MCMA 552
Blaxploitation Films of the 1970s:
Origins, Evolution, & Demise
Spring 2016
Tuesdays 3:00-6:30pm
COMM. 1046

**Professor:** Dr. Novotny Lawrence
**Office:** 1056B Communications
**Office hours:** M 1:30-4:30, R 1:30-4:30, & by appointment
**Office Phone:** 453-6992
**Email:** novotnjl@siu.edu

**Required Texts:** *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*, 4th edition by Donald Bogle, Continuum International Publishing Group.


**Additional readings will be provided.**

**Course Description:** This course is an historical and critical examination of the blaxploitation movement of the 1970s. The course includes, but is not limited to, exploring the factors that led to the emergence of the films, the height of their popularity, and the subsequent demise the movement. In exploring these topics we will discuss blaxploitation’s historical significance in addition to its impact on generic conventions, economics, marketing, exhibition, and critical reception.

**Course Format:** The coursework will consist of lectures, readings, class discussions, and screenings. *Note: Students are expected complete all reading assignments prior to class.*

**Requirements and Grading:** Grades will be based on 5 weekly reaction papers that should be no more than 2 double-spaced pages in length. Papers should include specific references from
the readings, connecting the author’s research to the class concepts. The total point value of the papers is 50 points.

There will be one 25-point quiz based on lectures, class discussions, reading assignments, and screenings. Note: I will NOT administer make-up quizzes under any circumstances.

Midterm Assignment: Your midterm project is to produce a 5-8 page literature review that will serve as the foundation for your final paper. As you work to complete this assignment keep in mind that the goal of the literature review is to familiarize yourself with pertinent scholarly discourse surrounding your topic. However, it goes beyond summarizing a book chapter, journal article, or book. Rather, in the literature review you should show evidence that you know the field and position yourself within it, showing which scholars you agree or disagree with and why—not just citing sources that support your argument. This assignment is worth 50 points.

There will be a final research paper worth 100 points. This assignment will be discussed in greater detail later in the semester.

Finally, students will also be evaluated on in-class participation. It is simply not enough to show-up to class; students must bring their voices and be prepared to use them. Students will be required to express and support their opinions using information from the readings as well as the filmic language taught in the course. Participation is worth 25 points.

DO NOT ASK FOR EXTRA CREDIT! In the event that extra credit is given it will be assigned to the entire class at the discretion of the instructor.

The total number of points for the course is 250. Grades will be assigned as follows:

90% or more of total points: “A”
80% - 89%: “B”
70% - 79%: “C”
60% - 69%: “D”
59% or below: “F”

Course Policies: Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each class session. Students are required to arrive on time as latecomers disturb the class. More than 1 unexcused absence will result in a 10% decrease of your final grade for EACH additional absence. Excessive tardiness will also adversely affect your grade. If you arrive to class more than 5 minutes late you will be marked absent for that class session. Arriving to class tardy 2 times will result in a charged absence. Late arrivals may not sign the attendance sheet until the end of class. If you leave class early or return late from breaks your name will be removed from the attendance sheet. Make certain that you sign the attendance sheet. It is too late to receive credit for attendance at any time after a class session. Forging another student’s signature on the attendance sheet will result in penalties ranging from an automatic “F” in the course to expulsion from the University.

Students will remain attentive during lectures, class discussions, and screenings and refrain from talking or other disruptive behavior. I reserve the right to cancel your attendance for any
day that you are talking in class or rude to either me or to your classmates. Furthermore, although some people often think of film screenings as social events, you will be working during screenings as in a film class they are important components of the lectures. Therefore, behaviors that demonstrate a lack of engagement in the films being shown such as talking, sleeping, reading the newspaper, working on assignments for another class, and/or leaving class for extended periods of time during movie screenings will result in a charged absence.

**Mobile Phone Policy:** It is extremely important that students are engaged during every phase of the class. With that in mind, turn all mobile devices including phones, tablets, etc., off before entering the classroom. Using such devices during class for surfing the web, texting, tweeting, checking Facebook, Instagram, or other activities is strictly prohibited and will result in the cancellation of the student’s attendance for that class session. **Moreover, if any student violates the mobile device policy then I will administer a pop quiz to the entire class on the subject of my choice.** Any repeat (more than 1 act of non-compliance) violators of the mobile phone policy must immediately leave the class and will not be allowed to return until they have met with me personally. Failure to comply with the mobile phone policy again after that meeting will result in permanent dismissal from the class.

