
Term 2: 2016-2017
Week-by-week overview


[Seminar exercise to do in advance of the following week]


3. From Auteurs to Brats: Authorship in New Hollywood

4. Genre

5. Reading week, no classes

6. Stardom

7. Refiguring War and History: From Vietnam to Iraq and Beyond

8. Spectacle vs. Narrative in the Contemporary Blockbuster (seminars this week will focus on the case-study assessment)

9. Race, Gender, Action!

10. Classical to Post-Classical?: Hollywood style in the era of DVD and the iPod

[Case-study plan due Wednesday 29 March]

11. Feedback on case study plans

12. Tutorials available (after Easter) before submission due

[Case-study assessment due Tuesday 2 May]
Department | Social Sciences, Media and Communications
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Credits | 20
Level | UG
Module leader | Geoff King, GB167 geoff.king@brunel.ac.uk

Other staff

Contact and private study time | Lectures/seminars: 22 hours Screensings: c.20 hours Private study: c.200 hours

Assessment | Case-study project, 5,000 words (100%), due Tuesday 2 May Plan due in advance, 500 words max (deduction from final mark for non-submission of plan), due Wednesday 29 March

This module is to be taken as part of the following programmes | Film and TV Studies single or joint hons

**Access to support material**

Support material is provided electronically via the University’s Blackboard system. You can gain access to the Blackboard system on the intranet via the following:

- https://blackboard.brunel.ac.uk/

**Module Aims and Objectives**

- To study the texts and contexts of Hollywood cinema in the ‘post-studio’ era
- To examine changes and continuities in the Hollywood mode of production, distribution and exhibition since the end of the studio system in the late 1950s, including the relocation of Hollywood cinema within large media corporations
- To investigate new formal approaches explored by some film-makers and the possible creation of a ‘post-classical’ style of
production; also to consider the extent to which much production remains within or closer to the ‘classical’ paradigm

• To situate New Hollywood cinema within a range of social, political and cultural contexts
• To explore a number of theoretical approaches to the study of New Hollywood cinema including issues such as authorship, genre, stardom, contemporary audiences, relationships between narrative and spectacle, and the impact of new media technologies

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the module students should be able to:

• Demonstrate an understanding of key concepts and vocabulary used in the analysis of New Hollywood cinema and an ability to understand and evaluate a range of theories and debates
• Demonstrate an awareness of the connections between the industrial, formal and historical-social-ideological dimensions of New Hollywood cinema
• Demonstrate ability to apply theoretical analysis through close textual analysis of films
• Demonstrate a use of a range of primary and secondary materials going beyond material used in lectures or on the reading list
• Show good communication skills in both written form and in the organisation of seminar assignments

Skills developed:

Critical skills: development of skills involved in the analysis of primary and secondary textual materials, use of appropriate critical vocabulary and demonstration of an understanding of key concepts, debates and theories in the study of New Hollywood cinema

Learning skills: skills of independent research and study, application of theory to relevant film texts, ability to link developments in one sphere (such as industrial organisation) to others (such as formal or political factors)

Research skills: effective use of computer and library resources, including sources outside Brunel

Communication skills: growing competence in essay writing skills (tested by the substantial 5,000-word case-study project),
growing confidence in participation in seminar discussions (which students will be required to organise, in pairs, each week)

**Personal and Key Skills**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>These are skills that are valued by employers and will help you in your personal and career development after graduating from Brunel:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team working</strong> – working with others in seminars or on set tasks to develop your ideas and create a piece of work like a group presentation or seminar contribution.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Planning and time management</strong> – organizing your study time, prioritizing your reading and seminar planning, working with your timetable and preparing to present your work on time.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Independent study and initiative</strong> – working on your own and thinking ahead. Identifying solutions to problems by applying your own initiative, and being proactive (closely related to research).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong> – reading from the reading list and exploring the world of the text from appropriate sources e.g. historical texts, interviews, web searches. Using your initiative to extend your study and preparation beyond that set down by module information or course tutor.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Live presentation in front of an audience</strong> – preparing a presentation in class if set by tutor/module requirements. Using Powerpoint and speaking to slides in a confident and precise manner. Developing the confidence to present your ideas coherently and cogently to other people verbally.</td>
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**Attendance at lectures and seminars is required.** You are also expected to have seen relevant films for each week, which should not be difficult given the availability of mainstream Hollywood films. You are expected to attend screenings or make sure you otherwise see the screened films at the time – they will be an important point of reference in lectures and in seminar discussions. Other suggestions for viewing are also given week-by-week. Do not to rely on distant memories of films seen some time in the past! Copies of these films are available in the library in most cases, but don’t rely on them being available at the last moment as this is a large module with many students. Everyone
should try to view, as well as to read, as widely as possible around the subject.

