EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION

FILM AND VIDEO

School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Cinema and Media Arts

FA / FILM 2230 3.0 SECTION M
FILM AND TELEVISION AS SOCIAL PRACTICE
FALL 2018 / WINTER 2019

Last Modified Date: 01/09/2019

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Presents histories and theories that focus on the role of film and television in society including their relationship to social relations, social practice and social meaning. Prerequisite: FA/FILM 1400 9.00.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

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SPECIAL FEATURES

Expanded Course Description: What does it mean to describe film and television as a social practice? Broadly speaking, social practice is everything we do in society, with each other, connected by the ideas and institutions around us. Which is to say that studying "film and television as a social practice" can mean a wide range of things, including consideration of the social, political, cultural, environmental, economic, and industrial contexts of these media. In this course we also consider how social practices are temporally and spatially specific, which is to say that we will learn that "going to the movies" or "watching television" are social practices that vary according to time and date. The consequence of this is that there are a variety of histories of film and television practices, and we can use comparative media analysis to learn about different ways to use media.

The course materials focus on global film and television histories and practices in the period from 1930 to 1960 in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Latin America. This term, the contents will be divided into four main areas that include: an introduction to the Hollywood studio system after the arrival of sound, film genres such as western, noir and musical, non-American aesthetics that cover –among others– poetic realism and Italian neorealism, and a final two classes on the television industries. The overarching theme is the concept of mass media and its contributions to social life, including public and private spheres. Weekly lectures, screenings, readings, and tutorials will provide opportunities to discuss the histories of film and television in the period from a variety of perspectives, including analysis of social (e.g., class, gender, national, and racial) formations and relations; political economy; historiography; urban studies; ideological and discourse analysis; as well as media-specific methodologies such as formal analysis, genre and narrative analysis, auteurism, and semiotics.

The course reading includes one classic text in the field of cinema and media studies: David A. Cook’s *A History of Narrative Film* (fifth edition, 2016). Other suggested readings are Erik Barnouw's *Documentary: a history of non-fiction films*, Robert Sklar's *Movie Made America: a cultural history of American movies*, and Raymond Williams's *Television: technology and cultural form*. One of the objectives of the course is to critically read these canonical texts, with a view to evaluating their continuing relevance as well as their shortcomings. In this sense, the course encourages critical media historiography by asking: how have
histories of film and television been narrated? from what perspective? and to whose benefit?

The weekly lectures will typically present an overview of a media artifact (usually a film or television program) that illustrates some of the themes and histories that are featured in the week’s readings. At mid-term and end-of-term, students will research and write a critical essay based on material from the lectures, readings and screenings (details below). This course is required of Cinema and Media Studies majors and is one of the approved required studies courses in the BFA programs. The material is designed to follow up on some of the topics and themes presented in FILM 2200 Cinema, Modernity, Technology and it is intended as preparation for Film 3200 New Waves in Cinema and Media Studies and Film 3230 Contemporary Issues in Cinema and Media Studies.

TOPICS AND CONCEPTS

Topics and Concepts:
American and World Cinemas, Mass Media, the Hollywood Studio System, Film Genres, Cinema Noir, Musicals, Westerns, Cultural Appropriation, Early Television, Documentary Style.

Course Texts:

Mandatory Text Book:

Suggested Readings:

Selected Bibliography:

LIST OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EXAMPLES OF

Learning Objectives:

- Develop familiarity with theories of cinematic modernity from the period 1930-1960.
- Study cinema and television in various locales and time periods where these technologies mean different social practices.
- Improve the students’ understanding of the development of practices of film production, distribution, exhibition and reception.

After taking this course, students should be able to:

- Recognize the similarities and differences of histories and theories of film and TV practices in different global locations during the period 1930-1960.
- Improve the ability to review and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative information in analyzing cinema and media history.
- Develop arguments, judge historiographic theories and models; apply underlying concepts, principles, and techniques of historical analysis; propose solutions to, or frame appropriate questions to historical problems.
- Research and write about advanced film theory and historical analysis.

