

## II. Bloodthirsty Indian Zombies in Space: Native Americans in Sci-Fi and Horror Film

### A. Broad-Based (with prospective movies)

- Representations of Indians in Film (Day 1)
- Horror of the Fifties (Day 2-4)
  - Riders of the Whistling Skull, 1937, 0:58:00
  - Four Skulls Of Jonathan Drake, The 1959 1:13:02
  - Bride of the Gorilla 1951 1:10:00
  - Mesa of the Lost Women 1953 1:10:00
- Space in the Sixties (Day 5-7)
  - The Phantom Planet 1961 1:21:59
  - Invasion Of The Star Creatures 1963 1:10:00
  - Planet Outlaws 1953 1:08:00
  - The Manitou 1978 1:44:00
- Indians Spaced-Out in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Day 8-10)
  - Cowboys and Aliens 2011 1:59:00
  - Avatar 2009 2:29:00

B. Description of Course: Students will view a series of movies within the Sci-fi and Horror genres that incorporate American Indians into their plots. During the mid-Twentieth century, both genres used Indian characters as plot devices. Often these Indian characters were cast in the noble sage-bloodthirsty savage dichotomy. Viewed as expressions of race relations during the Civil Rights era, students will see the changes in and perpetuation of Indian stereotypes from 1950 till the present. After identifying the problems in the selected six films, students will discuss the larger social repercussions of these representations in the public consciousness of American Indians.

### C. Purpose/Intended Goals:

1. Examine stereotypes of American Indians in film through the 20th Century.
2. Discuss the uses of Indians within sci-fi-horror movie plots.
3. Identify positive Indian characters, plots, and themes for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

D. Student Product: Students will create a proposal for a sci-fi or horror movie that involves American Indians in a more positive and realistic way. They will outline characters, settings and themes in the film and create a poster for the movie. This will be presented to the class and the top two in each class will be combined into a short video for presentation at the showcase.

E. Advertisement: Building houses on Indian burials grounds is a recipe for hauntings, mass murders, zombies or at least hereditary curses on hapless non-Indians. But there are also Indians in space and they frequently pose the same deadly and irrational obstacles to unaware sci-fi heroes. On the flip-side, these same indigenous people of far-flung planets are often there to remind audiences of their obligations to save their own planet. All of these movie tropes are found deeply embedded in Sci-Fi and Horror movies throughout the history of cinema. With a steady supply of buttered popcorn and a critic's eye come watch the curious adventures of American Indians as they fill the imaginations of Hollywood screenwriters and audience in Space and on Earth.

### F. Tentative Literature List:

- Kilpatrick, Neva J. *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- Bataille, Gretchen M., and Charles L. P. Silet. *The Pretend Indians: images of native Americans in the movies*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1980.
- Aleiss, Angela. *Making the white man's Indian: Native Americans and Hollywood movies*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2005.
- Price, John A. The Stereotyping of North American Indians in Motion Pictures. *Ethnohistory*, 20, No. 2 (Spring, 1973):153-171.

## **Teaching Projects**

### **I. News Segments**

In four groups, students will develop scripts to air on a news broadcast as if they were reporting for the first time about the events of the Red Power and American Indian Movement. Events could include the take over at Alcatraz, Wounded Knee and various sites. Peaceful events will also be reported as well. After researching the details of the event and the contemporaneous news coverage of the event, students will write their dialogue, edit it down to a 5 minute segment, and practice presentation. Using a video camera and classroom projector, the students will record their segments for presentation at the showcase.

### **II. Movie Proposals**

As students watch the collection of movies from the Broad-based course, they will discuss the tropes and stereotypes of Indians and pick a genre to write a movie proposal incorporating Indian characters in more realistic and positive ways. They (possibly in small groups 2-3) will create an annotated list of characters, settings, and a rough outline of the story. They will develop a movie poster and marketing idea and give a 5 minute pitch the movie to the class. A guest panel of Native American Studies colleagues and area Indians will score the proposals. The top two proposal presentations will be used for the showcase video.

### **III. Civil Rights Posters**

Create a propaganda poster about the American Indian Civil Rights Movement. Pick an Indian political organization, such as AIM or Red Power. Research the group and its principles and actions during the Civil Rights movement. Using the Civil Rights era posters, brainstorm images that support this group's position. The poster must use the organization's name and a slogan or appeal to citizens to act in a certain way.

### **IV. Historical Archaeology Trash Lab**

Archaeology is the study of human trash, therefore the principles of archaeology can be applied to a trash bag just as easily as a site excavation. Groups of students are given a carefully created bag of trash and a laptop with internet access. Each group has to catalog and identify all the components of the trash, identifying the materials, linguistic information, and intention of the item. After completing a table with this information, they will develop group answers to a series of questions about the economic, social, and temporal context of the materials. Students will piece together the "story" of the people who created the bag of garbage. This leads to a discussion of the limitations and uses of these perspectives for the recent past.