Additionally, all notes must be taken by hand. Laptop computers, word processors, or other devices are not to be used unless a student provides documented proof of extenuating circumstances.

Finally, do not begin to pack your belongings before class has been dismissed as this can also be disruptive to the instructor and to your classmates.

**Academic dishonesty** (cheating) will not be tolerated under any circumstances. The College of Mass Communication and Media Arts prohibit the use of someone else’s work. Do not copy another person’s work/quiz/exam. Any student caught engaging in academic dishonesty is subject to penalties set forth by the College of Mass Communication and Media Arts in accordance with SIU.

**Students with disabilities:** Any student with a disability that prevents the full participation in the course should please contact me as soon as possible to discuss making the necessary accommodations to enable full participation in the course.

**Building Emergency Response Protocols for Syllabus:**

**University’s Emergency Procedure Clause:**
Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on BERT’s website at [www bert siu edu](http://www.bert.siu.edu), Department of Public Safety’s website [www dps siu edu](http://www.dps.siu.edu) (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.
Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. **It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency.** The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

**Students With a Disability:**
Instructors and students in the class will work together as a team to assist students with a disability safely out of the building. Students with a disability will stay with the instructor and communicate with the instructor what is the safest way to assist them.

**Tornado:**
During the spring semester we have a *Storm Drill*.

Pick up your belongings and your instructor will lead you to a safe area of the basement. No one will be allowed to stay upstairs. Stay away from windows. The drill should not last more than 10 minutes. You must stay with your instructor so he/she can take roll. Students need to be **quiet in the basement** as the BERT members are listening to emergency instructions on handheld radios and cannot hear well in the basement.

**Fire:**
During the fall semester we have a *Fire Drill*.

Pick up your belongings and your instructor will lead you to either the North or South parking lot depending on what part of the building your class is in. You must stay with your instructor so he/she can take roll. As soon as the building is all clear, you will be allowed to return to class.

**These drills are to train instructors and the Building Emergency Response Team to get everyone to a safe place during an emergency.**

**Bomb Threat:**
If someone calls in a bomb threat, class will be suspended and students will be asked to pick up their belongings, evacuate the building and leave the premises. Do not leave anything that is yours behind. We will not allow anyone back into the building until the police and bomb squad give us an all clear. **DO NOT USE YOUR CELL PHONES.** Some bombs are triggered by a cell phone signal.

**Shooter in the Building:**
If it is safe to leave, move to a safe area far from the building away from where the shooter is located. If anyone has any information about the shooter, please contact the police after they have gone someplace safe.

If it is not safe to leave, go into a room, lock the door and turn out the lights. Everyone should spread out and not huddle together as a group. Don’t stand in front of the door or in line of fire with the door. Students’ chair and desks should be piled in front of the glass and door as a barricade and the teacher’s desk, podium and anything moveable can be pushed against the door. This is intended to slow down any attempts to enter the classroom. If it looks like the shooter is...
persistent and able to enter, make a lot of noise and have the students use everything in their
backpacks to throw at the shooter to distract him.

Silence all cell phones after one person in the room calls the police and informs them of their
location and how many people are in the room. Be quiet and wait for the police to arrive. The
police are looking for one or more shooters, and they have no way of knowing if the shooter is in
the room people are hiding in. For this reason, when the police enter the room, no one should
have anything in his/her hands and each person MUST raise his/her hands above his/her head.

Earthquake:
In the event of an earthquake, you are advised to take cover quickly under heavy furniture or
crouch near an interior wall or corner and cover your head to avoid falling debris. Outside the
building are trees and power lines and debris from the building itself that you will need to stay
away from. In the building, large open areas like auditoriums are the most dangerous. Do not
try to escape on a stairway or elevator. Do not hide under a stairway. We do not recommend
that you stand in a doorway because the door could shut from the vibrations and crush your
fingers trapping you there.

Rave Mobile Safety Alert System:
We recommend that you sign up for the Rave Mobile Safety Alert System. It is a new system
that replaces the WENS system to alert you through emergency text messages on your cell phone
and emails for emergencies on campus, weather reports and emergency school closures. You
have to sign up. If you were signed up for WENS it does not roll over. You have to sign up for
Rave Mobile Safety Alert System. Go to Saluki Net, go to my records tab, under SIUC Personal
Records, click on View My SIUC Student Records, Under Main Menu click on Personal
Information, click on View and Update Addresses and Phones, in the middle of the page click
[Update Addresses and Phones], under phones click Primary: This will take you to Update
Addresses and Phones – Update/Insert, under primary phone number for this address put in your
cell phone and submit. For more information, visit dps.siu.edu, contact SalukiTech at 453-5155
or salukitech@siu.edu.

