

Get in loser, we're going to see "Mean Girls"

COLUMN BY
CAROLINE AVERITT
LIFE EDITOR

It's been 20 years since the world was introduced to Cady Heron and Regina George and six years after their Broadway debut, they are back on the big screen and more "fetch" than ever.

As someone who loves the original movie and is a big fan of the musical version, I had high expectations for this adaptation. While I do have some criticisms, I was pleasantly surprised by how much I liked this movie.

René Rapp stole the show, reprising her role as Regina, whom she played on Broadway in 2019 and 2020. She sang the best and most vocally challenging songs in the movie such as "World Burn" and "Someone Gets Hurt."

It was a great choice to cast Rapp in this movie because while she was not in the original Broadway cast, she was a fan-favorite and, in my opinion, born to play Regina George.

The songs in this movie were originally written to be performed on the stage, but I think they did a great job making the musical numbers fit the screen while also holding on to the campy and somewhat cheesy energy introduced by the Broadway version.

Unfortunately, 10 songs were cut from the original soundtrack, but I do think the

most important ones were in the movie.

I do wish they would have kept "Whose House Is This," a rap performed by Kevin G about a house party. It's so different from traditional Broadway songs, it is a shame it wasn't included.

I also think they should have kept "Do This Thing" which is sung during the math competition. Any song that uses calculus as a metaphor for sisterhood is a showstopper in my book.

The movie also included a song that was not in the Broadway version, "What Ifs" which replaces "It Roars." The song introduces Cady's character and shows her journey from Africa to Northshore High.

Many fans of the Broadway version don't like this replacement, but I prefer "What Ifs." It shows Cady as timid and is more suitable for a movie than its theatrical counterpart.

Many people have criticized this movie over social media for being set in the present day instead of the early 2000s like the original. However, I think updating it makes it more relatable to the new generation. It also allowed space for the actors to make the classic characters their own.

While I liked most of the casting, I do think they could have done better on the part of Cady. While Angourie Rice played the part well, she clearly



Poster for "Mean Girls"

PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB

couldn't keep up with the vocally challenging songs.

Many fans have criticized Rice on social media for her highly autotuned vocals. I would have liked to see someone with a more theatrical voice in the role of Cady, but I suspect they wanted Rapp to be the vocal powerhouse of the movie.



Playbill for "Mean Girls" on Broadway

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF PLAYBILL

In addition, Chris Briney, who played Aaron, did not sing at all. I think Briney is a great actor, but they could have cast someone who could sing Aaron's songs, such as "More is Better."

It would be hard to review this movie and not mention its marketing strategy. Other than the music note on the poster,

there were very few clues that let people know this movie would be a musical.

Many people went to the theater expecting a remake but were surprised by the singing and dancing. Much of the criticism of this movie stems from this surprise, rather than audiences truly disliking the movie.

Overall, I think this was a fun, hilarious movie that paid homage to its predecessors while also new iconic moments.

How many times will I go to the theater to watch this movie again? The limit does not exist.

Official Score: 9/10

The death of a box office Superman

COLUMN BY
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Big-budget superhero movies have dominated the box office for nearly a decade, but trends in 2023 proved attitudes toward staple franchises have shifted dramatically.

Since its start in 2008, Disney's Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) has been the money maker for superhero blockbusters. Even if a film had a bad theatrical run, being under the MCU umbrella was almost a guarantee that a film would make a profit.

Since 2020 however, Marvel films have been doing increasingly worse. "Black Widow" and "Eternals" were the first films to show this box office giant might not last forever, and the disastrous flop of "The Marvels" in 2023 was further evidence that blockbuster superhero films could be on the way out.

Similarly, the DC Extended Universe (DCEU), produced by Warner Bros. Pictures saw its share of bad runs in 2023. "The Flash," "Shazam! Fury of the Gods" and "Blue

Beetle" all failed to make back their cost of production.