**Reading:** The course outline includes reading for each week and you should read at least one of these *before* the session. It is important that you do this so that you can benefit from the lecture and seminar. Evidence of wide reading and engagement with ideas raised in the reading are key criteria for assignment grading. **Seminars provide space to air your own views, but these should be related to issues raised in the reading and/or lecture.**

Quite a lot of reading is listed for some weeks. Please don’t be intimidated by this, as it’s mostly to offer a range of alternatives to increase your chances of finding something in the library. Consult tutor if you want more guidance on the most appropriate sources for particular purposes. Some readings will turn up more than once during the module; these are often particularly worth checking out for the sake of economy and efficiency in your reading. Many texts are of relevance to more than one week without necessarily being listed again each time. There is a large degree of overlap in the issues tackled from one week to another and you are likely to miss useful material if you restrict reading just to books and essays listed specifically for any one week about which you plan to write. Credit will also be given for bringing in reading of your own, not on the reading list, but you should include some of the recommended material to ensure you engage in debate at a sufficiently ‘academic’ level. Again, if in doubt, talk to one of the tutors. High levels of demand mean you won’t always be able to get hold of all the material you want at short notice, so you should plan and get some reading done well in advance of assessment. You should be doing some reading as you go along, not leaving it all to the last minute. Key readings are usually particularly useful, but the distinction between these texts and other on the reading list is not an absolute one. ‘Secondary’ reading is not necessarily listed in any particular order. **Using academic sources from the reading list is crucial to the case-study assessment for this module.** You might want to use various other sources for factual background on your chosen film, but it is essential also to engage with material of the appropriate academic level. Lack of such engagement is a common feature of poor case studies.

**Seminars**

Seminar discussions are designed to create a forum in which you can explore issues raised in your reading, viewing and from lectures. The
onus is on you to make these work. Seminars provide an opportunity to try out ideas of your own and hear those of your colleagues. They are not about impressing tutors or each other, but having a space to raise issues freely and without being judged. Don’t hold back in seminars if you are unsure of being ‘right’, because that is not what they are about. It is just as important, and helpful to others, to ask questions as it is to have ‘answers’. Active participation in seminars is a good way to develop your own ideas and understandings – to make connections between these and the more ‘academic’ material found on the reading list. Everyone should try to take part, rather than leaving it to the same few individuals each week. Participation is also a good way to develop key skills sought by employers, such as an ability to work in a group, to problem-solve, etc. This is an important part of what you gain from studying, even where it is not assessed in its own right.

Attendance registers will be taken at seminars only, not lectures, so anyone missing the seminar will be listed as absent.

Assessment

Case-study project: 5,000 words, plus plan submitted in advance and completion of self-assessment form. Constitutes 100% of the assessment of the module.

Hand in on or before 12pm, Tuesday 2 May. Plan required in advance by 12pm, Wednesday 29 March (the plan should be submitted formally in the same way as the case study itself – electronically and with a cover sheet, as detailed below). You must also complete the self-assessment form (see below), to be submitted with the case-study (not with the plan).

Failure to submit a plan or to complete the self-assessment form will each result in a reduction of your mark by one letter grade (i.e. a B would become a C, a C+ a D+).

Choose one film to analyze in depth as a product of New Hollywood. The purpose is to demonstrate your understanding of New Hollywood more generally through a detailed analysis of aspects of one particular example. It is essential that you examine the film from all three of the perspectives around which the module is organized, with an equal balance between the three. That is, you must consider it at the
levels of its industrial, its formal and its social/cultural/political contexts:

- **Socio-cultural or historical perspective**

  How can your chosen film be understood in relation to its social context? In what ways might it be seen as a ‘reflection’ or a product of its time in this respect? It might be seen as a response to very particular issues or events of its time (remember, however, that films usually spend some two years at least in production, so there is a time lag in relation to very recent events). But films can also be understood from this perspective more broadly. You need not identify things that were happening exactly at the time. You might want to consider the broader way in which the film can be seen to have socio-cultural (or more clearly political) meanings – contributing to particular ways of understanding the world. This can include ways in which films participate in the creation or maintenance of dominant American myths and ideologies. It can also include broad issues such as representations of class, gender or race/ethnicity, or any other elements/issues that are social in nature.

- **Industrial perspective**

  How can your film be understood as a product of the particular industrial context of New Hollywood? How might the nature of the film be shaped in this way, by the particular manner in which New Hollywood operates as a business? Many if not all aspects of any New Hollywood film can be explained to a greater or lesser extent in this way (for example, their location within an existing franchise, the use of genre, the use of stars, etc, etc.) Think about the factors that would lead to a film being green-lit and funded. But try to relate specific elements of the film to how these work in this period in Hollywood more generally. Much of this relates to what is seen as selling well in this context, so it can be useful to look at elements beyond the film itself such as posters and trailers – they tend to suggest how the distributor sought to sell the film in the market. Bear in mind that not all contemporary Hollywood films are blockbusters but that there is a wider range of possibilities, including some films that blur into the independent sector or ‘Indiewood’.
• **Formal perspective**

How does your film use the medium or ‘language’ of film (this means elements such as narrative and all other aspects of audio-visual style: shooting style/camerawork, editing, sound/music, etc). To what extent does it stick to the conventions of ‘classical’ Hollywood style (and what might be the significance of this?), or to what extent does it depart from these. How might *either* use or departure from ‘classical’ convention be explained? Try to offer a balanced reading, paying due heed to both uses of and departures from the classical. Illustrated with specific textual detail from the film.

