

Eng 380: Film, Media, and History: The Hollywood Renaissance (1967-1980)

Winter 2014 M/W 12:00-1:50 pm MCK 214 CRN: 23393	Instructor: Dr. Stephen Rust Email: srust@uoregon.edu Office: PLC 239 / Phone: 346-0058 Office hours: M/W 2:15-3:45pm
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Course Description:

This course will constitute an historical survey of the New Hollywood period, examining the development of the U.S. film industry from approximately 1967-1980. “The Hollywood Renaissance” or “New Hollywood” refers to a unique period of U.S. studio filmmaking driven largely by up-and-coming writer/directors. These young filmmakers, influenced by the American social upheavals of the 1960s and the cinematic innovations of European filmmakers, brought explicit sex, drugs, rock and roll, and a countercultural ethos to the American cinema in the late 1960s and throughout the decade of the 1970s. According to film journalist Peter Biskind, the New Hollywood period was “the last time Hollywood produced a body of risky, high-quality work . . . that defied traditional narrative conventions, that challenged the tyranny of technical correctness, that broke the taboos of language and behavior, that dared to end unhappily” (Biskind 17). We will supplement our historical readings with formal close analysis of the films we screen, advanced library research methodologies, plus group presentations and extensive class discussion.

Required Texts:

Biskind, Peter. *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*

Cook, David. *Lost Illusions: American Cinema in the Shadow of Watergate and Vietnam*

* Access to Blackboard for Additional Course Readings, Documents, and Assignments

Recommended/Optional: Corrigan, Timothy *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* (8th Edition)

Learning Outcomes: Students who participate fully in course assignments and activities will learn to:

- apply theoretical, critical, and historical concepts to the analysis of cinema as an economic industry, aesthetic medium, and cultural form.
- recognize and critique the relationships between the film industry, popular film texts, and the cultural contexts –in which these film texts are situated with particular attention to US culture between 1967 and 1980.
- research, gather, and synthesize information from primary and secondary sources and apply this information to the analysis of film and media texts.
- develop and present original arguments supported by evidence from multiple sources in both group presentations and individual essays.
- discuss their insights into the readings and film screenings and respond thoughtfully to the insights of their peers during class discussion.

Participation: This is a discussion based class. As such it is absolutely vital that you complete the shared reading assignment prior to attending class. As you read, mark any passages that strike you as interesting or challenging and come to class with your texts and ready to discuss the texts.

Screenings: Watching films in a classroom requires you pay close attention to and take detailed notes on *how* the events unfold on screen and *why* each film takes its own specific form. If you are absent during a screening day you will need to make arrangements to see the film on your own. Several films are R rated. If this will be an issue for you please discuss it with me right away.

Class Meetings & Procedures: Attendance is required and checked daily. You are expected to attend all class meetings and participate in all discussions. Screening and discussing films in a group setting is vital to critical learning. If you plan to be absent on a given day you must contact me *in advance* to arrange make-up work/exams. The following attendance policy is straightforward and non-negotiable: **FOUR** absences no questions asked. You are responsible for any missed screenings, notes, or assignments due. Starting with your **FIFTH** absence, for any reason, each absence will result in the automatic deduction of one-third letter grade from your final grade (e.g., from A- to B+).

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism: The University of Oregon values academic integrity. You are responsible for understanding and adhering to the standards of academic honesty outlined in the student handbook. Document ALL sources consulted in preparing your work, including TV shows, magazines, your peer, of course, anything found on the web. At a minimum, documented plagiarism will result in course failure. See the Library website for resources and information on citation styles and practices.

Access For Students With Disabilities: If you have a registered disability, which you believe may affect your performance in this course, please see or contact me the first week of the term so we can make the necessary arrangements for your fullest access to the course and its activities.

Assessment and Evaluation: (A = 93%, A- = 90%, B+ = 88%, B = 83%, etc.).

Grades will be based on:

- 10% Group presentation and Participation in class discussions and activities
- 30% Reading Responses
- 25% Midterm Exam
- 35% Research Paper (Including proposal, annotated bibliography, and peer review)

Reading Responses: You are responsible for completing six 1-2 page single-spaced responses to the assigned readings and films. Type these in 12 point font and use double-sided printing. Responses should both summarize and analyze the reading. I want to tell that you not only completed the reading but are thinking critically about the readings and applying them to the media texts. In other words, your first couple of paragraphs should summarize the entire reading(s), your next paragraph or two should analyze specific passages and keywords in the reading(s), and your last couple of paragraphs should use the reading to analyze specific sequences, film techniques, characters, and plot elements in the film(s). Use formal prose. If you have personal opinions about the films or readings, save these for the very end of your response. Directly cite from the readings when necessary and use MLA or Chicago citation style. The goal of these responses will be to generate an ongoing discussion about and bring these ideas into play in class discussions. Responses are due in class on Wednesdays of the weeks indicated. I do not generally like to accept assignments by email but if you will be absent you may email your assignment to me before class. Late responses are accepted up to one week late at a 40% penalty.

Midterm Exam: Your midterm exam will consist of multiple choice, matching, true/false, chronology, and essay questions and will cover the material from the readings and films discussed Weeks 1-5.

