



*I always like to look on the optimistic side of life, but I am realistic enough to know that life is a complex matter.*  
--Walt Disney

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## Course Overview

Walt Disney (1901-66) was one of the most influential Americans of the twentieth century. Disney's work in film and television is connected to urban planning, ecological politics, product merchandising, United States domestic and global policy, technological innovation, and the construction of a national character. This course will consider Disney and his company in relation to art, society, and culture through the study of his contributions in the realms of animation, film, and the theme park. This course considers Disney from a critical (i.e. analytical, interpretive, and expository) perspective informed by art history, cultural, film, and media studies. The scholarship on Disney is vast and diverse and weekly readings from Steven Watts' *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life* stress Disney's life and historical context. This text is supplemented with interdisciplinary scholarly articles that are intended to enrich your understanding of the literature and discourse surrounding Walt Disney and his company.

## Course Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will:

1. Be able to discuss the life and contributions of Walt Disney in the context of contemporary political and cultural events
2. Analyze style and subject matter in animated shorts and features
3. Demonstrate critical familiarity with the form and content of theme parks.
4. Learn to critically engage with scholarly articles and discuss them with peers

## Required Texts and Materials

Steven Watts, *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life* (1997/2001). (available at the UCF bookstore or online <https://www.amazon.com/Magic-Kingdom-Walt-Disney-American/dp/0826213790>)

Scholarly readings available as pdf -- navigate to readings through the modules.

## Course Design

This course is fully online and delivered through Webcourses. It is divided into modules, one for each week of the course. Each week a new module will become available. Once the week ends, that module will close. Each week requires a significant time commitment: you will be responsible for between one and three chapters in the textbook; material posted in the modules; and readings in the discussion boards. There also are films and video clips you will need to watch. Your understanding of the module's material is assessed through discussion board posts and weekly quizzes.

It is imperative that you stay on schedule and keep up with the assignments. You will not be able to work ahead or fall behind.

## Assignments

### Discussion Board Posts (50%)

This course is divided into modules. Each week you will need to complete that week's module, which includes an assigned reading from your textbook and a scholarly article (the article is available in pdf format in the discussion board prompt). You have been assigned to a discussion group of about 10 students. After completing the readings and reviewing the module's content, you need to post twice to your group's discussion board (navigate to the discussion board through the module). There will be two posts per module. Your first post is a substantive post of approximately 500 words (worth 15 points). This substantive post requires you to respond to that week's prompt and scholarly article. Your second post is a responsive post (5 points). For this post you should post a 75-100 word response to the substantive post of someone else in your discussion group. You need to post **one substantive post** and **one responsive post** every week for full credit. **These 2 posts will be due each week by Thursday at 11:59 pm. Post your substantive post by Wednesday**, so that others have time to read your post and reply. You must post two times each week to receive full credit.

## Quizzes (50%)

Each week's module will conclude with a quiz on that week's material (module material, discussion board information, and readings). The module material, textbook, and articles are the source for the quizzes. The quizzes will open on Thursdays at 8am and are **due by Friday at 11:59pm**. Navigate to the quiz through the module. Each quiz will be a mixture of multiple choice and true-false questions. You will have 30 minutes to complete each week's quiz.

Here is the grading scheme for this course:

Name:	Range:	
A	100%	to 93%
A-	< 93%	to 90%
B+	< 90%	to 88%
B	< 88%	to 83%
B-	< 83%	to 80%
C+	< 80%	to 78%
C	< 78%	to 69.5%
D	< 69.5%	to 60%
F	< 60%	to 0%

## Course Policies

**Late Work Policy:** No late work is accepted. It is your responsibility to stay on schedule.

**Extra Credit Policy:** There is no extra credit

**Grades of "Incomplete":** The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course and the remaining work can be completed the next semester. Your instructor is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the "I" will automatically be recorded as an "F" on your transcript.

**Email:** I check my email regularly M-F 9am-5pm and if you email during these hours you will most likely receive a quick response. Emails sent during off hours will be answered on the following business day.

**Webcourses:** This course takes place fully online in Webcourses. You should check our class Webcourses page daily.

**Accessibility:** The University of Central Florida considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and critical to its educational mission. UCF expects every member of the university community to contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture for all in its classrooms, work environments, and at campus events. Dimensions of diversity can include sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, income, faith and non-faith perspectives, socio-economic class, political ideology, education, primary language, family status, military experience, political beliefs, cognitive style, and communication style. The individual intersection of these experiences and characteristics must be valued in our community. Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at [www.shield.ucf.edu](http://www.shield.ucf.edu)

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible and/or contact Student Accessibility Services. For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

Title IX – EO/AA - <http://www.eeo.ucf.edu/> & [askanadvocate@ucf.edu](mailto:askanadvocate@ucf.edu)

Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services

- <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/> & [sas@ucf.edu](mailto:sas@ucf.edu)

Diversity and Inclusion Training and Events – [www.diversity.ucf.edu](http://www.diversity.ucf.edu)

Student Bias Grievances – Just Knights response team - <http://jkrt.sdes.ucf.edu/>

UCF Compliance and Ethics Office - <http://compliance.ucf.edu/>

Ombuds Office - <http://www.ombuds.ucf.edu>

**Academic Conduct Policy:** Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, please consult The Golden Rule, the University of Central Florida's Student Handbook (<http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>) for further details. As in all University courses, The Golden Rule Rules of Conduct will be applied. Violations of these rules will result in a record of the infraction being placed in your file and receiving a zero on the work in question AT A MINIMUM. At the instructor's discretion, you may also receive a failing grade for the course. Confirmation of such incidents can also result in expulsion from the University.