Some films might display some ‘new’ elements but many are likely to remain ‘classical’ in many respects.

It is up to you to choose exactly which aspects of the film on which to focus in order to do this. Please note that you are not expected to cover every possible aspect of the film at each of these levels, but to **select aspects that enable you to demonstrate an understanding of how the film can be understood within the broader New Hollywood context in each of the three dimensions**. You might draw on aspects of the film that relate primarily to one week’s material in the module, or aspects that cross over between different weeks. **Don’t try to cover too much material.** Depth of analysis, focused on certain salient aspects of the film is much more important than breadth of less focused detail.

The purpose of the assignment is to demonstrate your understanding of a) the separate dimensions of New Hollywood around which the module is organized and b) how these different dimensions are inter-related in various ways. You should, therefore, seek to integrate your analysis of the different aspects of the film considered. **Please note that the seminars in week 8 will be devoted to further discussion of the requirements for the assessment.** Credit will be given for originality and use of your own analysis of the chosen film, within the frameworks established in lectures/seminars and/or on the reading list.

**You are required to submit a plan in advance**, by the date given above (submit electronically, with cover sheet, etc). This should amount to a **maximum of 500 words**. It should give a sketch indicating the film chosen and what aspects of the film are to be considered in each of the
three contexts. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that you are on the right lines and have understood the brief – this is especially important given that this is the sole assignment on which the module is assessed. No marks are given for the plan as such, but a good initial plan is an important aid to your own work. Tutorials time will be made available for feedback on plans, of which you are strongly encouraged to take advantage. **Failure to submit a plan will result in the reduction of your grade by a whole letter’s worth (i.e. A reduced to B).** Longer drafts of case-studies will NOT be read in advance by tutors – and the plan must not significantly exceed the 500-word limit. You can discuss your plan with one of the tutors before handing it in if you wish.

The case-study itself must be accompanied by a completed self-assessment form. The purpose of this form is to encourage you to reflect on your own work, to assess its strengths and weaknesses and identify what you might see yourself as room for improvement. Good self-assessments will demonstrate an ability to stand back from your work, to gain some perspective on it, to give a sense of what you have achieved and where there is room for improvement. Good self-assessment will demonstrate an understanding of what is expected in a piece of work and the extent to which you have met such expectations. Understanding your own work in this way is in itself a very good way to improve. Ideally, think about what you might say on the form before you have entirely completed the case-study, and use those thoughts to improve it.

A copy of the self-assessment form will be available on Blackboard. You should copy this onto the end of your case study before submitting as a single document containing both (and also the cover sheet at the start).

**Case-studies not accompanied by a completed self-assessment form will have their mark reduced by a letter grade.** Your overall mark will take your comments on the form partly into account, but mostly in a positive sense. That is, you stand to gain from this part of the assessment. Good self-assessment will contribute to your mark. Less good self-assessment will not greatly harm your mark, provided that the form is taken seriously and completed fully.
A good case-study assignment will:

- Focus closely on the individual film while also situating it clearly in the broader New Hollywood context, with equal attention to its industrial, formal and social/cultural/political terms.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the industrial context, formal characteristics and potential social-cultural meanings of a given text – and of the relationships between these different dimensions.
- Provide in-depth analysis of the film, within the perspectives required, rather than description or just factual detail.
- Demonstrate an understanding of, and a critical engagement with, key theories and debates relevant to the understanding of New Hollywood.
- Show evidence of reading, viewing and research beyond material given in lectures
- Have a well-planned and structured argument that focuses on and engages critically with the brief.
- Have a good standard of clarity, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Not just be a collection of facts about the film

Remember that focus, clarity, depth of analysis and coherence of argument are primary features of any good assignment.

A key requirement is analysis rather than description. Do not just describe a film but analyse it, seek to explain it. Lack of analysis is one of the most common shortcomings in assessed work. Analysis means not just describing how a sequence is shot, for example, or how a narrative is structured or how an issue is handled. It means going beyond that to suggest what the significance is of that way of shooting/structuring a narrative/handling an issue: what kinds of meanings are constructed as a result, how the material being considered can be explained (how it is similar to or different from other forms, why it might be done that way, what kinds of contexts might explain it, etc.).

Avoid merely reproducing material from lectures or readings without demonstrating your understanding of the material. One of the best ways to demonstrate your own understanding is to apply key concepts to an example of your own – as is required here – rather than repeating examples given in lectures or reading. If you use quotations from sources, make sure these are integrated into the development of your own argument.
Instructions for Coursework Submission

You must add your student number to the top of every page of your work. Please note that coursework is marked anonymously so your name should not appear anywhere in your work.

