



UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK IN PRAGUE

Course: Cinema and Society (3 credit hours)

Instructor: MgA. Beth Lazroe, RSA Cert.

Class meetings:

Office hours to be announced

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1. Catalogue Description

This course is designed to introduce students to ideas about the relationship between cinema and the larger society in which it is produced and promulgated.

In this course students will learn how to “read a film”, i.e., how to critically analyze what is generally viewed as entertainment. Analysis will focus on how social and cultural identities are identified, developed, and shot on film as a society’s way of representing, or re-presenting (depicting or distorting) itself, and changes that occur within or in relation to it.

Why is this important? The world is not only becoming “smaller”, but it is also often watching the same fantasies on screens and tuning into the same channels, and these form a powerful imprint in terms of how we see ourselves and others, and of what we view as “reality”. After music, in the 21st century cinema increasingly communicates more and more of these ideas throughout the world - and you will need to know and identify what you see. In general, students will study film from 3 main perspectives: the film as socio-cultural history, the nature/structure of societies and subcultures depicted in the film, and how a particular film compares with others of the same genre.

2. Course Purpose

Aims of course: This course is designed to introduce students to ideas about the relationship between cinema and the larger society in which it is produced and promulgated. Students learn how to critically analyze what is generally viewed as entertainment, focusing on how social and cultural identities are identified, developed, and shot on film as a society’s way of representing, or re-presenting itself and changes that occur within or in relation to it.

The course aims to provide students with the vocabulary, knowledge and skills necessary to analyze and interpret images of socio-cultural identity within the framework of cinema studies in relation to the following contexts: perception and culture; historical, economic and technological influences; issues of race (realism vs. formalism); narrative structure; genre and myth; and gender and gaze.

3. Required Readings: texts

These materials will be available for download from the e-learning:

Course Reader, *Cultural Diversity in Film*

The articles within the Course Reader are:

from Monaco, James (2009). *How to Read a Film: The World of Movies, Media and the Multimedia* (Third Edition). London: Oxford University Press.

The Shape of Film History, pp.1-32

Story, pp.92-114

From Toplin, Robert Brent (1996, 2010), *History by Hollywood: The Use and Abuse of the American Past*. Baltimore, United States: University of Illinois Press: *Mississippi Burning: "A Standard to Which We Couldn't Live Up"*, pp. 25-45

Required Additional Materials: YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

Additionally, films, and extracts of films, will be shown in class for lecture and seminar analysis, for homework, and as the basis for exams. Students are therefore expected to view these in class and/or for homework - and to receive/download assignment sheets for this.

Specific articles, other materials, handouts and worksheets and specific links will be supplied in videoconference or put up on UNYP e-learning. You will always find where the handouts or materials are, and what you need to bring to class with you on the required days, under the e-learning homework assignments. Sometimes they will be given as homework assignments; otherwise, you will be asked to study and discuss as e-learning Forums, and/or bring completed worksheets bring to do as group discussion work – either within Zoom breakout rooms or as full-class discussions - during the videoconferences.

Failure to do this will result in your being given a Zero towards your Class Engagement and Worksheet grades, the equivalent of a homework grade.

Students are responsible for receiving all materials for any given lecture, and/or seminar, and/or assignment.

4.Additional readings:

Bordwell, David and Thompson, Kristin (2016). *Film Art* (11th Edition). London: McGraw Hill Higher Education

Thompson, Kristin and Bordwell, David (2011). *Film History, an Introduction* (International Edition) (3rd Edition). London: McGraw Hill Education-Europe

Evans Jessica, Hall, Stuart, and Nixon, Sean eds. (2013). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (2nd Edition). London: Sage Publications.

Hayward, Susan (2013) *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts* (4th Edition). London: Routledge.

