: Driving the Market One Purchase at a Time."

2. Group discussion on the following questions (feel free to agree to focus on one or two):

A. How do this week's presentations by Professors Brady and Garner (Australia and Great Britain) relate to the larger context of this class, that is, the portrait of "America" painted by non-American artists/intellectuals from various national cultures and subcultures?

B. What does Prof. Brady and the compatriots he cited--from an Australian point of view?--think about "American" culture (pop, high, media, multiculturalism)? "American" democracy? Triumphalism? Cultural Cringe?

C. Does Australian culture and society have something in common with "America" that French culture does not? How does this appear in the writings or the presentations of the speakers?

D. On the other hand, is it possible that the French have something in common with Americanness that the Anglo, English-speaking cultures do not?

E. How about British culture as represented by Churchill ("special relations"), et al? What did the Cold War do for America's international relations and its position with respect to the rest of the world?

F. To what extent can a certain admiration, praise, or respect for "America" be related to a given culture's (a given culture's spokesperson's) "self-interest"?

G. How relevant are Churchill's positions today? Has the U.S. and the judgments of the U.S. evolved over the years?

H. To what extent did international political, social, and economic forces, such as Communism and/or Soviet Russia, contribute toward the "America" of today?

I. Are there clear lines of demarcation between readings of "America" from the different national cultures? Do these British and Australian readings offer additional insight into both who "we" are and how we are perceived by cultural Others?

J. What have you learned about British and Australian culture?

K. How relevant and useful are certain principles, institutions, and histories?

Remember the terms we used for the French: secularism, education, economic/political/social systems, cultural/artistic/intellectual life, civil rights, women's rights, individualism, universalism, patriotism, nationalism, etc.? How about sportsmanship?

L. Anything that relates to the methodological tools/concepts of value orientations? Did these presentations help answer the question, What is culture?

The following groups will collaboratively produce a (200+-words) response to these questions. Each group will designate a "secretary" (S) who will write up the response which they will submit to James G. at the end of the class. You may respond in the form of a list of comments, but these should contain specific, concrete references/quotes.

James	Thom	Sara	Helana
Piper	Jennifer (S)	Jessica	Kelly (S)
Derek (S)	Dorothy	Walter	Crystal
Christy	Megan	Leslie (S)	Gina
			Chris (?)

**IMAGES OF AMERICA” COURSE--UNIV. STUDIES--FALL ‘04--PROGRAM
SUPPLEMENT 4 (10/3)**

Assignment of Midterm Paper: Due Monday, 10/25

Three-four pages, typed (ab. 1500 words) (this does not have to be much longer than most of the short papers I received)

1. This assignment is similar to the one for the short paper, but now you have a broader range of materials from which to choose and compare.

2. Review the syllabus (“Course Description,” Working Definitions, Questions...,” and Supplements 1-3 for ideas, questions, terms, and arguments.

3. Read the “Class Reports” on the Blackboard site.

4. Pick up a copy of the “essays of reference” (from the first short paper) in the envelope on my office door (Tower 718).

5. You may continue to work/write using the same approach or angle that you used in the first short paper, as long as you take this paper in a new direction and cover new ground. Consider in particular (see Supplem. 2, #3) comparing and/or contrasting one text/ source/ document/ event/ point of view of one author (or authors from one “national culture”) with another. Also consider applying questions, mutatis mutandis, from Supplem. 3 to materials and presentations on Spain, Latin America, the Caribbean, Chicano, and other “national cultures” or subcultures we are studying.

6. Optional: You may submit a brief 1-page outline for the midterm paper in the following format (due no later than Monday, 10/18):

TITLE

THESIS

I.

A.

1.

a.

Some new terms and observations from recent presentations:

Britain’s “special relationship” with the U.S.; British “reserve” vs. US “emotion”; Britain’s relationship with the U.S. is inseparable from its relationship with Europe.

The “other” Americas; the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny; imperialism, racism, and “scorn”; U.S. representations of Latin America in political cartoons; salsa has replaced ketchup as the most important food product in the U.S.