Written coursework must be submitted electronically via Blackboard Learn. Full instructions on how to submit your work is available on Blackboard. Your work must be submitted by 12pm on the day of the deadline. Remember that you can also submit work early! It’s recommended not to leave it until the last minute, to allow for any glitches.

Your assessment MUST be accompanied by a cover sheet. A copy will be available on the module Blackboard home page. You can also download it here:

https://intra.brunel.ac.uk/cbass/Pages/Handbook.aspx#/mu_Assessment/mu_Courseworksubmissions

(Scroll down the page to the ‘Documents’ section and choose ‘CBASS Electronic Coursework Submission Coversheet 2016-17’).

You need to submit each assessment with a cover sheet as part of the same file - so, you can either copy the cover sheet onto the top of your work, before the first page, or copy the work so that it starts on the blank page supplied after the cover sheet. Both should form part of a single assessment document, with the cover sheet at the start. For the case study itself, the self-assessment document should also be copied onto the end of the submission.

Please note that email submissions direct to the module leader are NOT acceptable.

Feedback on your work

Please note that feedback will be provided electronically, via Blackboard, where you will be able to access your grade and feedback comments. You will be notified to your Brunel email address when grades and feedback are available to view.
We will usually provide feedback within no more than 15 working days from the submission date. If you do not receive feedback within this time, you should first contact the module leader.

**Policy statements**

The College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences student handbook can be found on the College IntraBrunel site. The handbook is a useful source of information for all aspects of your studies, including detail of grade descriptors, policy, procedures, plagiarism, house style for assignments, group work submissions and other important matters. **This includes details of policies relating to late coursework and mitigating circumstances.** The Department assumes that you will familiarise yourself with this information, so you will need to look at these pages carefully at various times throughout your studies. The Department also operates within the rules and regulations of the University more generally, and you should also look at what are known as 'Senate Regulations' under the University’s web pages at: [http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/senate-regulations](http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/senate-regulations).

These policies and procedures, and rules and regulations, are liable to change from one academic year to another. You should therefore ensure that you make yourself aware of these, as you cannot later claim a lack of knowledge on these matters.

**Student Support**

University-level support is available in a number of areas such as the quality of written English used in essays and other assignments. Do take advantage of this resource – especially if you get comments in your coursework feedback relating to writing.

Study skills support is offered in the Library. This covers a number of areas including:

Academic Writing; Critical Reading; Maths, Numeracy and Statistics; Time Management; Presentations and Seminars; Note Taking; and Critical Thinking.
For further details, please contact the Library or go to http://www.brunel.ac.uk/library/ask

Do take advantage of this support – especially if you have had comments on your work about the quality of your written English.

Contacting tutors

Geoff King’s office is GB167, email: geoff.king@brunel.ac.uk

I will have office hours posted each week. Email is also a very useful way of getting in touch with any questions you might have or to discuss ideas for the case-study assessment.

Please don’t hesitate to get in touch if you want to discuss assessments, seminar assignments, or anything else. The main place for notices relating to the module will be Blackboard. You should make sure you check your Brunel email account (or you can set up your Brunel account to forward mails to another account), as module group emails will be sent to your Brunel address.

Copies of lecture slides will be available on Blackboard.

Referencing

Correct referencing is crucial if you are to avoid accusations of plagiarism (see separate section), but it is also a requirement in its own right for all written work. You will lose marks if you do not reference properly, so make sure you understand how to do it. If anything here is not clear, seek clarification from one of your tutors. It is a basic requirement that you understand the fundamentals of academic referencing procedure.

The system you must use is called Harvard Referencing.

Harvard is an in-text author-date system so you need to reference in each of two ways:

- references to texts that you use as you go along during an essay.
and

• a bibliography that needs to appear at the end, listing full details of all of the sources used.

Referencing books, chapters from edited collections, journal articles, etc.

Referencing sources as you go along in a piece of written coursework:

Whenever you are drawing on an argument or background information from a source, that source must be referenced. This applies whether you are quoting directly or paraphrasing. It is not sufficient just to put sources in a bibliography at the end. You must indicate in some specific detail where you are drawing on which sources. Not to do this can be to risk accusations of plagiarism, or at the least to be marked down for poor referencing.

The reason for doing this is that you need to provide information that allows the reader to know who the author is, what the text by the author is, and what page or pages of the work you are referencing. You do not need to give every last bit of information about the source in these kinds of references (for example, the publisher), as some of these can be put just in the bibliography at the end. Please note: one very common error occurs in references to essays in collections of essays. You must cite the actual author of the essay you are using, as well as the editors of the collection. Do not just cite the editors of the collection, as they didn’t write the piece.

Titles of books, like those of films, should be in italics. Titles of chapters from edited collections or titles of journal articles should be in quotation marks and not in italics.

When using the Harvard system you place references in brackets in the main part of the essay text; place the author surname, the year of publication and page number in brackets at the end of the relevant sentence. The full details – the title of the work, publisher, etc, will then be available in the bibliography and not needed in the bracketed reference.
For example:
Suzanne Buchan argues that ‘in contrast to most puppetmakers, the Quays have a tendency to intentionally expose what lies beneath the surface’ (Buchan, 2011, p. 127).

