Course Description:

Fame, notoriety, renown – the desire to be recognized and immortalized is the most enduring and perhaps the most desirable form of power. Culture, commerce, politics, and religion all proffer promises of fame – whether for fifteen minutes or fifteen centuries. This course departs from the insight that fame is a uniquely human ambition and a central force for social life. Together, we will investigate this subject by asking, what is fame?, Why do people want it?, How do they get it?, What can they do with it?, How does it affect those around them, and the generations that come after? In other words, what kind of good is fame? Drawing on texts from history, ethnography, theory, literature, philosophy, and contemporary media, this course will reflect on the ethics, erotics, pragmatics and pathologies of fame. We will compare fame to other forms of recognition (reputation, honor, etc.), and look at how fame operates in various social and historical circumstances, from small agricultural communities to enormous, hyper-mediated societies such as our own. Is fame, in our contemporary understanding, possible before photography? We’ll consider the enduring question of fame as it is transformed by the technological conditions of reproducing reputation across space, time, and societies.

Insert: Learning Outcomes

LEARNING OUTCOMES

For tips on How to Craft Effective Learning Outcomes, click on this link:
http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/academics/affairs/faq/outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements that specify what learners will know or be able to DO as a result of a learning activity. The key word is Do and the need in drafting learning outcomes is to use active verbs. Outcomes describe a desired condition such as knowledge, skills, or attitudes that need to be fulfilled.

Please consider these objectives:

Course level | Learner Objectives
--- | ---
Introductory | Define, identify, outline, describe, indicate, summarize
Intermediate | Compare, contrast, categorize, defend, review, describe, apply, demonstrate
Advanced | Assess, analyze, synthesize, defend, explain, evaluate, critique, compare, integrate

Required Texts (see Bibliography)

Expectations and Assessment:
(1) **Readings are to be completed before class.** Class meetings center on in-depth discussion of concepts from the texts. Weekly meetings are our opportunity to work through texts as a community and the prerequisite for high-quality discussion is that everyone reads material ahead of time. Come to class prepared for discussion.

(2) **Engaged participation.** We will be looking for knowledge-building contributions that show not only that you are trying to understand the readings but also that help contribute to your peers’ understandings. A pre-requisite for active and intelligent participation in discussions is prompt and regular attendance to all classes. Notify us in advance if you are going to miss a class.

(3) **Essay writing.** You will be asked to write 3 short essays during the course of the semester (3-5 pages). Writing assignments provide you with the opportunity to work through specific concepts from the readings and to engage in original synthesis of ideas on the page. Do start early and do write multiple drafts. We will expect tight, well-edited prose. Remember, clarity is next to godliness. Do remember that the university generously provides help with assignments through the Writing Center, see: [http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html](http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html)

(4) **Final Project.** The final leg of this course will expose you to a few supportive research methods and resources in order to help you work through an original analysis of a contemporary or historical situation of fame. This is an opportunity to apply the critical skills and material covered in the class as well as to have some fun, to create and express and do it with academic rigor and gusto. Final presentations can be completed in small groups and will consist of in-class presentation during the last 2 weeks of the course.

(5) **Grading & Evaluation Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation Rubric**

A= Excellent
This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

B= Good
This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.
C=Average
This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate.

D= Unsatisfactory
This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

F=Failed
This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments.

\[
\begin{align*}
A & = 94-100 \\
A- & = 90-93 \\
B+ & = 87-89 \\
B & = 84-86 \\
B- & = 80-83 \\
C+ & = 77-79 \\
C & = 74-76 \\
C- & = 70-73 \\
D+ & = 65-69 \\
D & = 60-64 \\
F & = 0-59
\end{align*}
\]

(6) Course Policies

Absences and Lateness
More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower grade. Chronic lateness will also be reflected in your evaluation of participation. Regardless of the reason for your absence you will be responsible for any missed work. Travel arrangements do not constitute a valid excuse for rescheduling exams. There are no extra credit assignments for this class.

