A LENS ON DENZEL WASHINGTON:
CRAFTING BLACK & WHITE IMAGES

Award winning actor Denzel Washington has crafted an image both onscreen and off that at times appears to be an endangered species: that of a highly intelligent, strong black male. Denzel’s characters are the everyman, the hero, the lover, the villain, the cad, and the list goes on. As a youth growing up during the Blaxploitation film era, just how did he do it and how successful has he actually been in challenging the stereotypical images of blacks portrayed on film?

Join the dialogue as we dive into the world of Denzel Washington and take a look at his work in Glory, Training Day, American Gangster and other notable films.

Coursework will consist of film screenings and supported readings. The main texts used in the course are noted historian Donald Bogle’s critically acclaimed Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: an Interpretive History of Blacks in America and biographer Douglas Brode’s Denzel Washington: His Films and Career. Students will be evaluated on their ability to critically analyze the representation and narration of blacks in American film through sound written and oral argument. By the end of the course, you will “view films with a new awareness and an altered sensitivity.” (BOGLE)