

27847 - Films in Context I

Syllabus Information

Academic Year: 2021/22

Subject: 27847 - Films in Context I

Faculty / School: 103 - Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Degree: 416 - Degree in English

ECTS: 6.0

Year: 4 and 3

Semester: First semester

Subject Type: Optional

Module:

1. General information

2. Learning goals

3. Assessment (1st and 2nd call)

4. Methodology, learning tasks, syllabus and resources

4.1. Methodological overview

This optional course is the continuation of the compulsory courses Film Analysis I and II, taught in the second year of the degree. The course will consist in the analysis of a list of audiovisual texts within a series of cultural and historical contexts. The main goal is to sharpen the critical acumen of the students and their ability to analyse audiovisual texts in context.

4.2. Learning tasks

This is a 6 ECTS course organized as follows:

- **Theory sessions** (1.2 ECTS: 30 hours). Introductory lecture, film analysis. Introduction to the formal, historical and cultural contexts of the text.
- **Practice sessions** (1.2 ECTS:30 hours). Individual and group work. Film analysis and debate. Guided analysis of clips from a selection of films.
- **Individual and group tutorials** (1 ECTS: 2.5 hours). Guidelines for the writing of essays . Essay marking.
- **Essay writing** (2,2 ECTS: 55 hours). Viewing and analysis of the compulsory audiovisual texts. Writing of essays.
- **Autonomous work and study** (1.2 ECTS: 30 hours). Personal work and reading of compulsory bibliography.
- **Assessment tasks** (0.1 ECTS: 2.5 hours) It will consist on a theory and practice exam.

4.3. Syllabus

Part 1 Light

1a The Transition to Sound. Pre-Code Films.

2b The theory of comedy. Romantic comedy. The films of Ernst Lubitsch.

Class analysis: *Trouble in Paradise* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1932)

Essay 1: *The Smiling Lieutenant* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1931)

2 The Production Code and Classical Hollywood Cinema. Screwball comedy

Class analysis: *The Lady Eve* (Preston Sturges, 1941)

Essay 2: *Bringing Up Baby* (Howard Hawks, 1938)

Readings 1 and 2:

Grindon, Leger. 'The Transition to Sound Cluster, 1930-3?' and 'The Screwball Cycle, 1934-42?'. In *The Hollywood Romantic Comedy*. Maldon: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 26-31 and 31-38.

Mashon, Mike. 'Pre-Code Hollywood.' *Sight and Sound*, May 2014, 20-26.

The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930 (Hays Code). *Arts Reformation.Com*.
<http://www.artsreformation.com/a001/hays-code.html>.

Paul, William. 'The Purest Style.' In *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*. New York: Columbia U.P., 19-33.

3 The Paramount Decision and the 1950s. The Comedies of Seduction

Class analysis: *Pillow Talk* (Michael Gordon, 1959)

Readings:

Dirks, Tim. 'The History of Film: the 1950s.' <http://www.filmsite.org/50sintro.html>

Jeffers McDonald, Tamar. 'The Sex Comedy.' In *Romantic Comedy: Boy Meets Girl Meets Genre*. London & New York: Wallflower, 2007, 38-58.

Grindon, Leger. 'The Comedies of Seduction Cycle: The Playboy, the Golddigger and the Virgin, 1953-66.' In *The Hollywood Romantic Comedy*. Maldon: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 45-50.

Part 2 Dark

4 The films of Alfred Hitchcock. Hitchcock's influences. Point of view and film form. Major themes.

Class analysis: *Notorious* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1946)

Essay 3: *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1956)

Readings:

Bell, James, ed. *A selection from 39 Steps to the Genius of Alfred Hitchcock*. London: BFI, 2012.

Orr, John. 'Hitch as Matrix-Figure: Hitchcock and Twentieth-Century Cinema.' In Marshall Deutelbaum and Leland Poague, eds. *A Hitchcock Reader*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 47-67.

Yacowar, Maurice. 'Hitchcock's Imagery and Art.' In Deutelbaum and Poague, eds., 25-34.

5 *Film Noir*. The creation of noir. Visual style and narrative structure. Alienation and determinism. Noir and feminism.

Class analysis: *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1944)

Essay 4: *The Reckless Moment* (Max Ophüls, 1949)

Readings:

Cassuto, Leonard. 'Introduction: Sentimentality, Sympathy, Serial Killers.' *Hard-Boiled Sentimentality: The Secret History of American Crime Stories*. New York: Columbia UP, 2009, 1-21.

Place, Janey and Peterson, Lowell. 'Some Visual Motifs of *Film Noir*.' In Alain Silver and James Ursini, eds. *Film Noir Reader*. New York: Limelight, 1997 (1972), 65-74.

Schrader, Paul. 'Notes on Film Noir.' In Silver and Ursini, eds., 53-62.

6 The New American Cinema. The social movements of the 1960s. The influence of Art Cinema and 'auteur theory'. New genres and new directors.

Class analysis: *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974)

Readings:

Grant, Barry Keith. 'Movies in the 1960s.' In Barry Keith Grant ed. *American Cinema of the 1960s*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2008, 1-21.

Haskell, Molly. 'The Sixties.' *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1974, 323-339.

4.4. Course planning and calendar

This course is taught in two weekly sessions. The course schedule will be handed to the students on the first day of class and will include the specific content of the theory and practice sessions. The introductory sessions will include the basic aspects of each one of the topics and the analysis of a selection of clips from the films in each topic. The practice sessions will consist in the analysis of the films in context, which the students will carry out with the assistance of the professor.

At the end of each topic, the students will be offered the opportunity to write a short essay which the professor will mark as part of the continuous assessment.

Further information concerning the timetable, classroom, office hours, assessment dates and other details regarding this

course, will be provided on the first day of class or please refer to the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts website (academic calendar: <http://academico.unizar.es/calendario-academico/calendario>, timetable: <https://fyl.unizar.es/horario-de-clases#overlay-context=horario-de-clases>; assessment dates: <https://fyl.unizar.es/calendario-de-examenes#overlay-context=>)