



**XIDS 2002 (First-Year Seminar)
WDYKA Identity through American Cinema**

Days and Times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:50-9:40 a.m.

Meeting Place: Humanities 208

Instructor: Duane Theobald	E-mail: dtheobal@westga.edu **Please use this email address for official course communication (rather than Course Den).**
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Office Hours: By appointment only.	

Our Course Description:

Have you ever watched a film and found that it speaks to you? Filmmakers often create movies that allow viewers to learn more about who they are through the experiences of others. In this seminar, we will examine what it means to construct identity & how we craft our identities—initially through readings that incorporate different disciplines & approaches. Then, through a broad range of films (such as *The Godfather*, *Boyz n the Hood*, and *Lady Bird*), we'll consider how who we are can be found in American cinema and why that matters.

Description for XIDS 2002 Course (in general):

XIDS 2002 is a course designed to help students get excited about learning at West Georgia. In addition, it is our hope that this course helps you succeed academically as well as personally and socially during this semester and beyond. The fundamental focus of the class is to provide an understanding of the basic structure of critical thinking and of academic disciplines in order to increase learning in the university classroom. Students are required to attend class and to interact with their instructors and classmates. While students must take responsibility for their own learning, the course attempts to support and enhance that responsibility by making the class a learning community within the University.

Course Objectives

- adapt written and oral communication to specific rhetorical purposes and audiences.
- recognize and begin to implement the skills necessary to become life-long, active learners through the exploration of an academic topic that focuses on a contemporary and/or enduring topic, question, or problem.
- identify, evaluate, and use information, language, or technology appropriate to a specific purpose.

Text, Readings and Instructional Resources

- A. Assigned Films (see Course Schedule below)
- B. *The Navigator: Your Guide West* (reference only!)
- C. Other readings as assigned (via CourseDen and in-class)

Expectations, Evaluation Procedures, and Grading Policy

Expectations: You are expected to arrive *on-time* to each class meeting having watched the assigned film, read assigned readings, and be prepared to actively participate in class activities and discussions. If you miss class regularly and/or are late, you are likely to miss important information and in-class graded assignments (which cannot be made up).

Screening Policy: This is a film-focused course, so the viewings are as important as the readings. No viewing listed on the syllabus is optional, though I may offer other suggested viewings throughout the semester. For these reasons, you will likely need Netflix, Hulu+, etc. You may also access these films through other means. Group screenings are a great way to experience films, so consider setting these up in the library or in your own dorms or homes. Remember: films are our primary sources, so take good notes. I strongly recommend viewing films more than once, whenever possible.

Content Advisory: Art and entertainment are filled with the many complicated elements of human life. This means that many films contain violent and sexual content, nudity, all manner of potentially offensive themes, and profanity. You should be aware that your continued enrollment in this course requires that you consume such content with maturity and a scholarly perspective. No viewing assignment will be waived on the basis of moral objection.

Assessment — Course assignments will be weighted as follows:

Assignment	Percentage of Overall Grade
Attendance & Daily Assignments (includes Quizzes, In-Class Writings & Activities, etc.)	30%
FYS Wolf Experience	15%
One-on-One Meeting	10%
Reading/Viewing Journals	20%
Final Podcast Project	25%
Total	100%

Assignments:

Attendance & Daily Assignments: This should be the easiest portion of your grade to earn. First, show-up to class and do so on-time. Do note that excessive tardiness and/or absences will negatively affect your grade. Note that you'll receive two (2) attendance grades—one at midterm and one at the end of the semester.

Daily assignments are comprised of quizzes, homework, & in-class writings and activities we complete during the course of the class. Always do your best to complete all assignments and follow instructions; however, do recognize that there will be quite a few of these grades taken. Doing poorly on one will not devastate your grade. Not showing-up to class regularly and missing several daily grades, however, will lower your grade here.

FYS Wolf Experience: This is an assignment that ALL students enrolled in a first-year seminar are completing throughout the semester. See the instructions for this ongoing assignment in CourseDen & do let me know if you have questions at any point throughout the semester.

One-on-One Meeting: You will be required to schedule a one-on-one meeting with me during the course of the semester. This meeting will need to be held during the scheduled week for one-on-ones (located in the “Course Schedule” below). You are responsible for reaching out and scheduling the one-on-one meeting with me and can do so by emailing me (dtheobal@westga.edu).

