GEM2005/HY2243 Film and History
Syllabus 2009-2010

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.

TEACHING MODES

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.

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. Topics vary from year to year. You should evaluate whether or not you want to take this module based on the information provided here and on the course web page. Be sure to read the student feedback about the module. Most students enjoy this module finding it both fun and challenging (read the feedback we are not making this up), but some students do get frustrated by the way the module works. If after reading all the material here you still do not understand what the module is about and how it works, and you already have received a place in it through CORS, come to the first lecture and listen carefully and then make your decision whether to take it or not.
SYLLABUS

Part I Introduction (Week 2: August 17)

Part II History and Facts
1) We all want to forget something, so we tell stories. (Week 2: August 17)
   Film: Rashomon (1950)

Part III Changing Perspectives of the Past
1) Shane! Come Back! (Week 3: August 24)
   Film: Shane (1953)
2) I ain’t different than anyone else no more (Week 4: August 31)
   Film: Unforgiven (1992)

Part IV It’s Just Chinatown
1) Chinatown, My Chinatown (Week 5: September 7)
   Film: Hollywood Chinese (2009)
2) Chop Suey! (Week 6: September 14)
   Film: Flower Drum Song (1961)

Film for Essay (to be advised) (Week 7: September 28)

Writing Week (Week 8: October 5)

Part V Rockin’ Reality
1) We’re not university material (Week 9: October 12)
   Film: This is Spinal Tap (1984)
2) We missed our train (Week 10: October 19)
   Film: Anvil: The Story of Anvil (2009)

Part VI Nationalism
1) I want... our country to love us as much as we love it! (Week 11: October 26)
   Film: Rambo: First Blood, Part II (1985)
2) We need our dignity, we need our olympics (Week 12: November 2)
   Film: The One Man Olympics (2008)
3) America *#&! Yeah! (Week 12: November 9)
   Film: Team America: World Police (2004)
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 4pm Monday August 24 Project 2 due noon Friday September 4 Project 3 due noon Friday September 18 Project 4 due noon Friday October 24 Project 5 due noon Friday November 13

Discussion Group participation every week is graded on quality not quantity (25%) The deadline for participation in discussion groups is 8pm the Thursday before the projects are due, but posting your only contributions on that Thursday will earn you very few marks. Hence, for Discussion 1, the closing date is 8pm Sunday August 23 Discussion 2: 8pm Thurs September 3 Discussion 3: 8pm Thurs September 17 Discussion 4: 8pm Thurs October 23 Discussion 5: 8pm Thurs November 12


Plagiarism will result in at very least a zero grade (0) for the assignment and students will be reported to their respective faculties. Students should consult the following link on how to avoid plagiarism: http://www.cdtl.nus.edu.sg/ctdlhome/special.htm#Plagiarism

Reading

All the essential readings are either available online through the links below or on 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: (Under each project question, there will be a main reading. For each film, there will be supplemental readings and films. All key readings are available through the IVLE)


Two very useful books are:


All these books and readings are in the Central Library.
PROJECT 1: How Do We Remember the Past?

Week 2 (August 17) (Rashomon)

PROJECT 2: Changing Perspectives of the Past

Week 3 (August 24) (Shane)

Week 4 (August 31) (Unforgiven)

PROJECT 3: It's Just Chinatown

Week 5 (September 7) (Hollywood Chinese)

Week 6 (September 14) (Flower Drum Song)

ESSAY READING Week 7 (September 28) (Film for Essay TBA)

Week 8 (October 5) (Writing Week)

PROJECT 4: Rockin' Reality

Week 9 (October 12) (This is Spinal Tap)
John Covach, " Stylistic Competencies, Musical Humor, and This is Spinal Tap," in Elizabeth West Martin and Richard Hermann eds, Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz since

**Week 10 (October 19) (Anvil: The Story of Anvil)**

**PROJECT 5: Nationalism**

**Week 11 (October 26) (Rambo: First Blood, Part II)**

**Week 12 (November 2) (One Man Olympics)**

**Week 13 (November 9) (Team America: World Police)**