"The Flash" in particular lost nearly \$200 million, making it one of the biggest theatrical flops in the history of film. While the DCEU has had its share of problems since it began, the failure of its 2023 releases ultimately meant that the franchise was officially considered to be canceled after the release of "Aquaman and The Lost Kingdom" in December of 2023.

The end of superhero supremacy at the box office seems inevitable at this point. The market has become saturated with content and audiences are clearly showing signs of fatigue with the genre. Instead, audiences seem to be searching for something new to replace the once unkillable box office titans.

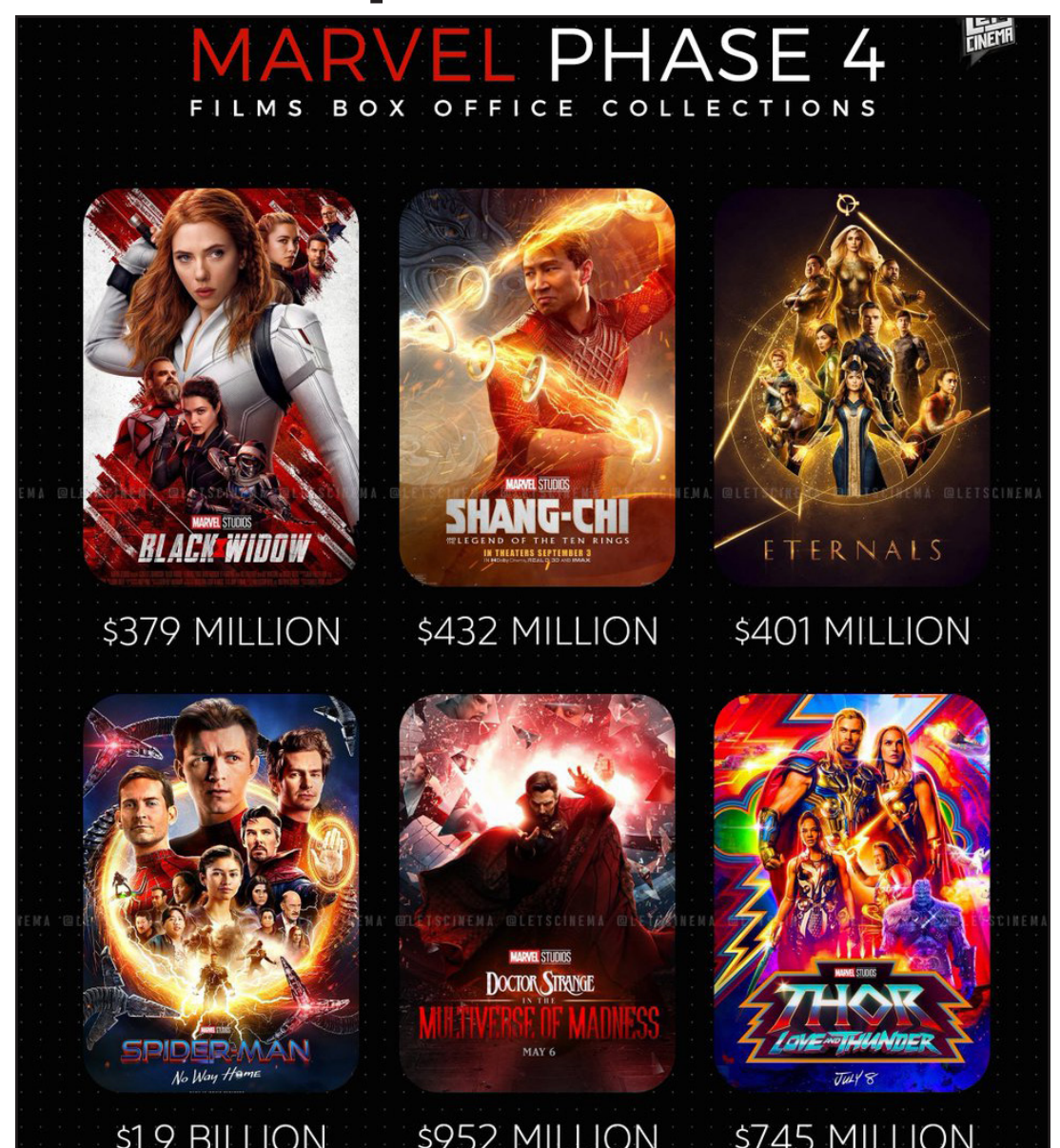
With the release of "Barbie," "Oppenheimer" and "Napoleon," the auteur style of filmmaking, which places the creative control of a film in the hands of its director, seems to be back in the mainstream. Instead of movies being sold under the label of a giant superhero franchise, it's possible that in the next