Presentation: Each student must sign up for a group presentation during the term. Presentations will take place on the day listed on the course schedule. There will be six presentation groups consisting of 6-7 students each. Each student will be individually responsible for a 3 minute presentation on a topic related to the week's film. Each student will write a 300-word summary/outline of their research (plus citations) and bring this to class on the day you present. Each group should cover the following topics: **a)** Production, **b)** Reception, **c)** Cast and Crew, **d)** Cultural/ Historical references, **e)** Related film/media

texts. The group should meet twice: once to divide topics and again to practice. Your group will have approximately 20 minutes to present 20 slides using Prezi, Microsoft PowerPoint, Google Docs or similar software. Slides should be filled primarily with images, not text. Do not simply read from your slides. Your group may also include a video clip. It is YOUR responsibility to make sure our classroom technology can support the media you plan to show. Get to know your fellow presenters as you will need to be in contact with them before your presentation. Get contact information in class or via our Blackboard site.

Research Essay and Annotated Bibliography: Your final project for the course is to write a 10-12 page research paper exploring a specific aspect of the New Hollywood Period. Your job is to identify a question that is currently at issue within the broad context of this course and endeavor to develop an original conclusion/solution to this question. You will complete an in class jigsaw activity (more details in class) and a research source worksheet to help you get started on your research. The project itself will include a 500-word proposal and 1000-word annotated bibliography of 10 sources due week 9, a rough draft of at least 6 pages for peer review due week 10 week 10 a peer-review, and a final draft of 10-12 pages with a bibliography of 10-15 sources due during finals week. You are invited to discuss you project with me during office hours and visit the Writing Lab in 72 PLC. The essay should evidence depth of reasoning and textured writing that integrates pertinent quotations from the source material. A minimum of five direct citations from your source texts are required. Include page numbers and use MLA or Chicago format. Use double-sided printing. Format: Double-Spaced, Size 12 Times New Roman Font.

Research Information: Research librarian Elizabeth Peterson <emp@uoregon.edu> and I have put together a number of resources of our course that should help you get started in your research. First, remember that you will have to do a lot of digging to uncover the relationships between these films and history – so think creatively when considering sources. Second, once you start talking to people about your project the recommendations will come pouring in – so get started early. Third, the optional Corrigan textbook has an extensive list of resources related to film and media scholarship. Fourth, Google will only get you so far; so the KNIGHT LIBRARY website is a key starting point. In addition to the general search databases for books and articles you should also make use of the cinema studies resource guide designed specifically for this course: <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/english/380.html>.

Course Schedule

Week 1: The Times They Are a-Changin': American Culture in Flux

Screening: *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969)

Reading: Biskind: Chapters Intro-Chapter 3 and PDF: Writing about Film (Available on Blackboard)

Due: Reading Response 1 due in class on Wednesday

Week 2: The Collapse of the Old Hollywood and Rise of the New Hollywood

Screening: *M*A*S*H* (Robert Altman, 1970)

Reading: Cook: Chapters 1-2 and Cook p. 89-98

Due: Reading Response

Week 3: The Blockbuster Film

MLK Jr. Holiday on Monday: Screen on your own: *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972)

Reading: Cook: Chapter 3 and Biskind: Chapter 4-7

Due: Reading Response 3; Group 1 Presentation

Week 4: The Rise of the Auteur Cinema

Screening: *Mean Streets* (Martin Scorsese, 1973)
Read: Cook: Chapter 4 and Biskind: Chapters 8-10
Due: Reading Response 4; Group 2 Presentation

Week 5: The Fall of the Auteur Cinema

Screening: *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (George Hickenlooper, Fax Bahr, and Eleanor Coppola, 1991, R)
Reading: Biskind: Chapters 11-14
Due: *In-Class Midterm on Wednesday of Week 5*

Week 6: Hollywood and its Audiences: Genre Films

Screening: *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973)
Reading: Cook: pgs. 220-238 & PDF: Doing Film History
Due: In-Class Jigsaw Research Activity; Group 3 Presentation

Week 7: Revisionist and Exploitation Genres

Screening: *Blazing Saddles* (Mel Brooks, 1974)
Reading: Cook: Chapters 5 & 6
Due: Reading Response 5; Group 4 Presentation
Meet in Library 267B on Wednesday for research

Week 8: Deal Making and Location Shooting: Oregon's Vital Role in the Hollywood Renaissance

Screening: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Milos Forman, 1975)
Reading: Cook: Chapter 8 & PDF: Excerpts from Ken Kesey's novel
Due: Reading Response 6; Group 5 Presentation
Visit this week to the Kesey Archives at the Knight Library Special Collections

Week 9: Doing Film History: Researching the Hollywood Renaissance

Screening: *The Kid Stays in the Picture* (Nanette Burstein and Brett Morgen, 2002)
Reading: Cook: Chapters 7 and 11
Due: Research Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography due Wednesday; Group 6 Presentation

Week 10: The New New Hollywood – Globalization and Media Conglomeration

Screening: *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982)
Reading: PDF: Polishing and Editing a Film Essay
Due: Research Paper Rough Draft (6 pages minimum) due on Wednesday for Peer Review

Finals Week:

Post Research Paper Final Draft to Blackboard by Monday of Finals Week at 10:00 am