Hollows, Joanne; Hutchings, Peter and Jancovich, Mark, eds. (2000). *The Film Studies Reader*. London and New York: Hodder Arnold

Other recommended readings

Cripps, Thomas (1977). *Slow Fade to Black: The Negro in American Film 1900-1942*. London, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Hollows, Joanne; Hutchings, Peter and Jancovich, Mark, eds. (2000). *The Film Studies Reader*. London and New York: Hodder Arnold

Hollows, Joanne and Jancovich, Mark, eds. (1995) *Approaches to Popular Film*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

Maalouf, Amin (2000). *On Identity*. London: The Harvill Press.

Lazroe, Beth (1997). *Perception, Culture, Representation and the Photographic Image*. Ljubljana: World Young Photography.

5.Learning Outcomes

Specialist knowledge:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of specific historical perspectives of Western, and in some cases other, societies in regard to cultural portrayal
- identify and differentiate between the main international movements in global cinema and critically appraise the reasons for the differences between them
- critically appraise a film in relation to gaze
- differentiate between types of narratives and how this influences how audiences respond to films
- Identify aspects within films that are designed to resonate within audiences as cultural and/or societal myths

Specialist skills:

Students will be able to:

- utilize a basic working vocabulary with which to understand, discuss, and analyze the way filmic depictions of social and cultural groups are constructed within various frameworks
- identify the functions of these elements in terms of their desired effect or impact on viewers
- explain themes and issues in multiculturalism and global society - race, gender, religion, ethnicity and sexuality
- identify different film genres and types of narratives within them
- explain the relationship between the film industry and audiences and how film content relates to this

6.Course Schedule

Mondays Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from week of 31st May – week of 21st June 2021, 15:00-18:00 CET

Wednesday, June 24, 15:00-18:00 Final examination and Online Submission of Worksheet Portfolio

Discussion topics in order of presentation:

- 1.Contextualization, Perception and Culture
- 2.Historical, Economic and Technological Influences
- 3.Issues of Representation I: Realism, Formalism and Race
4. Issues of Representation II: Narrative structure/story
- 5.Issues of Representation III: Genre and Myth
- 6.Issues of Representation IV: Gender and Gaze

There will additionally be one or two guest lectures by professional filmmakers; specific reading materials may be required for this.

Note: Depending on time and students' interest in and absorption of the material, some aspects may be extended and others reduced.

7.Course Requirements and Grading

The class will be divided between three sources of information: 1) lectures and seminars, outside reading; 2) worksheets and homework assignments, and 3) films viewed both in class and for homework. All worksheet and handouts, as well as links to the films or film clips will be posted on e-learning. Class lectures are unique to the course; students should take care to take as many notes as possible, although the videoconferences will be recorded and these recordings uploaded.

Most materials, or links to them, will be posted online. Film assignments are always accompanied by worksheets (which will be done for homework and also on forums). The longer film clips, and one or 2 feature films, you will watch at home; others that are shorter or unavailable online will be provided from the Instructor's own library, showing them from an external hard drive and/or putting up links for you to watch in advance, to be then discussed in the seminars, sometimes reviewing key segments.

SPECIAL NOTE: The links to the films will only be posted for the particular assignments to which they are related, so it is important to do your homework assignments on time.

Many, but not all, of the films are available on the Internet or commercially at a price.

You are expected to be able to write coherently and cohesively, at the least within the parameters of Composition I – in paragraphs, spell-checked and proof-read - and handle sources properly for the Essay Assignment (see under Homework for more information). Written work which does not meet these criteria will be marked down or not marked at all.

Lastly, a final examination will be given in order to evaluate students' understanding and application of vocabulary, lecture and reading material and homework assignments; part of the examination will be the analysis of a film clip in relation to these.

Segments of the course grade

Class engagement 20%

Engagement is similar to participation, but it means more than just active involvement. Being engaged means demonstrating the following knowledge and skills: (a) being accountable and taking responsibility; (b) leadership; (c) integrity and honesty; (d) being engaged with the topic and the class; (e) striving for excellence in all endeavors. Specifically, it means following up without being told to follow up; doing what you are supposed to do when you are supposed to do it and as well as you can do it; arriving on time with homework done, required materials organised, and ready to “work;” contributing to discussions in the breakout rooms and in the forums; keeping the faculty member aware of any situations that might impinge upon your performance; and fostering a relationship of mutual respect.

