

FI249-15 Classical Hollywood

20/21

Department

SCAPVC - Film & Television Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Julie Lobalzo Wright

Credit value

15

Module duration

9 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This core module will build on what students have learned about Hollywood in first year modules (such as Film History and Screen Technologies) by expanding their knowledge about Hollywood in what has been deemed its 'classic' period. The module will illustrate important aspects about the industrial system that dominated Hollywood filmmaking from the late 1920s to the early 1960s, including style, genre, and stars. By first focusing on Hollywood as an industry, examining the practices and cultures of film production, the module will then consider its ideological influence by promoting specific American values and traditions through political issues, such as race and ethnicity.

The exact content of the module in any given year will depend on the expertise and research interests of the module convenor. The following is an example.

The module will be divided into four parts:

Part I. Style and System

Part II. Politics

Part III. Ideology

Part IV. Decline of the System

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

- To provide an appreciation of the classical Hollywood period
- To understand the industrial studio system
- To access some of the social and cultural contexts that helped shape classic Hollywood cinema
- To examine the ideological influence of this period of cinema

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Style and System

Week 1: Classical Hollywood Style

Film: Stagecoach (John Ford, 1939)

Week 2: Genre and Hollywood Studios: Musical

Film: Singin' in the Rain (Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, 1952)

Week 3: Classical Hollywood Stardom

Film: Mildred Pierce (Michael Curtiz, 1945)

Politics

Week 4: Hollywood and Politics I: The New Deal and World War II

Film: Casablanca (Michael Curtiz, 1942)

Week 5: Hollywood and Politics II: The Blacklist and Cold War

Film: Invasion of the Body Snatchers (Don Siegel, 1956)

Week 6: Reading Week

Ideology

Week 7: Hollywood and Ideology: Race and Ethnicity

Film: The Defiant Ones (Stanley Kramer, 1958)

Week 8: Hollywood and Ideology II: Antebellum South

Film: Dixie (A. Edward Sutherland, 1943)

Decline of the System

Week 9: Independent and Exploitation Cinema (B films)

Film: Jailhouse Rock (Richard Thorpe, 1957)

Week 10: Auteurs and a 'New' Hollywood

Film: Psycho (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the Hollywood classical style
- Identify key industrial contexts of the studio system
- Consider ideology in relation to Hollywood as an American Industry
- Understand certain political contexts that informed filmmaking in the classical period

Indicative reading list

Allen, Robert C. (1999) 'The Role of the Star in Film History: Joan Crawford' in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, Leo Braudy and M. Cohen (eds.) (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 547-561.

Bordwell, David, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson (1985) *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge)

Campbell, Jr., Edward D.C. (1981) *The Celluloid South: Hollywood and the Southern Myth* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press)

Cook, Pam (ed.) (2007) *The Cinema Book*, Third edition (London: British Film Institute)

Cripps, Thomas (1993) *Making Movies Black: The Hollywood Message Movie from World War II to the Civil Rights Era* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press)

Doherty, Thomas (2002) *Teenager and Teenpics: Juvenilization of American Movies* (Philadelphia: Temple University)

Doherty, Thomas (2018) *Show Trial: Hollywood, HUAC, and the Birth of the Blacklist* (Chichester and New York: Columbia University Press)

Dunne, Michael (2010) 'Bing Crosby's Cinematic: "Song of the South"', *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 32:1, pp. 31-38.

Dyer, Richard (1992) 'Entertainment and Utopia' in *Only Entertainment* (New York and London: Routledge), pp. 17-34.

Gledhill, Christine (2007) 'History of Genre Criticism', in Pam Cook (ed.) *The Cinema Book*, Third Edition. London: BFI, pp. 250-259.

James, David (2016) *Rock 'N' Film: Cinema's Dance With Popular Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press)

Knight, Arthur (2002) *Disintegrating the Musical: Black Performance and American Musical Film* (Durham and London: Duke University Press)

Lindholm, Charles and John A. Hall (2000) 'Frank Capra Meets John Doe: Anti-politics in American National Identity' in Mett Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (eds.) *Cinema and Nation* (London and New York: Routledge), pp. 32-44.

MacDowell, James (2013) *Happy Endings in Hollywood Cinema: Cliché, Convention and the Final Couple* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

Maltby, Richard (2003) *Hollywood Cinema*, Second Edition (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell)

Publishing)

Mann, Katrina (2004) “‘You’re Next!’: Postwar Hegemony Besieged in ‘Invasion of the Body Snatchers’”, *Cinema Journal* 44:1, pp. 49-68.

McDonald, Paul (2000) ‘Controlling the System’ in *The Star System: Hollywood’s Production of Popular Identities* (London: Wallflower Press), pp. 39-66.

Morgan, Iwan and Philip John Davies (eds.) (2016) *Hollywood and the Great Depression: American Film, Politics and Society in the 1930s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

Ray, Robert B. (1985) *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press)

Russell, James (2006) ‘Debts, Disasters and Mega-Musicals: The Decline of the Studio System’ in Linda Ruth Williams and Michael Hammond (eds.) *Contemporary American Cinema* (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill), pp. 41-61.

Sarris, Andrew (1996) *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions: 1929-1968* (Da Capo Press)

Schatz, Thomas (1988) *Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* (New York: Metropolitan Books)

Smith, Jeff (2014) *Film Criticism, The Cold War, and the Blacklist* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press)

Wollen, Peter (1992) *Singin’ in the Rain* (London: BFI)

Wood, Robin (2002) *Hitchcock’s Film’s Revisited, Revised Edition* (New York: Columbia University Press)

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

This module develops skills of audio-visual literacy, through historical, textual, and ideological analysis of the moving image. It develops the student's understanding of frameworks that have been relevant to the study of Hollywood cinema.

Transferable skills

critical and analytical thinking

independent research skills

teamwork

clarity and effectiveness of communication- written and oral

accurate and persuasive writing

audio-visual literacy

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Other activity	18 hours (12%)
Assessment	114 hours (76%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Other activity description

Screenings each week

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time
Final Essay	100%	114 hours

Detailed information will be provided during the term including essay questions that relate to each week on the module. The essay will ask students to apply what they have learned about classical Hollywood through detailed analysis of one or more films.

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback sheets and annotated essays

Availability

Pre-requisites

To take this module, you must have passed:

- All of
 - [FI114-15 Film and Television Analysis](#)

Post-requisite modules

If you pass this module, you can take:

- FI355-15 Film Aesthetics 1

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 2 of UFIA-W620 Undergraduate Film Studies
- Year 2 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature
- Year 2 of UFRA-R1WA Undergraduate French with Film Studies