If you use long quotations, of more than three lines or so of text, these should be presented off-set into the text: indented from the left. When you do this, you do NOT use quotation marks. An indented quotation of this kind should then be referenced as above.

Bibliography
You must provide a bibliography at the end. This is an alphabetically ordered list of sources cited. If you want to include films and TV programmes here, do them separately, also alphabetically, in a filmography. If you do not include a bibliography you will lose marks.

A book should be cited this way:

Author surname, author first initial. (date of publication) Title of Book, Place of Publication: Publisher’s Name.

For example:


For the whole of an edited collection:


If you have only cited one essay in a collection, cite that in its own right only (don’t cite the collection as well), eg:


A journal article should as follows. Sometimes there will be an issue number as below, sometimes a volume number and issue number – if the latter, give both, as in 34(3):

When citing internet sources, give the fullest details you can. Never just give a web address or url. If the piece has an author and/or title, give those in the same way as you would for any other text, followed by the name of the website and its web address and date accessed. The aim is to give the reader as much information as is available to understand the nature of the source (internet sources being so variable in kind). If no author’s name is given, and it is an institutionally authored site give this name, e.g. (BBC, 2013).

Referencing films, TV programmes, etc.

Titles of films or TV programmes should be given in italics; titles of individual episodes of TV shows should be given in quotation marks and not italics. On first mention of a film or TV programme, you must give a date in brackets (or dates for longer running TV shows, for example, 2000-2004). If you wish, or if it is appropriate, you might also give the name of a film’s director, studio or nationality (or the equivalent for a TV show), but these are optional.

Books to buy

You may like to purchase one or more of the following that will be of recurrent use throughout the module:

- Geoff King’s book New Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002) is based largely on the material covered on the module – including much of that used in the lectures. It is effectively the core textbook for the module. The library has a number of copies but not enough for everyone to always be able to access, so it is recommended to buy this book.

Also very useful for a number of weeks and generally is the following:


Three collections of essays include contributions that turn up frequently on the reading list and are well worth the investment (there are copies in the library, but demand for them is likely to be very heavy):

An excellent general introduction to Hollywood, although not just New Hollywood, is:


Another useful collection included in some places in the reading list, but also with numerous shorter pieces and analysis of individual films not listed is:


Other books are particularly worth buying if you chose to focus on certain subjects. It is obviously worth buying a copy of the film you use for your case study, to permit repeated viewing/close study.

**Other sources**

It is worth looking in film-related journals and exploring the resources of the internet, although some parts of the latter should be used with care.

The Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) is a handy source of factual data such as film budgets and box-office figures for the US and overseas markets. Another similar source is boxofficemojo.com. You will also be able to find useful material through general internet searching but beware of the quality and reliability of some material on the web – and *always* include any internet sources you use, with full URL details, in your bibliography (google is also a good source for detecting internet plagiarism!).

*Variety, the film industry bible* is taken by the library and can be searched electronically. **This is a really good way to access specific**
info about the industrial dimension of films, including things like release strategies, etc, so it’s use is strongly recommended. To access: go to library home page, click on ‘E-journals A to Z’, then enter the journal title and click on one of the links to where it can be accessed, FIAF International Index (which accesses issues from 1974 to date). On the FIAF page for Variety, click the ‘Search articles from this journal’ link and you are in business. What you find varies from one film to another, but can include really useful info about industry strategy.

Websites of other major Hollywood trade papers provide limited access to their materials, but are worth checking in some cases, for example The Hollywood Reporter.

Also worth consulting are academic film journals in the library. You can search these via the library’s ‘Summon’ facility – for a particular film, search under the title and limit the findings to academic journals. You will also find a much wider range of material this way, although much of it might not be academic in focus.

Background reading

For those who are not single honours Film & TV Studies students or those who need to refresh their understanding, the following are recommended for general background on the formal and socio-cultural dimensions of Hollywood studied on this module (along with industrial contexts). Understanding of these approaches is key to the assessment in this module.

Form: For basic grounding in the ‘classical Hollywood’ style, and alternatives, see David Bordwell, Film Art, various editions. Also see sections relating to form in Robert Kolker, Film Form and Culture, New York/McGraw-Hill, 1999, and ‘Film Form’ section at the start of Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin, America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies, second edition, Oxford/Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Socio-cultural: For basic grounding in the understanding of films as products of their contemporary society or culture, see Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin, America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies, second edition, Oxford/Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, especially chapter 1, ‘Introduction to the Study of Film Form and Representation’. Also see Robert Kolker, Film Form and Culture, New York/McGraw-Hill, 1999, especially chapter 3, ‘Film as
Cultural Practice’. And Douglas Kellner, ‘Hollywood film and society’, in John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson (eds), *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, Oxford/Oxford University Press, 1998. If you are writing about particular social issues (for example, race, gender, particular political issues, etc.), you will usually be able to find other readings about these subjects in their own right in the library.

