

HUM 201: Film Genre

Course Head:

Instructor: Ma Lunpeng

Lectures: Tu. We. Th. F. 5:30 pm – 9:55 pm, Humanity Room 3018

Department: Department of Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies

Office Hours: Tu. 10:00 am – 12:00pm; Humanities 2116

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Course Description:

This course will introduce students to the concept of genre through three cinematic genres: Musical, Film Noir, and Melodrama. By focusing on the representative genres and engaging each of them with daily screening, we explore both thematic and theoretical issues such as film narrative, technology, spectatorship, gender, race, ethics, national identity, and global representation. When investigating generic conventions and developments, we also look at how a certain genre is “invented,” contested, metamorphosed, translated or perished, thereby forming a contextualized, historicized view.

This course satisfies DEC **category D**.

You can access class information on-line at: <http://blackboard.sunysb.edu> Please check blackboard frequently, as all course-related issues and materials will be posted there. For help or more information see: <http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/helpdesk/docs/blackboard/bbstudent.php>

Grading:

1. Attendance and participation: 10%

Attendance will be taken every time throughout the term, each of which accounts for 10% of the class.

Participation in class discussion is also an integral part of the credit.

2. Two Exams: 40%

There will be two exams given throughout the term. Possible formats are fill-in-the blank, short-answer, or multiple-choice questions. No make-up quizzes will be given.

3. Final Exam: 50%

The format will be similar to quizzes with a possible addition of one or two short-essay questions on the films we have watched.

Required Texts:

1. One book is available for purchase at the University Bookstore and at Stony Books (1081 Route 25 A).

Barry Langford, *Film Genre: Hollywood and Beyond*, 2005

Barry Keith Grant ed., *Film Genre Reader III*, 2003

2. Other supplementary articles with asterisk * are indicted below, which will be available on Blackboard.

3. Recommended Reading is not required, but strongly recommended for the extended interest.

Recommended books:

Rick R. Altman, *The American Film Musical*, 1989

Film Screenings:

All students are responsible for watching the film on the day it is screened. If you can obtain the film and watch it on your own, that is fine. But if not, you must attend the screening.

42nd Street, 1933, Lloyd Bacon (89')

An American in Paris, 1951, Vincente Minnelli (112')

Dancer in the Dark, 2000, Lars von Trier (140')

Double Indemnity, 1944, Billy Wilder (107')

The Big Sleep, 1946, Howard Hawks (114)

Hard Boiled, 1992, John Woo (126')

Blonde Venus, 1932, Josef von Sternberg (93')

The Goddess, 1934, Wu Yonggang (85')

Cocktail, 1988, Roger Donaldson (104')

Class Schedule:

01/05 **Introduction and syllabus**
Screening: *42nd Street*

MUSICAL

01/06 **Genre history and its contenders**
Film Genre (1-28) "Who Needs Genres?"
Screening: *An American in Paris*

01/07 **American genre representative**
Film Genre (82-104) "The Musical: Genre and Form"
Screening: *Dancer in the Dark*

01/08 **(De-)mystification of the musical**
Film Genre Reader III "The Self-Reflexive Musical and the Myth of Entertainment"
Screening: *Double Indemnity*

FILM NOIR

01/12 **A "Borrowed" term and genre**
Exam #1
Film Genre (210-232) "Film Noir"
Screening: *The Big Sleep*

01/13 **Noir, war, and ideology**
Film Genre Reader III "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism Revisited: The Progressive Genre"
Screening: *Hard Boiled*

01/14 **Film Noir and its transformation**
Film Genre Reader III "Global Noir: Genre Film in the Age of Transnationalism"
Screening: *Blonde Venus*

MELODRAMA

01/15 **A Long tradition and mode**
Film Genre (29-53) "Before Genre: Melodrama"
Screening: *The Goddess*

01/19 **Melodrama: West and East**
Exam #2
* Williams Rothman, "*The Goddess*: Reflections on melodrama East and West"
Screening: *Cocktail*

01/20 **"Deconstructing" genre**
* Richard Altman, "Genre Mixed: *Cocktail*"
NO screening this time, preparation for the final

01/21 **Final Exam**

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS) STATEMENT

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services (631) 632-6748 or <http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/dss/>.

They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instance of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/>

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, and/or inhibits students' ability to learn.