

General Information

Course name	Media in the USA - American Film	ECTS Credits	3
		Semester	winter

Aims

The main objective of this course is to provide students with a set of information that will help them develop and/or improve essential analytical skills in interpreting contemporary American cinema. The course will enable students to acquire knowledge of major developments in American cinema, from silent films to the present day, and explore their connections with broader context. It will attempt to increase students' appreciation of diverse styles and genres, as well as help them recognize how some of the popular genres express social and cultural tensions. One of the main aims of this course, however, is to enable students question their own role as passive spectators and increase their ability to watch films actively and critically.

Contents

The course presents an overview of American cinema, focusing primarily on Hollywood production (both classical and contemporary). Topics covered include the Hollywood style, film techniques, the studio and star system, the viewing of films and analysis of their relationship to society.

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: What is American Cinema? Reading: Bazin, Andre. The Myth of Total Cinema in What is Cinema. London: University of California Press, 1967. 27-32. Films: The Birth of a Nation, D.W. Griffith (1915)

Week 3: Silent Film. Films: The Docks of New York, Josef Von Sternberg (1928) The Street Angel, Frank Borzage (1928)

Week 4: Classical Hollywood / Sound and Color. Films: The Ghost Ship, Mark Robson (1943), The Adventures of Robin Hood, Michael Curtiz, William Keighley (1938)

Week 5: Classical Hollywood / Genre. Films: Sunset Boulevard, Billy Wilder (1950) , It Happened One Night, Frank Capra (1934), The Searchers, John Ford (1956)

Week 6: Classical Hollywood / Narrative + Star system. Reading: The Actantian Model, PDF. Films: It's a Wonderful Life, Frank Capra (1946) It Happened One Night, Frank Capra (1934)

Week 7 Screening: All That Heaven Allows, Douglas Sirk (1955) Writing assignment – submission

Week 8 Discussion – All That Heaven Allows. Writing assignment - evaluation

Week 9: Post-classical and New Hollywood. Reading: Bordwell, David. „Intensified Continuity Visual Style in Contemporary American Film.“ Film Quarterly. Volume 55.No. 3 (Spring) (2002): 16-28. Web. 28 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/fq.2002.55.3.16>>

Forwath, Alexander. The Impure Cinema: New Hollywood 1967-1976. 1st edition. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004. 9-17. Print. Films: Bonnie and Clyde, Arthur Penn (1967), Jaws, Steven Spielberg (1975)

Week 10: Tutorial

Week 11: 1980s, 90s and beyond. Films: Do the Right Thing, Spike Lee (1989), Dead Man, Jim Jarmush (1995)

Week 12: Hollywood and critical approaches. Reading: Maltby, R. Hollywood Cinema. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. Ch. Ideology (300-308) Ray, Robert B. 1985. Hollywood and Ideology. In HILL, John and GIBSON, Pamela (eds.). American Cinema and Hollywood:

Critical Approaches. 1st edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2000, pp. 137-138. Print.

Week 13: Tutorials

Week 14: Tutorials

Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation: To complete the course, students need to complete both parts of the assessment - continuous and final. Continuous assessment requires students' active participation in each lesson (participation in discussions based on reading required texts and watching required films). Each student will also be asked to prepare short written assignments on a weekly basis to be able to contribute to the discussion about individual films. If a student fails to provide these assignments, he/she will not receive 30% of the final evaluation. To complete the course, students must also successfully pass the essay-question test at the end of the course. The test comprises 70% of the final grade. It is also expected that students attend each class according to the schedule - both contact and online classes. No transfers among the groups are allowed. Should someone miss three or more classes, he/she will not receive credits for the course no matter what their overall results are, also in the online environment. Attendance is compulsory, every absence must be properly announced and justified to the lecturer. Final assessment: The final grade will be calculated as a sum of the score for assignment(s) - assignments (30%), test (70%). Attendance: Students are expected to attend each class according to the schedule, which applies to both contact and online classes. No transfers among the groups are allowed. Should students miss three or more classes, they will not receive credits for the course no matter what their overall results are. FINAL EVALUATION : A 93-100% B 86-92% C 78-85% D 72-77% E 65-71% FX 64 and less

Bibliography

BAZIN, Andre. The Myth of Total Cinema in What is Cinema. London: University of California Press, 1967. 27-32.

MALTBY, Richard. Hollywood Cinema. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. Selected chapters.

BORDWELL, David. „Intensified Continuity Visual Style in Contemporary American Film.“

Film Quarterly. Volume 55.No. 3 (Spring). (2002): 16-28. Web. 28 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/fq.2002.55.3.16>>

HORWATH, Alexander. The Impure Cinema: New Hollywood 1967-1976. 1st edition. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004. 9-17. Print.

RAY, Robert B. 1985. Hollywood and Ideology. In HILL, John and GIBSON, Pamela (eds.).

American Cinema and Hollywood: Critical Approaches. 1st edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2000, pp. 137-138. Print.

Recommended literature:

BORDWELL, David, THOMPSON, Kristin and STAIGER, Janet. 2002. The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960. 6th edition. London: Routledge. 2002. Print.

ELSAESSER, Thomas. 2012. The Persistence of Hollywood. New York: Routledge. 2012. Print.

ELSAESSER, Thomas, and BUCKLAND, Warren. 2002. Studying Contemporary American Film. New York: Oxford University Press. 2002. Print.

ELSAESSER, Thomas, HORWATH, A., and KING, N. (eds.). 2004. The Last Great American Picture Show. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 2004. Print.

HAYWARD, Susan. 2000. Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts. 2nd edition. London: Routledge. 2000, pp. 190-195. Print.

HILL, John and GIBSON, Pamela (eds.). American Cinema and Hollywood: Critical Approaches. 1st edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2000. Print.

RAY, Robert B. 1985. A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema: 1930-1980. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1985. Print.