GEM2005M/HY2243 Film and History
Syllabus 2004-2005

See also module web page:
http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/hisilg/2243.html

Lecturers: A/P Ian Gordon, Dr. Tim Barnard
Venue: LT 11 Monday 4pm – 8pm
Repeat Film Showing Wednesday 12 noon to 4pm. Central Library Theatrette 1.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES
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 & LEARNING
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.

SCHEDULE
Lecture and Film Showing: Monday 4pm to 8pm (or when the film finishes). LT11.
Repeat Film Showing Wednesday 12 noon to 4pm. Central Library Theatrette 1.
SYNOPSIS
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, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. In 2004-2005 the three themed areas are: History and Memory, Sports and Identity, and the City in History.

SYLLABUS

Week 1 August 9 is the National Day holiday. Consequently the first two weeks of lectures will be combined.

Part I Introduction (1 week)
Key Issues in Film and History (Week 2: August 16)

Part II History and Memory (5 weeks)
1) Yesterday: Documenting Memories (Week 2: August 16)

2) A Hard Days Night: Messy Narratives (Week 3: August 23)
   Film: Backbeat (1994)

3) The Truth and the Rashomon Effect (Week 4: August 30)
   Film: Rashomon (1950)

4) Truth, Justice, and the American Way (Week 5: September 6)
   Film: Wonderland (2003)

5) Who Are You?: Memory and the Past (Week 6: September 13)
   Film: Memento (2000)

Part III Sports and Identity (4 weeks)
1) Ali - Boma Ye (Week 7: September 27)
   Film: When We Were Kings (1996)

2) Empires, Sports, and Indian Identity (Week 8: October 4)
   Film: Lagaan: Once upon a time in India (2001)

3) Martial Arts and Chinese Identity (Week 9: October 11)
   Film: The Chinese Connection (aka Fist of Fury) (1972)

4) Martial Arts and Thai Identity (Week 10: October 18)
   Film: Ong Bak: Muay Thai Warrior (2003)
Part IV The City and History (3 weeks)

1) Forget It Jake (Week 11: October 25)
   Film: Chinatown (1974)

2) Off the Record, on the QT, and Very Hush Hush (Week 12: November 1)
   Film: LA Confidential (1997)

3) You’re Money, and You Don’t Even Know It (Week 13: November 8)
   Film: Swingers (1996)

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

**CA: 100%:**
Students must complete five (5) assignments/projects. On average, assignment/project every second week.

**5 Projects (50%)**
Project 1 due: August 27 (On films from weeks 2 & 3)
Project 2 due: September 17 (On films from weeks 4, 5 & 6)
Project 3 due: October 8 (On films from weeks 7 & 8)
Project 4 due: October 22 (On films from weeks 9 & 10)
Project 5 due: November 12 (On films from weeks 11, 12 & 13)
See: [http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/hisilg/2243projects.html](http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/hisilg/2243projects.html)

**Discussion Group** participation every week (25%)


**Texts & Readings**
All the essential readings will be available online through the IVLE under: Library eReserve. Be sure to download and save the reading because each individual student can only access it once through the Library eReserve.

**Core reading:**

**Week 1 (Required Reading, prior to class)**

**Additional Films of interest and relevance (Week 2 and 3):**
*A Hard Days Night* (1964)

Other volumes of *Beatles Anthology* (2003)

**Week 2 (Required Reading, prior to class)**

**Essential:**

**Additional:**

**Week 3 (Required Reading, prior to class)**

**Essential:**

**Week 4 (Required Reading, prior to class)**

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

**Additional:**
**Additional Films of interest and relevance (Weeks 4, 5 and 6):**

*Run Lola Run* (1999)
*Breaker Morant* (1981)

**Week 5 (Required Reading, prior to class)**

**Essential:**

**Week 6 (Required Reading, prior to class)**

**Essential:**

**Additional:**

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

**Essential:**

*Reel to Reel: When We Were Kings:*
[http://www.filmeducation.org/secondary/WhenKings.html](http://www.filmeducation.org/secondary/WhenKings.html)

**Additional:**

**Additional Films of interest and relevance (Week 7):**


**Week 8: (Required Reading, prior to class)**

**Essential:**
**Additional:**

**Week 9: (Required Reading, prior to class)**

**Essential:**
"A Brief Historical Tour of the HK Martial Arts Film" [http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/31/hk_brief1.html](http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/31/hk_brief1.html)

**Additional:**

**Additional Films of interest and relevance (Weeks 9 and 10):**
*Once Upon a Time in China* I-IV
*Iron Monkey* (1992)
*Enter the Dragon* (1973)

**Week 10 (Required Reading, prior to class)**

**Essential:**

**Weeks 11, 12, and 13 (Required Reading, prior to class)**

**Essential:**

**Additional:**


**Additional Films of interest and relevance (Weeks 11, 12, and 13):**

*To Live and Die in LA* (1984)

*LA Story* (1991)

*Booty Call* (1998)