few years directors' names alone may be able to bring audiences to the box office.

Likewise, video game movies did very well at the box office in 2023, with "Five Nights at Freddy's" and "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" performing exceptionally well. Video game movies seem uniquely well-positioned to take advantage of the excitement of adapting existing off-screen characters to film.

"Five Nights at Freddy's" was particularly praised for its costume design in bringing the animatronic characters from the video game to life on screen. With video games being more accessible to younger audiences than comic books, the appeal of video game movies will continue to grow.

All in all, the death of the superhero movie isn't a bad thing for the film industry. The bloated budgets and diminishing returns have put superhero movies in a place where they may not be as financially viable as they once were. The question is now, what do we as an audience want to see replace superheroes in the future?



Box office earnings for Marvel Phase 4 films

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF LETS CINEMA

Life

How to be a successful student this semester

COLUMN BY
CAROLINE AVERITT

LIFE EDITOR

Is your New Year's resolution to do better in school this semester? If yes, you have come to the right place.

Whether you are a first-year student still getting used to college, a senior battling senioritis or anything in between, I have gathered my best tips for how to have a successful semester.

Make it fun

It can be tough to try your best in a class you find boring. Lecture classes may cause you to daydream or you may have to take a class from that professor you are convinced hates you.

The key to acing these classes is to make it fun, however, this can vary from student to student.

For example, I like to study in coffee shops to make my long hours of working more enjoyable. I get to sip a warm drink and get out of my apartment. This makes studying a more fun experience so it doesn't feel so mundane and dry.

Anytime I am given a choice to pick any topic for a paper, presentation or project, I pick something that excites and interests me. Don't just pick the easiest topic or a topic you already know a lot about, pick something you can dive into that will make you want to keep researching.

Buy notebooks in your favorite color. Listen to music while you work.

Do whatever makes schoolwork more fun for you.

Become besties with your professors

This may seem daunting, but it is incredibly beneficial to establish a good relationship with your professors.

First, if you establish yourself as a kind and likable person, they are more likely to help you. I don't mean professors give grades based on what they think of you, but I am saying that professors are less likely to give extensions, bonus credit or extra help to students who have disrespected them or are difficult to work with.

Having a good relationship with your professors can also help them tailor the education experience to you. I have had professors send me articles, give me books and recommend research areas. This would not be possible if they didn't know my goals and interests.

Another way getting to know your professors can be beneficial is through recommendation letters. Whether you are applying to graduate school or a job, it's hard for a professor to recommend you if they don't know anything about you.

Befriend your classmates

I spent many classes not knowing any of my classmates. When I have friends in the class, it's usually easier to do well and more fun.

If you are unable to make it to class one day, having a friend you can text to see what you missed is a game

changer. If something is confusing, it may be easier to ask a friend than the professor. If you both are lost, you can ask the professor together.

Finally, having someone to talk to before class starts or to study with is nice. Plus, if the class ends up being a nightmare, you have someone to laugh about it with.

General tips

You've probably heard these before but in case you need the reminder, here are some general tips for a successful semester.

- Don't procrastinate.
 - Plan ahead and keep track of your assignments. Some people use a planner or a calendar, I use a long note on my phone.
 - Don't be afraid to ask questions.
 - Don't skip class. I know it is easy but you are paying tuition, so you lose money each time you skip.
 - Have someone read over your papers before turning them in. The Writing Center can help you or you can ask someone else in your class.
 - Take advantage of tutoring on campus if you need it. It is covered by your tuition which means you are already paying for it.
 - Don't cheat or plagiarize. It's better to get a poor grade than fail the class or get expelled.
- Good luck and have a great semester!