It also means that if you are unable to attend the classes that you inform the instructor in advance, and that if you have difficulty with connectivity you also inform the Instructor and take steps, either on your own or with UNYP IT, to correct this.

Worksheets 20%

There will also be articles and prepared worksheets which you will do in conjunction with seminar work for films you will see in class, and for homework. You will be expected to

*find them on e-learning when required

*submit them online according to format (14 pt, double-spaced, Times New Roman, in MS Word files) before the due dates/ times;

*have them in class on the required day;

*bring these back to class when they are assigned for homework and on occasion write specific analytical essays on them, or paragraphs within them, in preparation for a class seminar to be conducted the following class meeting. Because the worksheets assigned for homework will be discussed in the following class meeting, it is important that these be done on time.

*taking notes on them during breakout room discussions, and then resubmitting these versions, together with your original, for your Worksheet Portfolio at the end of the course (see below).

Most of the worksheet assignments do not require outside reading, apart from the materials mentioned above.

Essay 20%

There will be one major Essay Assignment, to be given at the end of the second week. This will be uploaded to Turn-It-In by the due date in an MS Word file.

Worksheet Portfolio 20%

All assignments are to be kept by students throughout the course and will be submitted at the end as a Portfolio; students are therefore advised to create a folder to keep these organized as files.

You are expected to make notes on your original during breakout room and full class discussions. This aspect will form part of your engagement grade, whether you are present during the actual class session or not.

Not submitting the Portfolio will additionally result in automatic failure of the class engagement grade.

Most of the worksheet assignments do not require outside reading, apart from the materials mentioned above. Some of them may be done as pair or group work for homework, as long as credit is given to all group members.

Final examination (20%)

This will consist of 2 parts: a gap-fill exercise and an essay worksheet for a film clip to be viewed on the examination day. The material will be from class lectures and

discussion, vocabulary and handouts, as well as the Reader, so you are advised to keep a folder of all the materials you receive and that are worked on in class.

Your written submissions (portfolio worksheets and term essay) will be graded primarily on the depth and quality of your analysis according to the material discussed in lecture. **All worksheets homework assignments and the essay are to be typed 14 pt., double-spaced, spell-checked and proof-read; when required, these must be submitted in MS Word files as Turnitin assignments on the e-learning.**

NOTE: You should keep all of the assignments in a folder, which will be submitted at the end of the course as your class Portfolio (see above).

Work not submitted to Turnitin in advance when required will not be given credit.

8. Key UNYP Policies

Attendance:

-It is your responsibility to show up to class on time, and follow the course via the Zoom recordings if you do not attend the class meetings. If for some reason you have connectivity issues, please consult IT. All classes will be recorded via the Zoom conferencing system and will be uploaded to the UNYP e-learning.

Academic Honesty

- The university's rules on academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, submitting false information) will be strictly enforced. Please familiarize yourself with the *student honor code* or ask your instructor for clarification.
- For examinations: copying from your neighbor, communicating with another student, using a phone or anything similar will result in you failing the test or quiz.
- On written papers, properly note your sources with academic citations. Cutting and pasting from the Internet without accurately citing the source may be considered plagiarism. Students will be required to submit papers electronically, which could mean an automated check for plagiarism via the Turnitin resource. Students may also be required to defend the content of a paper orally to an instructor as a check on authorship.
- If you have questions about any of the above, please consult with the instructor.

9.General Requirements

-In the event of illness or emergency, contact your instructor IN ADVANCE to determine whether special arrangements are possible.
-Students should also be familiar with the UNYP Mission Statement in regard to tolerance of multicultural, racial and gender identities and to behave accordingly. Some of the course content may on occasion bring students out of respective "comfort zones"; this is not to cause offence, but to challenge and also to illuminate various

social attitudes as represented in film, not as the Instructor's or the Institution's opinions.