“Remember the Maine!”-- “Bienvenido, Mister Marshall!” (the U.S. might produce oil, cars, and other desirable products, but it also produces [Protestant] sin!; “They’re not our benefactors, but trading partners, since we can provide them with morality and spirit); Franco; the Coalition for the

War on Iraq. How does Spain “use images of America for self-reflection” and how does America “create images of other countries as foils to America” (see Piper’s “Class Report” on the presentation)?

The Caribbean region (our “backyard” tropical paradise!) (see Dr. Duke’s handout), their ethnic mix, their personalities, revolutions and revolutionaries (Castro, Bishop, Ortega) (“The militia is the people”); Puerto Rico’s nationalists vs. annexationists; the problem of Cuba; Haiti; Marxism and socialism at our back door?

What makes this Chicano literature a representation of America from a “foreign” perspective? How could/would it compare with the perspectives of those Latin-Americans who remain in their native countries? Distance? Familiarity?

Manifest Destiny: Origins? Effects? Is the doctrine still alive and well in some form or another?

Do you see divergent positions and attitudes among Latin-American countries?

What are you learning about “foreign” communities? About recognizing, understanding, and assessing their principles and values?

James Greene’s system of “Valuistics”:

“How is it possible to be hard-core about your convictions, to participate in a true culture of critique while buying into the very culture you critique?... ‘brand camouflage’ visual confrontations, hybrid images of real people in hyperreal forms.... These commodities, then, form a new reality which I try to depict.... Individuals are shown swathed in the brands they’re loyal to, the brands they love.... In order to see, I’m afraid it will require at least a backdoor dialectic.... People like us may be well served by being not only conscious of the consumer decisions they’re making, but also by being self-critical in order to face the contradictions of their existence and escape the fiction of culture, whether it’s a culture of critique or otherwise. This goes for the Wal-Mart set and the Co-Op set alike.... ‘The Brand Loyalty Survey’”

Is “valuistics” an American phenomenon? Does the theory/ system / method/ genre betray or manifest certain American value orientations (or high/low context orientation)?

What about “exclusion” (see Theory Toolbox)?

Any ideas or questions of your own?

**IMAGES OF AMERICA” COURSE--UNIV. STUDIES--FALL ‘04--PROGRAM
SUPPLEMENT 5 (10/27)**

[NB: Change in schedule for week of 11/1-11/5: Wednesday, 11/3=China; Friday, 11/5: Table Ronde]

I. Begin to think about your next short paper, due Monday, 11/15.

For this paper (ab. 800-1000 words) you will write a “short” version of a paper you can expand/develop into a final research paper (ab. 2500 words). While, as always, you will need to focus your thesis, you will also need to demonstrate in this paper that you’ve been actively present and attentive (that you’ve done your homework) throughout the course, meaning, you will need to situate your topic within the broader framework of a variety of ways in which various foreign cultures represent “America.” Consequently, you will need to incorporate references to a variety of texts and materials presented and examined in this class. So the work should have some kind of a comparative component.

And, as always, be sure to establish a critical framework for the subject, and to substantiate your arguments and give concrete examples. (Add “Orientalism” to your portfolio of critical tools.)

PLEASE: Periodically review the syllabus and its supplements for useful questions and critical terms that might help you understand and analyze your topic.

Japan and the U.S. (see Horiguchi’s handout)

1. The “Orient”--->Asia--->Japanese culture and its attitudes toward (and representations of) America. Consider--in concrete, critical terms--the rather enormous leap we’ve taken from Western attitudes / representations/ sensibilities/ (read “orientalism”). Consider the uniqueness of Japan’s history (its break with the past and with the East, for example?) and development within the context of “Asian” culture as a whole. Consider Japan’s postwar relationship with America. And, once again, don’t forget the Cold War and its contribution to the global status and “images” of “America.” Note as well that, unlike most of the national cultures we’ve studied, Japan is an extremely homogeneous culture (non-Japanese, mostly Koreans=less than 1% of pop.!).
2. Devastation-->Occupation--->Democratization--->Americanization? (“America’s Job in Japan”?)
3. Images of Japan in the U.S.--->images of ‘America’ in Japan; another example of “America” as a foil, or surrogate?