# Course Schedule

Dates	Modules	Readings	Assignments
August 21-26	Module 0 Introduction	Syllabus and Protocols	Discussion Post 0 Syllabus Quiz
August 27-Sep 2	Module 1 Disney's early life and career	Chapter 1: Disney and the Rural Romance Chapter 2: Young Man Disney and Mickey Mouse Chapter 3: The Entertainer as Success Icon  Robert Neuman, "'Now Mickey Enters Art's Temple': Walt Disney at the Intersection of Art and Entertainment," <i>Visual Resources</i> 14 (1999): 249-261.	Discussion Post 1 Quiz 1
Sep 3-9	Module 2 Mickey Mouse & Silly Symphony	Chapter 4: Disney and the Depression: Sentimental Populism  Yasco Horsman, "Steamboat Willie: Towards a Mickey Mouse Version of Apparatus Theory," <i>Empedocles: European Journal for the Philosophy of Communication</i> 5 (2015): 75-80.	Discussion Post 2 Quiz 2
Sep 10-16	Module 3 Golden Age	Chapter 5: Disney and the Depression: Populist Parables  Tracey Mollet, "'With a smile and a song. . .' Walt Disney and the Birth of the American Fairy Tale," <i>Marvels &amp; Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies</i> 27 (2013): 109-124.	Discussion Post 3 Quiz 3
Sep 17-23	Module 4 Animation and High Art	Chapter 6: The Entertainer as Artist: Sentimental Modernism  Chapter 7: Of Mice and Men: Art Critics and Animators	Discussion Post 4 Quiz 4

		Bill Mikulak, "Mickey Meets Mondrian: Cartoons Enter the Museum of Modern Art," <i>Cinema Journal</i> 36 (1997): 56-72	
Sep 24-30	Module 5 Disney and Culture	Chapter 8: Disney and American Culture  Henry A. Giroux and Grace Pollock, "Disney and the Politics of Public Culture," <i>The Mouse That Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence</i> (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 17-55.	Discussion Post 5  Quiz 5
Oct 1-7	Module 6 The Disney Studio	Chapter 9: The Fantasy Factory  Chapter 10: The Engineering of Enchantment  Mark Langer, "Regionalism in Disney Animation: Pink Elephants and Dumbo," <i>Film History</i> 4 (1990): 305-21.	Discussion Post 6  Quiz 6
Oct 8-14	Module 7 The Strike and WWII	Chapter 11: Animation and Its Discontents  Chapter 12: Disney and the Good War  Neal Gabler, "Disney Joins Up," <i>World War II</i> 30 (2016): 52-59.	Discussion Post 7  Quiz 7
Oct 15-21	Module 8 The Package Films	Chapter 13: Disney's Descent  Chapter 14: The Search for Direction  David Diffrient, "Cabinets of Cinematic Curiosities: A Critical History of the Animated 'Package Feature', From <i>Fantasia</i> (1940) to <i>Memories</i> (1995)," <i>Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television</i> 26 (2006): 505-535.	Discussion Post 8  Quiz 8
Oct 22-28	Module 9 Disney and the Cold War	Chapter 15: Cold War Fantasies  Chapter 16: Disney and National Security  Susan Ohmer, "'That Rags to Riches Stuff': Disney's Cinderella and the Cultural Space of Animation," <i>Film History</i> 5 (1993): 231-49.	Discussion Post 9  Quiz 9

Oct 29- Nov 4	Module 10  Family Values	Chapter 17: Disney and Domestic Security  Chapter 18: Citizen Disney  Lynn Y. Weiner, “‘There’s a Great Big Beautiful Tomorrow’: Historic Memory and Gender in Walt Disney’s ‘Carousel of Progress,’” <i>Journal of American Culture</i> 20 (2004): 111-116.	Discussion Post 10  Quiz 10
Nov 5- 11	Module 11  The Culture Industry	Chapter 19: Disney and the Culture Industry  Josef Chytry, “Walt Disney and the Creation of Emotional Environments: Interpreting Walt Disney’s Oeuvre from the Disney Studios to Disneyland, CalArts, and the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow (EPCOT),” <i>Rethinking History</i> 16 (2012): 259-78.	Discussion Post 11  Quiz 11
Nov 12- 18	Module 12  Disneyland	Chapter 20: The Happiest Place on Earth  Kara Ann Marling, “Disneyland, 1955: Just Take the Santa Ana Freeway to the American Dream,” <i>American Art</i> 5 (1991): 168-207.	Discussion Post 12  Quiz 12
Nov 19- 25	Thanksgiving	No assigned reading	n/a
Nov 26- Dec 2	Module 13  Walt Disney World	Chapter 21: Pax Disneyana  Chapter 22: It’s a Small World, After All  Cher Krause Knight, “Swampland, Walt Disney Builds Paradise,” <i>Power and Paradise in Walt Disney’s World</i> (2014), 1-25.	Discussion Post 13  Quiz 13