-Students are additionally expected to respect the virtual space of the instructor and the other students in the class, and to understand the codes for basic acceptable and unacceptable behavior in a classroom/conference situation.

-Students are responsible for submitting all assignments (and via Turnitin when required) before the stated deadlines.

Homework

Homework is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. It is up to you to submit homework on time. As previously mentioned, we will be regularly reviewing your homework in class seminars, so you must have it prepared for the beginning of the class.

As mentioned above, submitted work, especially the Essay Assignment, must follow appropriate format style and be DOUBLE SPACED, 14 pt Times New Roman and submitted in MS Word files and/or onto Turnitin or it will not be marked and receive no credit. As mentioned above, it should additionally be of a standard at least within the parameters of Composition 1, in paragraphs, spell-checked and proof-read: if these criteria are not met, the instructor reserves the right to automatically fail the assignment.

Assignments must use appropriate analytical points of support from the text / lecture material for specific arguments or perceptions evoked. Work consisting of mere superficial description of film content and/or unsupported opinion will not be accepted.

Each student is responsible for attending every class meeting and completing all assignments on the due date. Late work, unless arranged with the instructor in advance, will not be accepted; any difficulties with the examination date must be discussed with the student's School Dean.

All assignments are due at the beginning of the next class meeting (unless otherwise noted), in order for students to participate in the subsequent seminar.

Plagiarism, or any form of cheating, will not be tolerated. The instructor reserves the right, according to UNYP academic policy, to require a student to attend a private consultation to discuss work suspected of not being the student's own, and to ask the student questions about it. Students who are unable to satisfactorily answer, or who do not co-operate or attend the meeting, will fail the assignment automatically. All plagiarized work will be forwarded to the student's School Dean and to the Registrar for inclusion in the student's personal file.

The use of mobile telephones will not be tolerated during the seminars.

Students should inform the Instructor of any ongoing connectivity issues, and consult with UNYP IT concerning specifics.

Criteria for Determination of Grade, including Evaluation Methods

Class engagement	20%
Worksheets	20%
Essay	20%

Portfolio	20%
Final examination	20%
Total	100%

Grading Scale	96-100 A	90-95 A-	87-89 B+
	83-86 B	80-82 B-	77-79 C+
	73-76 C	70-72 C-	67-69 D+
	63-66 D	60-62 D-	0-59 F

Letter Grade	Percent (%)	Generally Accepted Meaning
A	95-100	Outstanding work
A-	90-95	
B+	87-89	Good work, distinctly above average
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Acceptable work
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average
D	63-66	
D-	60-62	
F	0-59	Work that does not meet minimum standards for passing the course

10. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

- Students who complete the course will receive 6 ECTS credits, which are the equivalent of 3 American credits. (In other words, 2 ECTS credits equal 1 American credit hour.)
- Further, 1 ECTS credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of work. Thus, a 6-credit ECTS course (equivalent to a 3-credit American course) will total 150-180 projected work hours. For this course, students are expected to spend time in the following course-related activities:

Class Lectures and exams	45 hours
Reading/watching class-related material	50 hours
Mid-semester essay preparations	15 hours
Seminar/worksheet preparations	25 hours
Portfolio preparation	30 hours

TOTAL 165 hours

11. Technology Expectations

Students must keep copies of all worksheet assignments and submit them at the end of the course as a Portfolio in MS Word files.

The Essay assignment, and worksheet assignments, are to be word-processed and **DOUBLE-SPACED, 14 pt., and Times New Roman, spell-checked and proof-read**, and additionally some worksheet assignments submitted to Turn-It-In.

Make sure you are clear about the individual assignments.

Date Prepared and By Whom Prepared

May 2021 by MgA. Beth Lazroe, RSA Cert.