

GEM2005/HY2243 Film and History Syllabus 2003-2004

See also module web page:

<http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/hisilg/GEM2005.html>

[TOP](#)

Lecturers: A/P Ian Gordon and Dr. Tim Barnard

Venue: LT 11 Monday 4pm – 8pm

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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1. Through a study of film this module will examine the interpretation of history in film, and contrast filmic representation of history with printed sources. Students will critically evaluate a set of issues regarding film and history such as: What light do films shed on the past? How reliable are films as the grounds for making inferences about the past? What are the similarities and differences in the criteria for the critical evaluation of historical films and the historian's accounts of the past? The module is for students with an interest in film as a form of social expression.
2. On completion of this module students should be able to:
 - Initiate, conduct, and present findings on an aspect of film and history.
 - Develop and present arguments in a critical assessment of the ways in which popular films represent the past.
 - Deploy appropriate methodologies to evaluate the tension between social events and the representation of them in film.
 - Appreciate the debates over the interaction between the personal and the social in film.
 - Grasp the diverse genres that have characterised filmic depictions of social and cultural phenomena over the twentieth century, the context of twentieth-century cinema, and the contexts that shape the subjects of the films viewed and appreciate the methodologies that have produced this knowledge.

MODES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Four hour lecture-film showing. Students will read prior to the lectures and can use the remainder of the session to discuss in groups issues raised by the films. Group discussions will primarily occur outside the classroom through the IVLE.

SYNOPSIS

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The module will commence with an introductory session covering methodological and

theoretical issues regarding film and history. This will be followed by three themed areas of filmic representation covering such topics as: the Great Depression, Fascism/the Holocaust/World War II, the Cold War, the Vietnam War; Roman Empire, Nationalism and Anti-colonialism. Students will study up to twelve popular films from a variety of countries possibly including America, Australia, Britain, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Russia, Singapore, and Vietnam. *In 2003-2004 the three themed areas are: Searching For Truth; Defense and Fear in Asia; and The Cold War.*

Part I Introduction (1 week)

Key Issues of Film and History (Week 1: August 11)

Part II Searching for Truth (4 weeks)

1) *Ali - Boma Ye* (Week 2: August 18)

Film: *When We Were Kings*

2) *The Greatest* (Week 3: August 25)

Film: *Ali*

3) *British Justice?* (Week 4: September 1)

Film: *Breaker Morant*

4) *The Truth and the Rashomon Effect* (Week 5: September 8)

Film: *Rashomon* (1950)

Part III Defense and Fear in Asia (2 weeks)

1) *Martial Arts and Chinese Nationalism* (Week 6: September 15)

Film: *Iron Monkey*

2) *Japan and the Samurai Spirit* (Week 7: September 22)

Film: *Seven Samurai*

Part IV The Cold War (6 weeks)

1) *Precious Bodily Fluids* (Week 8: September 29)

Film: *Dr Strangelove*

2) *Imminent Danger* (Week 9: October 6)

Film: *Thirteen Days*

3) *Americans Don't Invade, They Liberate* (Week 10: October 13)

Film: *The Quiet American*

4) *Sukarno, Australians, and the Asian Horde* (Week 11: October 20)

Film: *The Year of Living Dangerously*

5) *It's a Conspiracy* (Week 12: October 27)

Film: *The Manchurian Candidate*

6) I Know But What's Your Name (Week 13: November 3)

Film: *Goldfinger*

ASSESSMENT

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The assessment in this module will be entirely continuous, without a final exam.

CA: 100%:

Students must complete five (5) out of a possible six (6) assignments/projects. On average, assignment/project every second week.

5 Projects (50%)

Discussion Group participation every week (25%)

Essay due in week 12 (25%)

TEXT AND READINGS

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All the essential readings will be available online through the IVLE.

Core reading:

Week 1 (Required Reading, prior to class)

Robert A. Rosenstone, "History in Images/History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History onto Film," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 93, No. 5. (Dec., 1988), pp. 1173-1185.

Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8762%28198812%2993%3A5%3C1173%3AHIIIWR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P>

Week 2 (Required Reading, prior to class)

Essential:

Robert A. Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996). Chap 2. "The Historical Film: Looking at the past in a Postliterate Age," pp. 45-79.

Reel to Reel: When We Were Kings:

http://www.filmeducation.org/secondary/s_archive/documentary/wwwKings/

Additional:

Carl R. Plantinga, *Rhetoric and Representation in Nonfiction Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Trevor Ponech, *What is Non-Fiction Cinema: On the Very Idea of Motion Picture Communication* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999).