Nosaka Akiyuki’s “American Hijiki,” 1967

1. This is **fiction**, of course! Note the narrative structure of the story and the way it presents/ reveals the space, time, and the characters.

What are the two principal time frames for the story?

2. How are both Japan and “America” represented spatially/ as space? What are the specific spaces that are represented?
3. How are they (the national cultures) represented through the characters? Who are the characters, and how are they represented, grouped: actions (professions?), situations (social roles?), words/language, expectations, myths?
4. Kyoto’s interest in the Higginases (“America”)= self-interest (437)? (NB: Supplement #3: F. To what extent can a certain admiration, praise, or respect for “America” be related to a given culture’s (a spokesperson of a given culture?) “self-interest”?)
5. Culture clash?
6. What elements and traits of American culture are represented? (Why and how?) Elements and traits of Japanese culture? (Why and how?)
7. Symbols? Can we speak of systems or constellations of figures (symbols, metaphors)? Whores, prostitutes, pimps, pornography, penises--chewing gum? Food (note the title of the story, and see 454-55)? Hunger?
8. Physical, intellectual, moral comparisons?
9. Is Toshio exaggerating the contrasts between cultures? Obsessing? “[T]his American inside me...the Great American Allergy...” (468).
10. The role of money?
11. (See Supplement 3, L) Anything that relates to the methodological tools/concepts of value orientations? Did these representations help answer the question, **What is culture?**
12. **Orientalism**: How does this story’s “Japan” represent “America” (as a discourse)?

Activity for Friday, 10/29

The following groups will collaboratively produce a (200+-words) response to a selection of these questions. Each group will designate a “secretary” (S) who will write up the response which they will submit to [..?..] at the end of the class. You may respond in the form of a list of comments, but these should contain specific, concrete references/quotes.

James	Thom	Sara	Helana
Krystal	Jennifer	Jessica	Kelly (S)
Derek (S)	Dorothy (S)	Walter	Piper
	Megan	Leslie (S)	Gina

**“IMAGES OF AMERICA”—UNIV. STUDIES--FALL ‘04--SUPPLEMENT 6
(11/11)**

Dogville (Lars von Trier)

I. What is this (foreign, displaced) image of “America”? “Foreign” = Danish nationality of film-maker; no personal experience of U.S.; produced in Sweden using international cast and a “foreign” artistic approach to the subject? “America” as a concept, practice, style?

Can we speak of “American” space, time, characters, language, action, objects, or themes in this film (see below)?

NB: Art (literature, film, theater, etc.): Form determines content!

II. Art form. mix of genres: film, theater, literature/prose; mix of styles: realistic (non-melodramatic, ironic, subdued?) acting, ironic tone of narrator, figurative space,?

III. Structure of story.

A. externally framed by introduction, narration, and coda.

B. movement of the action= beginning, middle, end, plus all the (progressive or regressive) sequences between.

C. structure in terms of the townspeople’s (evolving) attitude/behavior toward Grace (and her “change” in attitude toward them--”change of light”?)

IV. Time. 1) historic time: Depression era (How do we know this?); 2) seasonal time (spring, summer, etc.); 3) scenes/chapters; 4) duration and rhythm of action (pacing)?

V. Narration/Narrator. omniscient; anticipates and explains forthcoming action; insightful (?) commentary (Does this spoil the suspense?); How does he feel about the space and characters? How does his commentary affect our understanding of the story and characters?

VI. Space.

A. Site: small town perched in the mountains (isolation?) (note the “bird’s-eye view” in beginning)

B. Set: schematic design; chalk-designed building/floor/street plan; childlike drawing?; game board?; theatrical?; “design” in the full sense of the word.

C. Interior-exterior: “mountains”/background space; street (“Elm” with no elms!) represents a prominent exterior space (or transitional space between ext/int?); home/store/town hall (church?), converted “home” for Grace; enclosed physical structures? interiors that don’t cover or hide? full and constant exposure of characters and action? anti-intimacy?

D. mimetic (seen) space versus diegetic (unseen, referential) space (which is referred to); the “space beyond” in terms of national space (references to national culture?), orchard, road to town, telephone calls, references to “city” life (Chuck lived there, Vera goes there, Tom refers to it), new penitentiary being built down the road?, etc.