Screening: Easy Rider (Denis Hopper, 1969)

The term ‘New Hollywood’ was initially used primarily to identify a new generation of filmmakers and practices that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The demise of the vertically-integrated studio system during the 1950s and an economic crisis in Hollywood in the late 1960s created space for a number of striking works by filmmakers such as Scorsese, Coppola, Altman, et al; films that reflected both some of the social conflicts of the time and the formal experiments of the European ‘art’ film. This first ‘version’ of New Hollywood provides an illustration of the practice to be followed throughout this module, combining industrial, formal and socio-historical approaches.


Key Reading

- Steve Neale, “‘The Last Good Time We Ever Had?’: Revising the Hollywood Renaissance’, in Linda Ruth Williams and Michael


**Reading**

- David Cook, ‘Movies and Political Trauma’, in Lester Friedman (ed.), *American Cinema of the 1970s*, New Brunswick/Rutgers UP, 2007 (see also introduction and various other essays in this collection)


**Week 2:** New Hollywood Version II: Blockbusters and Corporate Hollywood

**No screening this week**

**Seminar:** Exercise to prepare in advance of seminar. Choose one or two Hollywood films currently or recently on release and try to find out the following (some might be harder to discover than others):

1. which company (or companies) *produced* the film
2. who *distributed* it
3. which larger company or group does the production and/or distribution company belong to, and what other interests does that company have
4. how might the nature of the film itself be explained in terms of these business relationships?

A very different version of New Hollywood has become dominant today. The ‘old’ studio system has been replaced, not by openness and freedom, but by a new form of control by major studios that have become part of larger entertainment conglomerates. This lecture will examine the impact of this industrial environment on the blockbuster strategy that dominates contemporary production. It will consider the extent to which films are shaped by their location within multimedia empires that seek to design products that can be exploited both on screen and in other formats. *There is a good deal of overlap between the readings for this week and week one; many also offer over-views that contain material of relevance throughout the module.*

**Viewing suggestions:** Any of many blockbuster franchises from *Jaws* (1975) and *Star Wars* (1977) to the *Batman* and *Spiderman* series and more recent examples including the *Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings* and various comic-book-hero cycles.

**Key Reading**

Reading:
• Paul McDonald and Janet Wasko (eds), The Contemporary Hollywood Film Industry, Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2007, particularly essays in Part I by Tom Schatz, Janet Wasko, Philip Drake and Charles Acland


• Julian Stringer (ed.), *Movie Blockbusters*, London: Routledge, 2003 (various essays, a couple listed separately above)

**Week 3: From Auteurs to Brats: Authorship in New Hollywood**

**Screening:** *War of the Worlds* (Steven Spielberg, 2005)

To what extent can New Hollywood films be seen as the products of individual authors? The Hollywood Renaissance was understood largely in terms of the work of the artistic *auteur*, but what does it mean to refer to products as works 'by' directors such as Steven Spielberg or Quentin Tarantino? Is this just another marketing ploy, or is there any space left for the expression of distinctive voices in terms of form or content? To what extent are the 'meanings' of films the product of the filmmaker, industrial structures, or their broader social context? The main case study used in the lecture will be Spielberg. This will be the first of several weeks to examine changes and/or continuities in the New Hollywood version of frameworks that have been applied to Hollywood in the past.

**Viewing suggestions:** Other films by Spielberg, or the work of ‘Hollywood auteurs’ such as Robert Altman, Martin Scorsese, Francis Coppola, Quentin Tarantino, *et al*

**Key Reading**

**Reading**


Extracts of various contributions to theories of authorship can be found in John Caughie (ed.), *Theories of Authorship*, London: Routledge, 1981, including:

• Andrew Sarris, pp 61-67
• Edward Buscombe, ‘Ideas of Authorship’, 22-34
• Michel Foucault ‘What is an Author?’, 282-91
• Roland Barthes, ‘The death of the author’, 138-51

On Steven Spielberg, social-cultural analysis can be found in:


• Leighton Grist, ‘Spielberg and Ideology: Nation, class, family and *War of the Worlds*, *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, vol.7, no.1, March 2009. Also see other essays in this special issue on Spielberg

General works on Spielberg:


• Nigel Morris, *The Cinema of Steven Spielberg: Empire of Light*, London: Wallflower, 2007 (useful but with unhelpful elements of Lacanian theory that can be ignored)

An example of a biographically-based reading is:

Familiar genres were often targets for deconstruction in the ‘Renaissance’ period. The corporate blockbuster, on the other hand, has dusted off some B-movie genres – especially science fiction – and given them big-budget treatment. Many contemporary productions combine the characteristics of more than one genre, a tendency sometimes taken to bewildering extremes. This apparent incoherence will be considered partly in terms of Hollywood’s strategies in relationship to audiences but will also be viewed in a longer historical context in which the generic boundaries of Hollywood have always been more fluid than they sometimes appear in retrospect. There is much talk about the undermining of genre boundaries today, yet it remains an important concept for our understanding of both industry and audience experiences. You might want to think in advance about the concept of genre as you use it in your own moving-going decisions: to what extent to you choose films on the basis of genre?

