

## Film History: Hollywood and the Second World War, 1939-45

Course Code: HST7 317

Please note: places are limited to 10 on this module. These will be allocated on a first come first served basis and students on the MA in Film Studies and MA in History will be given priority, with 5 places available for each MA.

### Autumn Term, 2011

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This course focuses on a key period in film history, and it considers the methods with which film critics and historians have analyzed it. It is as much about the writing of film history as it is about individual films and filmmakers, and the syllabus is designed to offer students the opportunity to engage with several different methods and schools of criticism, while at the same time maintaining a continuity by centering on the films of one distinct time period and country.

Our main areas of interest include:

- feature films and the historian, or how film history is written;
- ideas 'authorship' and their usefulness to the film historian;
- the evolution and appeal of key stars and genres during this period;
- reception studies and the search for the audience;
- audience tastes in wartime versus 'canonicity' and film studies.
- the cultural and social context of the USA during the war years, and how this influenced films and filmmakers;

Students should read and research into all of these areas as the course progresses, but their essay should focus on one area, and offer a detailed study within it. The essay should have an historiographical awareness, covering the work of several key texts in the area, while at the same time offering a fresh and original case study. Students are strongly advised to use the British Film Institute Library, and to take advantage of its many resources.

Essays should be approximately 4,000 words in length and submitted by the given deadline. They should be typed, double-spaced, and fully referenced using an accepted format. Topics should be discussed and agreed with the course organizer at the earliest possible date

### **General Reading for the Course**

Students will benefit from reading historical accounts of the United States during the war years. The following books are in the Queen Mary Library and are recommended:

J.M. Blum, *V Was For Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War Two*.

David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The United States in Depression and War*.

W. O'Neill, *A Democracy At War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad During World War Two*

R. Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941-5*.

There are several books specifically about Hollywood and the war, and these will be discussed in the first week of the course (see the first week's reading list for details).

Bernard Dick, *The Star-Spangled Screen: The American World War Two Film*.

Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture and WWII*.

C. Koppes and G. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War Two Movies*.

R.L. McLaughlin and S.E. Parry, *We'll Always Have the Movies: American Cinema During World War Two*.

Colin Shindler, *Hollywood Goes to War: Films and American Society, 1939-52*.

Note also that two key journals, *The Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* and *Screen*, are available on the internet via the Queen Mary Library website.

### **Weekly Reading Lists**

#### **Week 1. An Introduction to Film History**

Robert Allen and Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice*.

Chapman, Glancy and Harper, 'Introduction', *The New Film History*.

Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*.

#### **Week 2. History and the Historical Film**

*Gone with the Wind* (Victor Fleming, 1939)

*Jezebel* (William Wyler, 1938)

##### On Historical Films:

Mark Carnes (ed.), *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies*.

Robert Rosenstone, *History on Film, Film on History: Theory, Concepts and Practice*.

Pierre Sorlin, *The Film in History: Restaging the Past*.

Robert Brent Toplin, *Reel History: In Defense of Hollywood*.

##### On *Gone with the Wind* and *Jezebel*:

Tom Brown, 'Spectacle/Gender/History: The Case of *Gone With the Wind*', *Screen*, 49:2 (Summer 2008).

Bruce Chadwick, *The Reel Civil War: Mythmaking in American Film*.

R.B. Harwell, *Gone with the Wind as Book and Film*.

Molly Haskell, *Frankly, My Dear: Gone with the Wind Revisited*.

J.E. Smyth, *Reconstructing American Historical Cinema: From Cimarron to Citizen Kane*.

Helen Taylor, *Scarlett's Women: Gone with the Wind and Its Female Fans*.

#### **Week 3. Feature Films as Propaganda**

*Mrs Miniver* (William Wyler, 1942)  
*Random Harvest* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1942)

On propaganda and Anglo-American relations:

Nicholas Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American Neutrality in World War Two*.  
David Dimbleby and David Reynolds, *An Ocean Apart: The Relationship Between Britain and America in the Twentieth Century*.  
Mark Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*.  
David Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*.  
Ken Short, 'Cinematic Support For Anglo-American Detente'; in P. Taylor (ed.), *Britain and the Cinema in the Second World War*.

On wartime films:

Bernard Dick, *The Star-Spangled Screen*.  
Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War*.  
Clayton Koppes and Gregory Black, *Hollywood Goes To War*.  
Clayton Koppes and Gregory Black, 'What To Show The World: The Office of War Information and Hollywood, 1942-45', in S. Mintz and R. Roberts (eds.), *Hollywood's America*; also in J. Staiger (ed.), *The Studio System*.  
Colin Shindler, *Hollywood Goes To War*.

On Mrs Miniver:

Jan Herman, *A Talent for Trouble: The Life of William Wyler*.  
Michael Troyan, *A Rose for Mrs Miniver: The Life of Greer Garson*.

**Week 4. Authorship: Alfred Hitchcock**

*Shadow of a Doubt* (Hitchcock, 1943)  
*Saboteur* (Hitchcock, 1942)

Auteurist or biographical studies:

Patrick McGilligan, *Alfred Hitchcock: A Life in Darkness and Light*.  
Andrew Sarris, *You Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet: The American Talking Film*.  
Donald Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock*.  
John Russell Taylor, *Hitch: The Authorized Biography*.  
Francois Truffaut, *Hitchcock: The Definitive Study*.