Format
Please type and double-space your written work. Typing improves the clarity and readability of your work and double-spacing allows room for me to comment. Please also number and staple multiple pages. You are free to use your preferred citation style. Please use it consistently throughout your writing. If sending a document electronically, please name the file in the following format Yourlastname MCC-UE 1XXX Assignment1.doc

Grade Appeals
Please allow two days to pass before you submit a grade appeal. This gives you time to reflect on my assessment. If you still want to appeal your grade, please submit a short but considered
paragraph detailing your concerns. Based on this paragraph I will review the question and either augment your grade or refine my explanation for the lost points.

**General Decorum**
Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the Internet, doing homework in class, eating, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course.

**Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism**
http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity
The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. This relationship takes an honor code for granted and mutual trust, respect, and responsibility as foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A university education aims not only to produce high-quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens.

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.

You violate the principle of academic integrity when you:
• cheat on an exam,
• submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors,
• receive help on a takehome examination that calls for independent work, or
• plagiarize.

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning, and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated.

Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:
• copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media;
• download documents from the Internet;
• purchase documents;
• report from other’s oral work;
• paraphrase or restate someone else’s facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or
• copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

Your professors are responsible for helping you to understand other people's ideas, to use resources and conscientiously acknowledge them, and to develop and clarify your own
thinking. You should know what constitutes good and honest scholarship, style guide preferences, and formats for assignments for each of your courses. Consult your professors for help with problems related to fulfilling course assignments, including questions related to attribution of sources.

Through reading, writing, and discussion, you will undoubtedly acquire ideas from others, and exchange ideas and opinions with others, including your classmates and professors. You will be expected, and often required, to build your own work on that of other people. In so doing, you are expected to credit those sources that have contributed to the development of your ideas.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

• Organize your time appropriately to avoid undue pressure, and acquire good study habits, including note taking.
• Learn proper forms of citation. Always check with your professors of record for their preferred style guides. Directly copied material must always be in quotes; paraphrased material must be acknowledged; even ideas and organization derived from your own previous work or another’s work need to be acknowledged.
• Always proofread your finished work to be sure that quotation marks, footnotes and other references were not inadvertently omitted. Know the source of each citation.
• Do not submit the same work for more than one class without first obtaining the permission of both professors even if you believe that work you have already completed satisfies the requirements of another assignment.
• Save your notes and drafts of your papers as evidence of your original work.

Disciplinary Sanctions
When a professor suspects cheating, plagiarism, and/or other forms of academic dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken following the department procedure or through referral to the Committee on Student Discipline.

The Steinhardt School Statement on Academic Integrity is consistent with the New York University Policy on Student Conduct, published in the NYU Student Guide.

STUDENT RESOURCES
• Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.

• Writing Center: 411 Lafayette, 3rd Floor. Schedule an appointment online at www.rich15.com/nyu/ or just walk-in.
Course Schedule:

I- What is it to be known?

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Immortality and renown
- William Shakespeare, *Sonnet 18*
- William Butler Yeats, *Sailing to Byzantium*

Week 3: The space-time of personal expansion
- Nancy Munn, *The Fame of Gawa: A Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in a Massim Society*

II- What kind of power is fame?

Week 4: Leaders, heroes, champions, and stars
- *Egil’s Saga*
- Homer, *The Iliad*

Week 5: The modes and moral status of exceptionalism
- Max Weber, “The nature of charismatic authority and its routinization”
- Max Weber, “The prophet”

Week 6: Coins in different realms
- Peter Galison, “Trading zones: Coordinating action and belief”

III- Is fame anti-social?

Week 7: Mavericks and Mystics
- *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*
- Gay Talese, *Fame and Obscurity*

Week 8: Stigma and Infamy
- Émile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*
- Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes On The Management of Spoiled Identity*

IV- How is fame made?

Week 9: Agents, Acolytes and Assistants
- Phineas Taylor Barnum, *The Life of P.T. Barnum, Written By Himself*
- Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*
Week 10: mediums, technologies and techniques
- Walter Benjamin, “The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction”
- Hiroki Azuma, Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals

V- How do you find it?

Week 11: Research methods and resources
Week 12: Research methods and resources part II

VI- What kind of “good” is fame?

Week 13: Student Presentations
Week 14: Student Presentations

Course Bibliography


Gray, Jonathan, and Cornel Sandvoss, and C. Lee Harrington, eds. Fandom: Identities


The Gospel According to St. Matthew, King James Bible.