E. How do all these spaces communicate, connect, interact, or compete?

F. How do the characters relate to these spaces? What groupings, behaviors, or functions relate to these spaces? Can we speak of “communal” space(s)?

G. What types of actions relate to what spaces?

VII. Objects. figurines, glass lenses, calling card, posters, apples, gooseberries, cleaning utensils, Tom’s journal, sheets, chains, wheel, machine guns, pistol, books, etc.

A. How do these relate to space, characters, action, time?

B. Are all objects visible? Are some represented or evoked rather than physically present? Why?

VIII. Characters. Stock figures from American heartland? Representative of a “community”? Does the community change or evolve?; Illusion of intimacy? (Note the camera’s portrayal/presentation of characters.) Relative importance of the characters (to the

story, or to the community?) and relations among them; can we group characters according to whether they are insiders or outsiders in the community? (note the interesting identities of the “outsiders”: sheriff/policemen, gangsters)

A. Secondary characters. Chuck, Tom Sr. (hypochondriac dr.), Ben, Jack, Gangsters, Policeman, Jason, Mr. Hensen, Bill Hensen, Godfather (“God”father?), Moses the dog (how does he wind up?); Vera, Ma Ginger, Martha, Liz Hensen, Mrs. Henson, Olivia and her crippled daughter, Vera’s children; diegetic (unseen, referential) characters?

B. Principal characters.

Tom: writer who wants to “illustrate” [what?]; structurally, he’s sort of a mediator (Beatrice?) trying to “negotiate” Grace’s place in the community.

Grace: the “outsider,” fugitive (from what?); truly honest, virtuous?; confronts the self-righteous, denial-stricken, immoral society? Is this account too simplistic? Or not? What could it have to do with “America”?; Who/ What does she represent to the community? Truth? How does the community respond? Stoic? Credible?

Grace and the “God”father: the importance of their relationship to the story and the action; arrogance (hubris); why a “gangster”?; omniscience? forgiveness? hate? accountability? “problem-solving”; revenge--or something other than revenge?;

IX. Action. Daily life; religion (von Trier says he deliberately left out religion) (also, sports, pop culture, politics?); violence? business?; Grace tells the townspeople (except Tom?) the truth about themselves (and the truth about Tom?).

X. Themes.

A. *Mythology* (also a structure?): blend of Greek and Bible mythology? (Grace= martyr/Christ figure?); Grace and father=gods: she escapes Mount Olympus (Europe? Nahh!) (on a mission of “grace”), arrives on “earth” (America? Nahh!) to realize how vile human mortals can be, and the rest is her-story (one that’s not so much about revenge as divine intervention?); stoicism.

B. *Business/commerce/money*: townspeople’s businesses (writing, lens crafters, the “freight industry”--and its “surcharge,” orchards); Grace as both a “commodity” and a merchant who must negotiate a fair exchange (Tom brokers the deal?); hours and pay are rigorously negotiated; Grace enslaved (note the progression from having no “use” for her to the prevention of her escape); the town’s denial of all this.

C. *Sexuality*: Any “good” sex in this story/town? Why not? What about Tom and Grace?

D. *Other possible themes*: frugality/poverty, revenge (?), betrayal, love (not a chance!), race, individualism, community, self-sufficiency, patriotism (what form does this take in this film?), nourishment, labor, servitude, human relations, cultural identity (town, country, etc.), male-female, feminism, masculinity, intellectual analysis (Tom).

XI. Other questions.

A. Can we speak of a certain “illusion” (or illusory attribute) of space, time, action, characters, objects? Is this related to “America”? Illusion of community? Of privacy? Of happiness? Of life? (Next bus to Dogville leaves in....)

B. Why the title “Dogville”?

Your next short paper, which will lead to your final research paper:

***REREAD ALL THE HANDOUTS** (but only if you really want to get an overview of the course--and, if you want to do well on the paper).