A-State tutoring resources

1 LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES
focuses on 1000 and 2000-level courses

2 K. OVERSTREET LOGAN MATHEMATICS LEARNING COMMONS
focuses on math

3 WORLD LANGUAGES & CULTURES
focuses on foreign languages

4 SMART CENTER
focuses on the sciences

5 WRITING CENTER
focuses on writing assignments

6 THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER
focuses on helping student athletes

7 THE COMMUNICATION CENTER
focuses on oral presentations

8 STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
private one-on-one tutoring

for more information, visit
<https://www.astate.edu/a/tutoring/>

Graphic by Caroline Averitt | Life Editor

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

COLUMN BY
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COPY EDITOR

I made these horoscopes by looking at the placements of celestial bodies from Jan. 17 through 24. I use a handful of astrology books, apps and my sister Maddie Freeman to figure out what those placements will bring for each sign.

Big things are happening in the sky with Mercury finally leaving retrograde in Sagittarius and its chaotic energy behind. Conflicts may still arise because the Sun opposes Pluto and Aquarius.

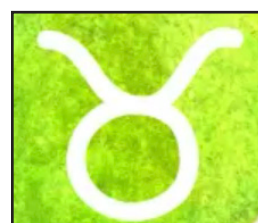
The Sun will square the moon Jan. 17, which will create a sense of imbalance. The Void of Course (VOC) moon occurs as the moon makes its final aspect in Taurus as we move from Capricorn to Pisces.

Be sure to check your sun, moon and rising signs!



Aries:

Watch out for potential communication challenges in your relationships. Venus entering Capricorn Jan. 23 offers stability.



Taurus:

Focus on stability and your relationships as the VOC moon enters Taurus and brings stability.



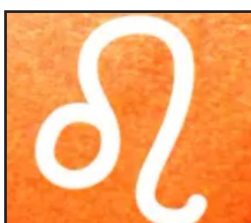
Gemini:

Communication challenges may arise, but hold on and focus on self-expression as Jan. 20 moon trine with the Sun boosts your confidence.



Cancer:

Navigate relationship dynamics carefully Jan. 22 and embrace the stabilizing influence of Venus entering Capricorn Jan. 23.



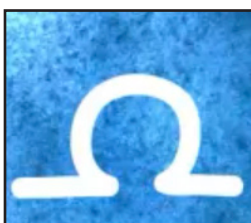
Leo:

Be mindful of relationship tensions Jan. 22, but find inspiration and creativity Jan. 24 with the Moon trining Neptune in Leo.



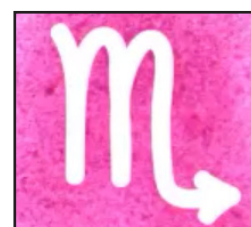
Virgo:

Communication improves after Mercury leaves retrograde, Jan. 13. Focus on your relationships as Venus enters Capricorn on Jan. 23.



Libra:

Jan 17 brings potential relationship challenges, but the Sun entering Pisces Jan. 21 brings balance.



Scorpio:

Tension may arise in your relationships Jan. 17. Embrace change as Pluto moves into Aquarius, Jan. 20.



Sagittarius:

Mercury leaves retrograde Jan. 13 easing communication. Navigate relationship challenges Jan. 22.



Capricorn:

Mars in Capricorn may give a boost of energy and Venus entering Capricorn Jan. 23 adds a touch of romance. Navigate communication challenges Jan. 17.



Aquarius:

Prepare for change as Pluto moves into Aquarius Jan. 20. Jan. 17 brings potential tensions in relationships.



Pisces:

The Sun enters Pisces Jan. 21 to lift spirits. With Saturn in Pisces, make practical steps towards your goals.

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