Week 3 (Required Reading, prior to class)

Essential:

David Remnick, *King of the World: Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero* (New York: Random House, 1998). Chapters 5: The Bicycle Thief; Chapter 7:

Secrets

Additional:

David Remnick, *King of the World: Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero* (New York: Random House, 1998). Remaining chapters.

Week 4 (Required Reading, prior to class)

Essential:

Susan Dermody, Elizabeth Jacka. *The Screening of Australia*. Volume 2. Sydney: Currency Press, 1987. pp. 151-163.

Ross Huggard, "Marching to a Distant Drum," *Herald Sun* (May 27, 2003): 33.

"Beresford's Breaker," *Metro* No. 51 (Autumn 1980): 10-14.

Additional:

Graeme Turner, *National Fictions*. (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986), Chapter 5.

Week 5 (Required Reading, prior to class)

Essential:

Stuart Galbraith IV. *The Emperor and the Wolf: The Lives and Films of Akira Kurosawa and Toshiro Mifune* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001), pp. 127-42.

"Rashomon" by Ryunosuke Akutagawa in *Rashomon: Criterion Collection DVD*.

"In a Grove" by Ryunosuke Akutagawa in *Rashomon: Criterion Collection DVD*.

Additional:

David Desser, *The Samurai Films of Akira Kurosawa* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983).

Donald Richie, *The Films of Akira Kurosawa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

Simon Schama. *Dead Certainties: Unwarranted Speculations* (New York: Knopf, 1991).

Week 6 (Required Reading, prior to class)

Essential:

"A Brief Historical Tour of the HK Martial Arts Film"

http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/31/hk_brief1.html

Mark Pollard, "Wong Fei Hung: The Man & the Legend"

<http://www.kungfucinema.com/articles/2001-04-08-01.htm>

Additional:

Siu Leung Li, "Kung-Fu: Negotiating Nationalism and Modernity," *Cultural Studies* 15, (2001): 515-542.

<http://tamino.ingentaselect.com/vl=4279602/cl=14/nw=1/rpsv/cgi-bin/linker?ini=routledg&reqidx=/catchword/routledg/09502386/v15n3/s6/p515>

Week 7: (Required Reading, prior to class) Essential:

Winston L. King, *Zen and the Way of the Sword: Arming the Samurai Psyche* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), Chapter 5, pp. 95-121.

Week 8: (Required Reading, prior to class)

Essential:

Paul Boyer, "Dr Strangelove: Stanley Kubrick Presents the Apocalypse," in *Fallout: A Historian Reflects on America's Half-Century Encounter with Nuclear Weapons*.

Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998. pp. 95-102.

Additional:

Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991

Week 9: (Required Reading, prior to class)

Essential:

"The Cuban Missile Crisis, October 18-29, 1962" at: <http://www.hpol.org/jfk/cuban/>
Or the real audio files of Kennedy et al at:
<http://www.hpol.org/master.asp?t=search&type=title&value=cuba&Submit=Submit>

Week 10 (Required Reading, prior to class)

Essential:

George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, 3rd Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996), Chapter 2, pp. 47-79.
Kevin Hillstrom and Laurie Collier Hillstrom, *The Vietnam Experience: A Concise Encyclopedia of American Literature, Songs, and Film* (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), "The Quiet American", pp. 237-46.

Additional:

Graham Greene, *The Quiet American* (London: Heinemann, 1955).

Week 11 (Required Reading, prior to class)

Essential:

Michael Bliss, *Dreams within Dreams: The Films of Peter Weir* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 2000), Chapter 6: The Puppet Show (pp. 94-110).
Marek Haltof, *Peter Weir: When Cultures Collide* (London: Prentice Hall, 1996), Chapter 6, pp. 67-77.

Additional:

C.J. Koch, *The Year of Living Dangerously* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1986).

Week 12 (Required Reading, prior to class)

Essential:

"The Manchurian Candidate (1962)," in *The Films of Frankenheimer: Forty Years in Film: John Frankenheimer talks about his life in the cinema to Gerald Pratley* London: Cygnus Arts, 1998. pp. 35-41.

Week 13 (Required Reading, prior to class)

Essential:

Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott . *Bond And Beyond: The Political Career Of A Popular Hero*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1987. pp. 11-21; 99-114.

Additional:

Paul Kennedy. *The Rise And Fall Of The Great Powers: Economic Change And Military Conflict From 1500 To 2000*. New York: Random House, 1987. Selections.
Bernard Porter. *Britain, Europe, And The World, 1850-1986: Delusions Of Grandeur*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1987.
David Reynolds. *Britannia Overruled : British Policy And World Power In The Twentieth Century*. Harlow : Longman, 2000. Chapter 8.