CPR/Defibrillator and First Aid Class:
If you would like to take a CPR/Defibrillator and/or First Aid class, contact LaVon Donley-
Cornett, lavong@siu.edu or call 453-7473.

Women's Self Defense Classes are offered to female students faculty and staff by the
Department of SIU Public Safety. For more information contact Officer Mary Stark
marys@dps.siu.edu.
Course Outline (Tentative and subject to change)

Week 1 Jan. 19
Course Introduction
Lecture: The History of Stereotyping in Motion Pictures
Screening: * Classified X* (Mark Daniels, 1998)

Week 2 Jan. 26
Readings: *Toms* chpts. 1, 2, & 3, *Soul Searching* Introduction
Lecture: Cinema and Civil Rights
Screening: *Eyes on the Prize*: “Awakenings” (Henry Hampton, 1987)

Week 3 Feb. 2
Readings: *Toms* chpts. 5 & 6, *Equality* chapt. 1, *Soul Searching* chapt. 1
Lecture: Precursors to Blaxploitation
Screening: *In the Heat of the Night* (Norman Jewison, 1967)

Week 4 Feb. 9 Quiz 1
Reading: *Equality* chpts. 2, 3, 4, *Soul Searching* chapt. 2
Lecture: The Emergence of Blaxploitation Cinema
Screening: *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (Ossie Davis, 1970)

Week 5 Feb. 16
Reading: “The Detective Film as Genre” (pdf), *Toms* chapt. 7, *Equality* chapt. 5 & 6, *Soul Searching* chapt. 4
Lecture: Independent Blaxploitation
Screening: *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song* (Melvin Van Peebles, 1971)

Week 6 Feb. 23
Reading: *Equality* chapt. 7, *Spectacular Blackness* Introduction & chapt. 1, “What the Battle was About: Interviews with Melvin and Mario Van Peebles” (pdf)
Lecture: Hollywood Takes Notice
Screening: *Shaft* (Gordon Parks, Sr., 1971)

Week 7 Mar. 1 Review of Literature Due
Reading: none
Lecture: The Aftermath of *Shaft*: Critical Reception, Sequels, and Reimaginings
Screening: *Shaft* (Jon Singleton, 2000)

Mar. 8 NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Week 8 Mar. 15
Reading: *Toms*, pgs. 231-239, *Spectacular Blackness* chpts. 2 & 3
Lecture: The Drug Dealer as Hero
Screening: *Superfly* (Gordon Parks, Jr., 1972)
Week 9 Mar. 22
Reading: *Toms*, pgs. 239-251, *Spectacular Blackness* chapt. 4
Lecture: Blaxploitation Gets Horrifying!
Screening: *Blacula* (William Crain, 1972)

Week 10 Mar. 29
Readings: “Deadlier than Dracula!”: *Blacula* the Horror Genre (pdf), *Spectacular Blackness* 5 & conclusion
Lecture: Interlude: The Revolution was NOT Televised
Screening: *The Spook Who Sat by the Door* (Ivan Dixon, 1973)

Week 11 Apr. 5
Readings: “Subverting the System: The Politics and Production of *The Spook Who Sat by the Door*” (pdf)
Lecture: Revisions in Black: The Pimp as New Gangster Hero
Screening: *The Mack* (Michael Campus, 1973)

Week 12 Apr. 12
Reading: “Now that You’ve Seen the Rest... Make Way for the Biggest and the Best!”: *The Mack* and the Gangster Genre (pdf), *African American Actresses* Introduction & chaps. 1 & 2
Lecture: Bring on the Heroines!
Screening: *Coffy* (Jack Hill, 1973)

Week 13 Apr. 19
Reading: *Toms*, pgs. 251 -256, *Women of Blaxploitation* chapt. 1 & 2, “She’s a simulatin’, fascinatin’, assassinatin’, chick!: Pam Grier as Star text” (pdf)
Lecture: A New Heroine Emerges
Screening: *Cleopatra Jones* (Jack Starrett, 1973)

Week 14 Apr. 26
Reading: *Women of Blaxploitation* chapt. 3 & 4
Lecture: The Trend Continues
Screening: *Foxy Brown* (Jack Hill, 1974)

Week 15 May 3
Reading: *Women of Blaxploitation* chapt. 7 & 8
Lecture: The Demise of Blaxploitation
Screening: TBD