GRADED ASSESSMENT
Evaluation:

- Midterm essay (1800 words; due February 14) 20%
- Final essay (2400 words; due April 04) 35%
- Final Exam (In exam period April TBD) 25%
- Participation and Attendance 20%

Midterm essay: Write a six (6) page critical essay (1800-1900 words). It must include a minimum of two (2) references to sources of research and/or criticism that are not assigned course readings. You are encouraged to use insights from the assigned readings but these do not count as part of the two (2) required sources. The essay will be organized as a response to one of several questions that will be provided on an assignment sheet that will also provide guidelines about the form of the essay as well as instructions for its submission. The questions will integrate material drawn from lectures, assigned readings, discussions, and screenings in the first few weeks of the term.

Final essay: Write an eight (8) page critical essay (2400-2500 words). It must include a minimum of five (5) sources of research and/or criticism that are not assigned course readings. The essay will be organized as a response to one of several questions that will be provided on an assignment sheet. These questions will combine material drawn from all the lectures, assigned readings, and screenings.

Final Exam: The final exam will consist of three questions that you have to answer to the best of your capacity. It will comprise a multiple choice, and a series of short-answers questions, as well as a 400 to 500 words analytical question. All the questions in the exam will be tied to this course’s textbook. The content examined will essentially cover what we learned in class, but feel free to use your own experience once you have defined your interpretation of the concepts addressed. Do not book travel until exam schedule is announced.

Attendance and Participation – General Guidelines:

- Students are expected to attend all lectures, screenings, and tutorials. Please arrive on time.
- Use of computers or other mobile devices in class is prohibited, unless you are seated in the first three rows of the lecture hall.
- Students are expected to take notes on paper during lectures as well as during screenings and discussions.
- Please see instructors if you require accommodation.
- Respect your fellow students’ opportunity to learn in class by remaining quiet during lecture and screening.
- Readings are to be completed prior to the weekly lecture.
- Screenings are mandatory. Study copies of most films (but not all) may be available to borrow or view at the Sound and Moving Image Library (SMIL) in Scott Library. In addition, York University Libraries also provides online access to over 5,000 titles – to access these resources, search the YUL catalogue using a specific film title or the title keywords “Criterion On Demand”; “Janus Kanopy Criterion”; or “NFB online”.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that their tutorial attendance is recorded.
- The participation grade is determined on the basis of the quality and frequency of participation in tutorial discussions, group work, and other activities, and demonstrated improvement in assignments over the year.
General Assignment Guidelines:

Assignment Submission: Assignments for this course must be received on the specified due date. All assignments must have a cover page that includes the assignment name, your name and student number, tutorial leader’s name, and the course title and number. Do not slip printed assignments under doors – there is an assignment drop box beside CFT 221. Ensure that you keep copies of all submitted work; in the event of lost assignments you are responsible for a replacement.

Lateness Penalty: A total grace period of three days will be allotted to each student for the entire course. After you use up your three late days, late assignments will be penalized 5% per day late, including weekends (i.e. 10% for Saturday and Sunday). Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained by the Course Director but will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter).

Course Management: The Course Director and Teaching Assistants (TAs) work as a team. Although the course director will deliver the lectures, all members of the team will attend and participate. The TAs (sometimes referred to as tutorial leaders) are graduate students in cinema and media studies. They lead the weekly tutorials in accordance with suggestions from the course director and they also bring their own expertise to discussions of readings and screenings. Tutorial discussions are a good opportunity to learn more about course topics in preparation for essay research and writing. All members of the teaching team are prepared to answer questions about the course but, in most cases, it would be appropriate to speak first with your TA.

Course Director and Teaching Assistant Availability: The course director and TAs are available for meetings during office hours or by appointment. You are encouraged to see us; we can discuss any topic or issue you like, including assignments, difficulties you are having with the course, suggestions for further reading, or clarification and expansion of issues that interest you.

E-mail Policy: We will endeavour to answer e-mail as promptly as we can, but allow one week for a response. Please reserve e-mail for making appointments and for asking brief questions of information. Substantive discussions about course material and assignments should occur in tutorials and during office hours. There may be times when information is sent to the entire class via email - please regularly check your email accounts as well as insuring that your TA has your preferred email contact information.