**Viewing suggestions:** *Starship Troopers* (Paul Verhoeven, 1998), *From Dusk Till Dawn* (1996), the *Scream* series (1996-2000). Any other films that deconstruct ‘classical’ genres (see other products of the Hollywood Renaissance), mix genres or return to ‘classical’ genre conventions (the latter including much science fiction, romantic comedy, etc.)

**Key Reading**
- Geoff King, *New Hollywood Cinema*, Chapter 4 ‘Genre Benders’
- Rick Altman, *Film/Genre*, London: BFI, 1999

**Reading**
- Thomas Elsaesser, ‘James Cameron’s *Avatar*: access for all’, *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3,
September 2011 (also relevant to reading of the film in terms of Cameron as auteur, from previous week)


- Edward Buscombe, ‘The Idea of Genre in the American Cinema’, in Barry K. Grant (ed.), *Film Genre Reader*

- Robin Wood, ‘Ideology/Genre/Auteur’, in Barry K. Grant (ed.), *Film Genre Reader*


• Steve Neale, Genre, London: BFI, 1980
• Barry K. Grant (ed.), Film Genre Reader (various essays worth exploring)

Week 5: ASK week, no classes
Week 6: Stardom
Screening: *Gran Torino* (Clint Eastwood, 2008)

Stardom has always performed a central role in Hollywood, a tendency that has if anything increased in New Hollywood. The presence of big star names is considered to be the nearest thing to the guarantee of success sought by studios seeking to maximize returns on a relatively small number of expensive films. Stars have, as a result, gained increased industrial clout, many having established their own production companies to ensure closer control over the projects in which they appear. This lecture will also examine the continued appeal of stars to audiences, including a focus on the case of Clint Eastwood, and the way the presence of a star persona affects our reading of Hollywood movies.

**Viewing suggestions:** Other films starring Clint Eastwood, from ‘Dollars’ and Dirty Harry series to more recent examples. Other star-led texts (which means many Hollywood movies!)

**Key Reading**

**Reading**
• Paul Smith, *Clint Eastwood: A Cultural Production*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993
• Thomas Austin & Martin Barker (eds), *Contemporary Hollywood Stardom*, London: Arnold, 2003, various essays and useful introduction
• Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood cinema and female spectatorship*, London: Routledge, 1994 (a study of audiences in the 40s and 50s, but with ideas applicable elsewhere)
**Week 7**: Refiguring War and History: From Vietnam to Iraq and Beyond

**Screening**: *Green Zone* (Paul Greengrass, 2010)

How does contemporary Hollywood tackle sensitive issues of war and history? Representations of the Vietnam war provide a good point of departure from which to consider the portrayal of more recent conflicts, including the two US-led invasions of Iraq, before and after 9/11. What kinds of strategies have been used to ‘make sense’ of these events? What is the relationship between representations of war and reality, myth or ideology. This lecture will begin by considering a range of films about Vietnam, from *Apocalypse Now* to *Platoon* and *Rambo*, before moving on to more recent Hollywood versions of conflict including *Green Zone*, set in Iraq.


**Reading**

On Vietnam:
- Clyde Taylor, ‘The colonialist subtext in *Platoon*’, in Dittmar and Michaud, *From Hanoi to Hollywood*
- Albert Auster and Leonard Quart, *How the War was Remembered*, New York: Praeger, 1988

On the post-Vietnam era, or war more generally:
• Jeff Birkenstein, Anna Froula and Karen Randell (eds), *Reframing 9/11: Film, Popular Culture and the ‘War on Terror’*, London: Continuum, 2010 (various essays)
• Stephen Prince, *Visions of Empire: Political Imagery in Contemporary American Film*, New York: Praeger, 1992
• Philip John Davies and Paul Wells (eds), *American Film and Politics from Reagan to Bush Jr*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002

For more background on the Vietnam war and the 1991 and subsequent invasions of Iraq there are various books in the library that can be found by using keyword searches.
Week 8: Spectacle vs. Narrative in the Contemporary Blockbuster

Screening: *Jurassic World* (Colin Trevorrow, 2015)

Seminar this week will focus on the case-study assessment rather than the lecture topic

Contemporary blockbusters are often accused of surrendering any interest in narrative, story or character to an emphasis on the provision of ever-more lavish or noisy spectacular entertainment. This week’s lecture will examine the context and characteristics of New Hollywood spectacle as a big-screen attraction. But it will also suggest that narrative – at various levels – has been far from abandoned, even in the most spectacular or critically mauled blockbusters or blockbuster sequels. These issues will be relevant to the formal dimensions of many contemporary Hollywood films.


