

The Humanities Ph.D. & the Commonwealth Center for the Humanities & Society

present

Postcolonial Film Series – Fall 2012

Students and Faculty are warmly invited.

1) SEPTEMBER 6th – 2:30-5 pm - Room 139 - Shumaker Research Building (Dr. WILLEY)

LA VIE EST BELLE (Belgium/France/Zaire, 1987)

La Vie est Belle takes us inside the vibrant music scene of Kinshasa, the Congo's exhilarating and exasperating capital whose back alleys and clubs pulsate to the beat of some of the most influential music in the world. The film, starring Soukous music legend Papa Wemba, tells the "rags to riches" story of a poor country musician who seeks fame in the city's vibrant music industry. This lively farce illustrates the Congolese faith in *Systeme-D or debrouillardise*, fending for yourself to survive in the face of overwhelming obstacles. If there is a commercial cinema in Africa's future, then *La Vie est Belle* may be one of its precursors.

2) OCTOBER 2nd Floyd Theater SAC – Time TBA (Dr. Jennie Burnet)

KINYARWANDA (USA/France, 2011)

Producer Darren Dean and actress will Hadjija Zaninka will be present for discussion

During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the Mufti of Rwanda, the most respected Muslim leader in the country, issued a fatwa forbidding Muslims from participating in the killing of the Tutsi. As the country became a slaughterhouse, mosques became places of refuge where Muslims and Christians, Hutus and Tutsis came together to protect each other. *Kinyarwanda* is based on true accounts from survivors who took refuge at the Grand Mosque of Kigali and the Imams who opened their doors to give refuge to the Tutsi and to those Hutu who refused to participate in the killing. The story interweaves six different tales that together form one grand narrative, providing the most complex and real depiction yet presented of life and human resilience during the genocide. We follow the young lovers, the child, the couple, the soldiers, the Imam, and the priest as they are swept up by the chaos of the world around them.

This compelling film, directed by African-American filmmaker, Alrick Brown, won the World Cinema Audience Award at Sundance in 2011.

3) NOVEMBER 1st CHAO AUDITORIUM – 1-4 pm Dr. Keith Leslie Johnson (Guest Speaker)

DISTRICT 9 (South Africa et al., 2009)

In 1982, a massive star ship bearing a bedraggled alien population, nicknamed "The Prawns," appeared over Johannesburg, South Africa. Twenty-eight years later, the initial welcome by the human population has faded. The refugee camp where the aliens were located has deteriorated into a militarized ghetto called District 9, where they are confined and exploited in squalor. In 2010, the munitions corporation, Multi-National United, is contracted to forcibly evict the population with operative Wikus van der Merwe in charge. In this operation, Wikus is exposed to a strange alien chemical and must rely on the help of his only two new 'Prawn' friends.

4) NOVEMBER 29th– Time TBA - Room 139 - Shumaker Research Building (Dr. BERTACCO)

SMOKE SIGNALS (Canada, USA, 1998)

The foundation of *Smoke Signals* is the central figures of Victor Joseph (Adam Beach) and Thomas Builds-the-Fire (Evan Adams), two natives of the Coeur D'Alene Reservation in Idaho. Victor and Thomas aren't friends, but they have known each other since childhood, and they share a link. On a night in 1976, Arnold Joseph (Gary Farmer), Victor's father, saved the infant Thomas from a fire that killed his parents. Now, more than 20 years later, Arnold, who abandoned his wife, Arlene (Tantoo Cardinal), and son for a life in Phoenix, has died, and Victor must make the trip to claim his ashes. Thomas, who is supplying the money for the journey, accompanies him. Along the way, they teach each other life lessons. Thomas, who has a sensitive nature and is a storyteller, shows Victor that there's more to living than cynicism and pent-up anger. Victor, in turn, lets Thomas know what it means to be a real Indian. In one of the film's best sequences, he has these words of advice: "Indians ain't supposed to smile. Get stoic. If you don't look mean, white people won't respect you." For Thomas, the trip from Idaho to Arizona means an opportunity to come to grips with his ancestry. For Victor, it's a chance to forgive his estranged father in death. And, for us, it offers the prospect of seeing beyond the stereotypes that plague Native Americans in even the best films.