Grading: The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 89, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.). For more information: http://registrar.yorku.ca/grades/legends/fa

Important Dates - detailed info on sessional dates is available at: http://registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/

Wednesday, January 9 - Course commences
February 16 - February 22 - Winter Term Reading Week (no lectures or tutorials this week)
Friday, March 08 - Last day to drop without receiving a grade
March 09 - April 05 - Course withdrawal period - withdraw from a course and receive a 'W' grade
Thursday, April 04 - Last date to submit winter term work
Schedule of Readings and Screenings

Part 1. THE DEVELOPMENT AND SPREAD OF THE FILM INDUSTRY.

January 9.  Introduction. The Emergence of Sound Films
Screening:  Casablanca (Michael Curtiz, 1942)
No tutorials this week

January 16. The Business of Mass Culture and the American Studio System
Screening:  It's a Wonderful Life (Frank Capra, 1946)
Reading:  Cook, 169-177 and 182-221.
Suggested Reading: Sklar, Chapters 10-14.

January 17. Tutorials begin

Part 2. FILM GENRES

January 23. The Hollywood Musical
Screening:  Moulin Rouge (Barz Luhrman, 2001)
          Fragments of Shall We Dance (Fred Astaire, 1939)
          Fragments of Dames (Rey Enright, 1934)
          Fragments of Chicago (Rob Marshall, 2002)
Reading:  Cook, 178-181.

January 30. Orson Welles and the Subversion of Film Noir: The End of "The Studio Era"
Guest Lecturer: Cody Lang
Screening:  Touch of Evil (Orson Welles, 1958)
          Fragment of Double Indemnity (Billy Wilder, 1944)
Fragment of The Lady from Shanghai (Orson Welles, 1947)
Reading:  Cook, 251-276.

February 06. Western Movies
Screening:  No Country for Old Men (Joel and Ethan Coen, 2007)
          Fragment of The Searchers (John Ford, 1956)
Fragment of True Grit (Joel and Ethan Coen, 2010)
Fragment of Django Unchained (Quentin Tarantino, 2012)
Reading:  Cook, 293-296, and 321-337.
**Part 3. Cinemas Beyond Hollywood**

February 13. Europe in the Thirties: Poetic Realism  
Screening: *The Rules of the Game* (Jean Renoir, 1939)  
Reading: Cook, 242-249.

February 16-24. Reading Week - No lectures, screenings or tutorials this week

February 27. Postwar Cinemas: The Foundation and Impact of Italian Neorealism  
Screening: *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio de Sica, 1948)  
Reading: Cook 275-285.

March 06. Social Justice in Fiction/Nonfiction  
Screening: *Los Olvidados* (The Young and the Damned / Luis Buñuel, 1950)  
*Las Hurdes / Land Without Bread* (Spain, 1932, 30m, b/w)  
Fragments of *Why We Fight* (Prelude to War, Frank Capra, 1942)  
Reading: Cook. Chapter 19 (623-667) and 456-460.

March 13. Wind from the East: Japanese Cinema before the New Wave  
Screening: *Rashomon* (Japan, Akira Kurosawa 1950)  
Fragments of *Floating Weeds* (Yasujiro Ozu, 1959)  
Reading: Cook, 565-578 and 456-460.

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End-of-term essay assignment distributed - due April 04 (in tutorial)

**PART 4. TV AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE**

March 20. Introduction to Television: Life TV and Notions of Liveness in the 1950s.  
Screening: Fragments of some of these shows from the US, Brazil, and Korea --*I love Lucy, House of Cards, A casa das Sete Mulheres,* and *It’s ok that’s love.*  
Reading: Cook, 300-301 and 746-750.  
Suggested Reading: Williams, Chapters 3 and 4.

March 27. Globalization, Stereotypes, and Cultural Appropriation in the Film and Television Industries  
Screening: Fragments of *That Night in Rio* (Irving Cummings, 1941)  
Fragment of *A La Habana me voy* (Walter Lang, 1941)  
Fragment of *El trueno entre las hojas* (Armando Bo, 1956)  
Fragments of episodes of *Boys Over Flowers, The Sopranos.*  
Music Videos “Más Macarena,” “Thriller,” “Video Killed the Radio Star,” “Gee”


April 03. From Pre-recorded TV to Web Streaming (Television Industry Panel)
Guest Speakers: TBD

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University's course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.
Moodle @ York University