Reading/Viewing Journals: As you read articles & watch films in this class, you’ll be tasked with keeping notes about what you read/view, your reactions to said reading and/or film, and how you’re connecting everything from this class to your own identity and experiences. You’ll do this for everything you read & every film you watch, and journals will be collected twice during the semester (see “Course Schedule” for due dates). Also, see CourseDen for specific instructions for journaling.

Final Podcast Project: This will serve as the culminating assignment for the semester. What you’re being asked to do is consider everything you’ve learned & done this semester & put it into action. You’ll choose one film (NOT one we’ve viewed for class) and craft a podcast that examines how identity is presented in the film, why it is presented in such a way (provide textual examples), and if the film is or is not applicable to viewers today. Essentially, consider why the film would or would not help shape an individual’s identity.

***Prior to crafting the podcast, you’ll turn-in a **one-paragraph proposal** that outlines what film you’ve chosen, how you’ll be tackling the subject of identity within said film, and what your overall goal will be through examining identity in the film. This proposal will serve as a “snapshot” for you and me of what you’ll ultimately present to me. (Note: This will also be the place where you’ll propose a time length and other technical details).*

Grading Scale

A = 90 - 100

B = 80 - 89.5

C = 70 - 79.5

D = 60 - 69.5

F = BELOW 60

Evaluation of Assignments – All in-class assignments will be assessed on three basic criteria:

- 1) **Successful Completion:** I will look to see that you have done the work that was assigned and that you answered all aspects of the assignment.
- 2) **Thoughtful Consideration:** I will read & examine your submission to determine whether you took the assignment seriously and applied critical thinking and logical reasoning to it.
- 3) **Professionalism:** I will look to see whether you proofread your work, took the assignment seriously, and handed it in on time.

****Note: Reading/Viewing Journals & your Final Podcast Project will be graded with an assignment-specific rubric.****

Extra Credit

Extra credit will be offered at the discretion of the instructor. These opportunities to earn bonus points will be offered at various points in the semester to the class as a whole. The instructor will not make special arrangements for individuals to earn bonus points.

Punctuality and Consideration for Others – Like most instructors, I expect you to participate professionally in this course, which means considering the effect that your behavior will have on your classmates, presenters, and other people in the UWG community.

- Please come to class on time, and do not leave early. If you must come to class late, enter as quietly as possible to avoid disrupting class. Be aware that if tardiness persists, points will be deducted from your “Attendance” grade at the discretion of the instructor. However, a discussion between you and I will occur prior to any action being taken.
- Turn off or silence cell phones, and do not use them in class.
- Please be sensitive of the perspectives of your classmates. Vigorous discussions about relevant, contemporary issues may arise; when this happens, I expect you to show respect to one another and not belittle the opinions of others. I completely recognize that you may disagree with me and with one another, but please do so in a respectful manner.
- Turn in assignments on time. As a general rule, late assignments result in the deduction of one letter grade per day; therefore, after an assignment is ten (10) days late, there is no need to turn in the assignment. I do understand, however, that life happens. In this case, simply communicate with me, and we’ll work something out.

Academic Honesty Policy— At UWG, we take academic honesty very seriously. Plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the use of someone else’s ideas or words as your own. This definition includes copying another student’s exam or assignment, as well as using material from a book, article or internet site without acknowledging the source. If you plagiarize any part of an assignment for this course, you will receive a zero for the entire assignment, and disciplinary action may be taken.

Special Needs – If you have any special needs associated with a disability, please make me aware so we may make the necessary accommodations that will allow you to be successful in the course.

Course Schedule – Here is a schedule of topics, along with assigned films and/or readings. It is an accurate projection of the course at the time of printing. However, it is sometimes necessary to make changes in course content based on student needs, time constraints, or other factors. I will update this schedule as needed throughout the term, so come to class and be attentive. You will be responsible for any changes announced in advance.