Week 16 FINAL PAPER DUE Thursday May 12th by 4:30pm
IMPORTANT DATES
Semester Class Begins: 01/19/2016
Last day to add a class (without instructor permission): 01/24/2016
Last day to withdraw completely and receive a 100% refund: 01/31/2016
Last day to drop a course using SalukiNet: 04/03/2016
Last day to file diploma application (for name to appear in Commencement program): 02/12/2016
Final examinations: 05/09-05/13/2016

Note: For outreach, internet, and short course drop/refund dates, visit Registrar's Academic web page: http://registrar.siu.edu/

SPRING SEMESTER HOLIDAYS
Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday Holiday 01/18/2016
Spring Break 03/12-03/20/2016

WITHDRAWAL POLICY—Undergraduate only
Students who officially register for a session may not withdraw merely by the stopping of attendance. An official withdrawal form needs to be initiated by the student and processed by the University. For the proper procedures to follow when dropping courses and when withdrawing from the University, please visit: http://registrar.siu.edu/catalog/undergraduatescatalog.html

INCOMPLETE POLICY—Undergraduate only
An INC is assigned when, for reasons beyond their control, students engaged in passing work are unable to complete all class assignments. An INC must be changed to a completed grade within one semester following the term in which the course was taken, or graduation, whichever occurs first. Should the student fail to complete the course within the period designated, that is, by no later than the end of the semester following the term in which the course was taken, or graduation, whichever occurs first, the incomplete will be converted to a grade of F and the grade will be computed in the student's grade point average. For more information please visit: http://registrar.siu.edu/grades/incomplete.html

REPEAT POLICY
An undergraduate student may, for the purpose of raising a grade, enroll in a course for credit no more than two times (two total enrollments) unless otherwise noted in the course description. For students receiving a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F, the course repetition must occur at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Only the most recent (last) grade will be calculated in the overall GPA and count toward hours earned. See full policy at: http://registrar.siu.edu/catalog/undergraduatescatalog.html

GRADUATE POLICIES
Graduate policies often vary from Undergraduate policies. To view the applicable policies for graduate students, please visit: http://gradschool.siu.edu/about-us/grad-catalog/index.html

DISABILITY POLICY
Disability Support Services provides the required academic and programmatic support services to students with permanent and temporary disabilities. DSS provides centralized coordination and referral services. To utilize DSS services, students must come to the DSS to open cases. The process involves interviews, reviews of student-supplied documentation, and completion of Disability Accommodation Agreements. For more information visit http://disabilityservices.siu.edu/

PLAGIARISM
Student Conduct Code: http://srp.siu.edu/student_conduct_code/
Guidelines for Faculty: http://pcssa.siu.edu_common_documents/Plagiarism/Guidelines%20for%20Faculty.pdf
Morris Library Hours: http://library.siu.edu/library/

SAFETY AWARENESS FACTS AND EDUCATION
Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: http://safe.siu.edu

SALUKI CARES
The purpose of Saluki Cares is to develop, facilitate, and coordinate a university-wide program of care and support for students in any type of distress—physical, emotional, financial, or personal. By working closely with faculty, staff, students, and their families, SIU will continue to display a culture of care and demonstrate to our students and their families that these are an important part of the community. For more information, visit: (618) 453-5714, or salukicares@siu.edu, http://salukicares.siu.edu/index.html

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
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INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE
SIU contains people from all walks of life, from many different cultures and sub-cultures, and representing all states of society, nationalities, ethnicities, lifestyles, and affiliations. Learning from and working with people who differ is an important part of education as well as an essential preparation for any career. For more information please visit: http://www.inclusiveexcellence.siu.edu/

LEARNING AND SUPPORT SERVICES
Help is within reach. Learning support services offers free tutoring on campus and math labs. To find more information please visit the Center for Learning and Support Services website: Tutoring: http://tutoring.siu.edu/
Math Labs: http://math.siu.edu/courses/course-help.php

WRITING CENTER
The Writing Center offers free tutoring services to all SIU students and faculty. To find a Center or Schedule an appointment please visit http://write.siu.edu/

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION & EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
Our office’s main focus is to ensure that the university complies with federal and state equal opportunity policies and handles reporting and investigating of discrimination cases. For more information visit: http://diversity.siu.edu/#

Additional Resources Available:
SALUKINET: https://salukinet.siu.edu/op/home/displaylogin
ADVISEMENT: http://advisement.siu.edu/
PROVOST & VICE CHANCELLOR: http://provost.siu.edu/
SIU ONLINE: http://online.siu.edu/

Spring 2016 R O' Bourke