RTD 489
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
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Additional required readings will be distributed during the semester.

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 of 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: Each week students are required to submit 4 questions (with the answers) in the format of their choice—true/false, multiple choice, short answer—from the weekly readings. The questions should be typed and are due at the beginning of each class. I will not accept handwritten or late questions. Importantly, I will select midterm and final exam questions from the questions that students submit, which means that this is an opportunity for you to take ownership over important class content. Questions must be well thought out and appropriately challenging. Students will not earn credit for submitting sub-par questions. This semester-long assignment is worth 50 points.
There will be 2 quizzes based on lectures, class discussions, reading assignments, and screenings. The total point value of the scheduled quizzes is 50 points. Additional quizzes may be administered at my discretion. **Note: Some quizzes may be unannounced. I will NOT administer make-up quizzes under any circumstances.**

There will be a midterm examination worth 100 points and a cumulative final exam worth 150 points. **Note:** Make up exams will only be given under extenuating circumstances such as **severe illness, death in family, and university recognized religious holidays.** Students will be asked to provide documentation to support the circumstances. A dentist appointment, medical check-up, work, tickets to a concert, plane/train tickets home, etc… are not acceptable reasons to miss an exam. These things are controllable and are thus, inexcusable.

There will be one short writing assignment worth 25 points.

There will be one research paper worth 100 points. The paper topic will be assigned 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 commentary using information from the lectures, readings, and screenings 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 500. 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 film 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, Department of Public Safety’s website 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' chairs and desks should be piled in front of the glass and door as a barricade and the teacher's desk, podium and anything movable 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: A History of African American Stereotyping in Motion Pictures
Screening: *Classified X* (Mark Daniels, 1998)

Week 2 Jan. 26
Readings: *Toms* chaps. 1, 2, & 3
Lecture: Civil Rights, Hidden Histories, and Cinema
Screening: *Eyes on the Prize: "Awakenings"* (Henry Hampton, 1987)

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

Week 4 Feb. 9 Quiz 1
Reading: *Toms* chapt. 7, *Equality* chaps. 2, 3, 4
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), *Equality* chaps. 5 & 6
Lecture: Independent Blaxploitation
Screening: *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song* (Melvin Van Peebles, 1971)

Week 6 Feb. 23 PAPER ASSIGNMENT
Reading: *Equality* chapt. 7
Lecture: Hollywood Takes Notice
Screening: *Shaft* (Gordon Parks, Sr., 1971)

Week 7 Mar. 1 Exam 1-covers readings, lectures, discussions, & screenings
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, *Equality* chapt. 8
Lecture: The Drug Dealer as Anti-Hero
Screening: *Superfly* (Gordon Parks, Jr., 1972)
Week 9 Mar. 22
Reading: *Toms*, pgs. 239-251
Lecture: Blaxploitation Gets Horrifying!
Screening: *Blacula* (William Crain, 1972)

Week 10 Mar. 29
Readings: “Deadlier than Dracula!”: *Blacula and the Horror Genre* (pdf)
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 Quiz 2
Reading: “Now that You’ve Seen the Rest... Make Way for the Biggest and the Best!”: *The Mack and the Gangster Genre* (pdf)
Lecture: Bring on the Heroines!
Screening: *Coffy* (Jack Hill, 1973)

Week 13 Apr. 19
Reading: *Women of Blaxploitation* chapt. 1 & 2, *Toms*, pgs. 251 -256
Lecture: A New Heroine Emerges
Screening: *Cleopatra Jones* (Jack Starrett, 1973)

Week 14 Apr. 26 PAPER DUE!!!
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 Examination-cumulative, Thursday May 12th 2:45pm-4:45pm, 1046 COMM.
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.si.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 they are an important part of the community. For Information on Saluki Cares: (618) 453-5714, or suicares@siu.edu.

http://salukicares.siu.edu/index.html

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
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INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE
SIU admits people from all walks of life, from many different cultures and sub-cultures, and representing all strata of society, nationalities, ethnicities, lifestyles, and affiliations. Learning and working with people who differ is an important part of education as well as 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 Lab: http://math.siu.edu/courses/courses-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 equity 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/ep/home/displaylogin
ADVISMENT: http://advisement.siu.edu/
PROVOST & VICE CHANCELLOR: http://pvca.siu.edu/
SIU ONLINE: http://online.siu.edu/