****Briefly review/scan the other materials and your notes.**

1. How does this film/story relate to other topics we’ve covered? The Chicano experience (as seen in the literature--and an experience that is a rather unique “foreign” experience). The exotic lure of America, as seen in the German Weimar Republic, German

and Chinese cinema, Japanese literature, German theater (Castorf and the remaking of Streetcar). How, for example, does it relate to the depiction of (and the Japanese relation to) the Higgenses in Nosaka’s “American Hijiki”?

2. How does this “author” (as compared with another/others) “use images of ‘America’ for self-reflection” (Mullins).

3. What do we learn about a “foreign” sense of community through this Dane’s representation of (“American”?) principles and values?

4. What is culture, after all?

5. How would the following authors apply to this story?

Baudrillard: desert-like, solitude (within community), utopian (dystopian?), indifference, un-culture, simulation, (collective) stupidity, a dialectical approach to life?

Ozouf: American feminism on display?

Said/Orientalism: reverse orientalism?

Value orientations that are on display? **High-context** society from a low-context point of view (or vice versa).

Frankfurt School (Adorno and Horkheimer): the “culture industry”? “...the coercive nature of society alienated from itself” (1037); are they referring to this type of film when they write: “The great artists were those who... used style as a way of hardening themselves against the chaotic expression of suffering, a negative truth... [they] have retained a mistrust of style... (1040)

6. Think about comparing one document with another, or one point of view with another. Or, use documents to analyze, elucidate the film.

**“IMAGES OF AMERICA”—UNIV. STUDIES--FALL ‘04--SUPPLEMENT 7
(11/22)**

Student Evaluation of Course and Final Paper

Student Comment Sheet: Suggestions for Reflexion

(Feel free to attach a separate or additional sheet to the “official” sheet)

Considering the “experimental” nature of this course, your thoughtful and thorough comments will help me to reevaluate the course structure, methods, and materials.

Assuming you have done your best to comply with your responsibilities (regular attendance, reading and reviewing materials, participating in discussions, serious consideration of guidelines for written and oral work [especially those appearing in the syllabus and the seven supplements], serious consideration of feedback on your written work, etc.), please provide your frank and honest assessment of the course (structure, methods, materials). In order to provide a more reliable and objective assessment, to the extent possible, you might:

1. Review the course syllabus (the course description/information and the schedule of presentations), the supplements, and any other materials/notes you think are relevant to the evaluation. Did the introductory part of the course (critical tools, including Baudrillard’s America) improve your ability to evaluate the presentations and the readings? If so, why? If not, why not?

2. Think about the presentations by visiting scholars and the materials they provided. Did you find any to be especially appropriate and interesting, or less so?

3. Think about your use of Blackboard, the “Class Reports,” “Discussions,” “Announcements,” and “Assignments.” Did you benefit from this component of the class? How? If not, why not?

4. Think about the work required of you: reading, preparation for and participation in discussions, papers, reports. Too much? Too little? Relevant? Difficult? Appropriate? Stimulating? Any suggestions?

5. Did you feel you benefited from the instructor’s feedback on your papers and in class? Do you feel the expectations for the quality of work were appropriate and/or fair for a 400-level University Studies course? Do you have any suggestions for different (and reasonable) strategies of assessment that you think could help you improve the quality of your work?

Final Paper

1. Read closely and consider seriously all comments/suggestions on your most recent “short” paper; and, based on these, prepare an outline for your final (research) paper. The **outline** is due on the final day of class: **Monday, 11/29**. I will evaluate it and place it in the envelope on my office door (Tower 718) for your retrieval.

2. (*Optional, unless otherwise indicated in my comments on your “short” paper*) Schedule an office visit (see sign-up sheet for Wednesday, 12/1, 3-6 p.m.).

3. If/When you arrive for office visit, please be prepared to explain how you plan to address what the instructor sees as problems with your short paper and his suggestions for improvement. Or, at least be prepared to discuss (or challenge) these.

4. Final paper is due by noon on Monday, 12/6. Late papers, i.e. those received after Wednesday, 12/8, will receive a reduced grade. (I’d be happy to receive your paper earlier!).

Five to seven pages 12 font, double-spaced (ab. 2500 words), plus short “Works Cited.”