Key Reading
- Geoff King, *Spectacular Narratives: Hollywood in the Age of the Blockbuster*
- Geoff King, *New Hollywood Cinema*, Chapter 6 ‘Narrative vs. Spectacle in the Contemporary Blockbuster’
- Fred Pfeil, ‘From Pillar to Postmodern: Race, Class, and Gender in the Male Rampage Film’, in Jon Lewis (ed.), *The New American Cinema*

**Reading**

*On narrative, primarily*

• Patrick Keating, ‘Emotional Curves and Linear Narratives’, *Velvet Light Trap*, 58, Fall 2006
• Geoff King, *Quality Hollywood: Markers of Distinction in Contemporary Studio Film*, London: I.B. Tauris, forthcoming 2015, chapter 3, ‘Inception and the Quality Blockbuster’, advance copy available on Blackboard (this is a longer version of the above chapter)

*On spectacle, primarily*
• Jose Arroyo (ed.), *Action/Spectacle Cinema*, London: BFI, 2000
• Wanda Strauven (ed.), *The Cinema of Attraction Reloaded*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006 (various essays, especially that by Scott Bukatman, ‘Spectacle, Attractions and Visual Pleasure’)

**On both or more background reading**

**Week 9: Race, Gender, Action!**

**Screening: Lethal Weapon** (Richard Donner, 1987)

What exactly is offered by the Hollywood ‘action’ movie? This week we will explore some of the central thematic issues underling the Hollywood action cinema, especially discourses around gender and race. We will also examine the formal characteristics of the action film. Some of the reading for this week will also be useful for anyone planning to write about gender issues more generally when tackling the socio-cultural dimension of the case study.


**Key Reading**


**Reading**


On race
• Donald Bogle, Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies and Bucks, New York: Continuum, 1993, especially chapter 9, ‘The 1980s: Black Superstars and the Era of Tan’
• Mark Reid, Redefining Black Film, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993

On gender
• Yvonne Tasker, Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema, London: Routledge, 1993

On gender more generally in contemporary Hollywood
• Hilary Radner, Neo-Feminist Cinema: Girly Film, Chick Flicks and Consumer Culture, London: Routledge, 2010
• Joel Gwynne and Nadine Muller, Postfeminism and Contemporary Hollywood Cinema, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013
• Suzanne Ferris and Mallory Young (eds), Chick Flicks: Contemporary Women at the Movies, London: Routledge, 2008 (various essays, some focused on Hollywood films)
• Hilary Radner and Rebecca Stringer (eds), Feminism at the Movies: Understanding Gender in Contemporary Popular
Cinema, London: Routledge, 2011 (again, various essays, some focused on Hollywood examples)


- Susanne Kord and Elizabeth Krimmer (eds), *Contemporary Hollywood Masculinities: Gender, Genre and Politics*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011 (various essays)

**On both race and gender**

- Fred Pfeil, ‘From Pillar to Postmodern: Race, Class, and Gender in the Male Rampage Film’, in Jon Lewis (ed.), *The New American Cinema*


- Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin, *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*, second edition, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, Part II, Race and Ethnicity and American Film and Part IV, Gender and American Film (for general background on these issues)

**Week 10:** From Classical to Post-Classical?: Hollywood style in the era of DVD and the iPod  
**Screening:** *Wanted* (Timur Bekmambetov, 2008)

Do mainstream Hollywood films of today display a ‘post-classical’ style, or do they still conform to the norms of established ‘classical’ conventions? **This week’s topic will be crucial to the case study of anyone who choose a film from the present or the past two or three decades.** A number of claims about the post-classical will be considered, alongside arguments that any change that might be identified is balanced by substantial degrees of continuity with the past. This session will also explore some explanations for elements of change, including the importance gained by small-screen media in the Hollywood commercial equation, from the first sales to TV to the contemporary role played by DVD, download and screenings on portable devices.


**Key Reading**
- Geoff King, *New Hollywood Cinema*, Chapter 7, ‘From Big Screen to Small’
- Drew Morton, *Panel to the Screen; Style, American Film and Comic Books in the Blockbuster Era*, Jackson, Miss.: University of Mississippi Press, 2016

**Reading**


• Jeffrey C. Ulin, *The Business of Media Distribution: Monetizing Film, TV and Video Content in an Online World*, Burlington: Focal Press, 2010, chapters 5 to 8 (on home video, TV, internet and ancillary markets)


• Paul McDonald *Video and DVD Industries*, London: BFI, 2007, esp. chapters 4 & 5

Picture, Small Screen: The Relations between Film and Television, Luton: University of Luton Press, 1997

• Tino Balio, Hollywood in the Age of Television, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990, Balio introductions to Parts I and II
• Timothy Corrigan, A Cinema Without Walls, London: Routledge, 1991, introduction, chapter 1
• E. Anne Kaplan, Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Postmodernism, and Consumer Culture, New York & London: Methuen. 1987
Week 11: Feedback on case-study plans

No screening, lecture or seminars this week. Instead, tutorials will be available to discuss your case-study plans.

Week 12: Tutorials available

This is the one teaching week after Easter, when tutorials will be available to discuss any last minute issues the week before submission is due