Course Schedule

Schedule:

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Assignments Due
1 – 8/13, 8/15 Introduction	No class	Introductions & Syllabus, Course Expectations, etc.	None
2 – 8/20, 8/22 What is Identity?	Discussion: What is Identity? How do we define it? **In-Class Activity & Writing	Discussion cont’d: What is Identity— spec. in Film?	W: Introduction Assignment

3 – 8/27, 8/29 Importance of Notetaking	Taking Notes: Both for Written Work & Film **In-Class How-to	Let's Practice Notetaking: In-Class Viewing of <i>Inner Workings</i>	None
4 – 9/3, 9/5 Identity Through Environments (Introduction)	No class (Labor Day)	Identity Through Environments (Intro. Discussion & Reading)	W: <i>Boyz n the Hood</i> article (see CourseDen); Journal entry (for reading)
5 – 9/10, 9/12 Identity Through Environments: <i>Boyz n the Hood</i>	<i>Boyz n the Hood</i> (First Reactions, Open Discussion)	<i>Boyz n the Hood</i> (Scene Analysis)	M: Journal entry (for film viewing)
6 – 9/17, 9/19 Identity Through Environments: <i>Taxi Driver</i>	<i>Taxi Driver</i> (First Reactions, Open Discussion)	<i>Taxi Driver</i> (Scene Analysis)	M: Journal entry (for film viewing) **Also, be working on FYS Wolf Experience**
7 – 9/24, 9/26 Identity Through Environments: <i>The Shining</i>	Discussion of <i>The Shining</i> article & First Reactions, Open Discussion	<i>The Shining</i> (Scene Analysis)	M: <i>The Shining</i> article & corresponding Journal entry W: Journal entry (for film viewing)
8 – 10/1, 10/3 Identity Through Environments: <i>Ex Machina</i>	<i>Ex Machina</i> (First Reactions, Open Discussion)	<i>Ex Machina</i> (Scene Analysis)	M: Journal entry (for film viewing)
9 – 10/8, 10/10 Campus Resources	Come to class & learn about Campus Resources!	No class (DT at IWCA Conference)	M & W: Sign-up for One-on-One Meeting
10 – 10/15, 10/17 One-on-One Meetings	No class (One-on-One Meetings)	No class (One-on-One Meetings)	**Turn-in Reading/Viewing Journals during meeting! ** **Spend this time watching <i>The Godfather</i> for next week** **Continue working on FYS Wolf Experience**

11 – 10/22, 10/24 Identity Through Family/Friends: <i>The Godfather</i>	Discussion of <i>The Godfather</i> reading & First Reactions, Open Discussion	<i>The Godfather</i> (Scene Analysis)	M: <i>The Godfather</i> reading W: Journal entry (for film viewing)
12 – 10/29, 10/31 Identity Through Family/Friends: <i>Halloween</i>	<i>Halloween</i> (First Reactions, Open Discussion)	<i>Halloween</i> (Scene Analysis)	M: Journal entry (for film viewing)
13 – 11/5, 11/7 Identity in Transition: <i>Lady Bird</i>	Discussion of <i>Lady Bird</i> articles & First Reactions, Open Discussion	<i>Lady Bird</i> (Scene Analysis) & Final Podcast Project Guidelines	M: <i>Lady Bird</i> article (choose one) & corresponding Journal entry W: Journal entry (for film viewing)
14 – 11/12, 11/14 Identity in Transition: <i>The Spectacular Now</i>	<i>The Spectacular Now</i> (First Reactions, Open Discussion)	<i>The Spectacular Now</i> (Scene Analysis)	M: Journal entry (for film viewing) W: Proposal (for Podcast Project) due by 11:59 p.m. (to CourseDen)
15 – 11/19, 11/21 Thanksgiving Break	No class	No class	**Be thinking about the Final Podcast Project!** **Remember to watch <i>Tangerine</i> for week we return from break!**
16 – 11/26, 11/28 Identity in Transition: <i>Tangerine</i>	<i>Tangerine</i> (First Reactions, Open Discussion)	<i>Tangerine</i> (Scene Analysis)	M: Journal entry (for film viewing)
17 – 12/3, 12/5 Wrapping-Up & Course Evaluations	Semester Wrap-Up: “What Have You Learned?” Discussion/Sharing; Course Evaluations	No class, but Optional One-on-One meetings (for Final Podcast Project) available—email me to set one up!	M: <u>Turn-in Reading/Viewing Journals!</u>
Finals Week 12/10-12/14	No class, but Optional One-on-One meetings (for Final Podcast Project) available—email me to set one up!	Final Podcast Project due **Turn-in CourseDen drop-box by 12 p.m.**	Final Podcast Project due