On Hitchcock and authorship:

Thomas Elsaesser, 'The Dandy in Hitchcock'; and William Rothman, 'Some Thoughts on Hitchcock's Authorship', in Allen and Gonzales (eds), *Hitchcock: Centenary Essays*.  
Leonard Leff, *Hitchcock and Selznick: The Rich and Strange Collaboration*.  
Robin Wood, *Hitchcock's Films Revisited*.

**Week 5. Authorship: Orson Welles**

*Citizen Kane* (Welles, 1941)  
*The Magnificent Ambersons* (Welles, 1942)

Andre Bazin, *Orson Welles: A Critical View*.  
Simon Callow, *Orson Welles: The Road to Xanadu*.  
Robert Carringer, *The Making of Citizen Kane*.  
Peter Cowie, *The Cinema of Orson Welles*.  
Charles Higham, *Orson Welles: The Rise and Fall of an American Genius*.  
Pauline Kael, 'Raising Kane', in H. Mankiewicz (ed.), *The Citizen Kane Book*.  
Joseph McBride, *Orson Welles*.  
Laura Mulvey, *Citizen Kane* (BFI Film Classics Series).  
James Naremore (ed.), *Orson Welles' Citizen Kane: A Casebook*.  
Andrew Sarris, *You Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet: The American Talking Film, 1927-49*.  
J.E. Smyth, *Reconstructing American Historical Cinema: From Cimarron to Citizen Kane*.

David Thomson, *Rosebud: The Life of Orson Welles*.

### **Week 6: Genre: Horror in Wartime**

*Cat People* (Tourneur, 1942)

*Curse of the Cat People* (Wise, 1944)

Edmund G. Bansak, *Fearing the Dark: The Val Lewton Career*

Jeremy Dyson, *Bright Darkness: The Lost Art of the Supernatural Horror Film*.

\*E. Ann Kaplan, *Women in Film Noir*, new edition (chapter 13: 'The Dark Continent of Film Noir: Race, Displacement and Metaphor in Tourneur's *Cat People* (1942) and Welles' *The Lady From Shanghai* (1948)').

Joseph Maddrey, *Nightmares in Red, White & Blue: The Evolution of the American Horror Film*.

Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*

Alexander Nemerov, *Icons of Grief: Val Lewton's Home Front Pictures*.

\*Kim Newman, *Cat People* [BFI Film Classics Series].

Andrew Sarris, *You Ain't Heard Nothing Yet: The American Talking Film, 1927-49*.

### **Week 8: Genre: Film Noir**

*Laura* (Otto Preminger, 1944)

*Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz, 1945)

Rudy Behlmer, *Behind the Scenes: The Making Of...[on Laura]*

\*Sheri Chinen Biesen, *Blackout: World War Two and the Origins of Film Noir*

E. Ann Kaplan, *Women in Film Noir*.

Frank Krutnik, *In a Lonely Street: Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity*.

James Naremore, *More Than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts*.

Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*.

J.A.Place and L.S. Peterson, 'Some Visual Motifs of *Film Noir*', in Nichols (ed.), *Movies and Methods, Volume 1*.

Andrew Sarris, *You Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet: The American Talking Film, 1927-49*.

Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*.

Paul Schrader, 'Notes on Film Noir', in Barry Keith Grant (ed.), *Film Genre Reader*.

### **Week 9: Genre and the Musical**

*Meet Me in St. Louis* (Minnelli, 1944)

*The Wizard of Oz* (Fleming, 1939)

#### On genre:

Rick Altman, *Film/Genre*.

Barry Keith Grant, *Film Genre Reader*.

Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*.

#### On the musical:

Rick Altman, *Genre: The Musical, A Reader*.

Bruce Babington and Peter Evans, *Blue Skies and Silver Linings*.

Richard Dyer, *Only Entertainment* ('Entertainment and Utopia').

Andrew Sarris, *You Ain't Heard Nothing Yet*.

Allen L. Woll, *The Hollywood Musical Goes To War*.

#### On the films:

\*Andrew Britton, 'Meet Me In St. Louis: Smith or the Ambiguities', *The Australian Journal of Screen Theory*, 3 (1977).

Mark Glancy, 'Dreaming of Christmas: Hollywood and the Second World War', in Connelly (ed.), *Christmas at the Movies*.

Gerald Kaufman, *Meet Me In St. Louis* [BFI Film Classics Series]

Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System*.

### **Week 10: Stars: Humphrey Bogart**

*Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942)

*To Have and Have Not* (Howard Hawks, 1945)

#### On Star Studies:

Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*.

Richard Dyer, *Stars*.

Christine Gledhill (ed.), *Stardom: Industry of Desire*.

#### On Bogart and his films:

Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: American Culture and Society in the Second World War*.

Aljean Harmetz, *Round Up the Usual Suspects*.

Joan Mellen, *Big Bad Wolves: Masculinity in the American Film*.

Robert Ray, *A Certain Tendency of the American Cinema*.

Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System*.

Robert Sklar, *City Boys: Cagney, Bogart, Garfield*.

### **Week 11: Stars and Reception Studies: Bette Davis**

*Now, Voyager* (Irving Rapper, 1942)

*All About Eve* (Joseph Mankiewicz, 1950)

#### On Bette Davis and the woman's film:

Jeanine Basinger, *A Woman's View: How Hollywood Spoke to Women, 1930-60*.

Christine Gledhill (ed.), *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*.

Cathy Klaprat, 'The Star as Marketing Strategy: Bette Davis in Another Light', in Balio (ed.), *The American Film Industry*.

Maria Laplace, 'Bette Davis and the Ideal of Consumption', *Wide Angle*, 6:4 (1984).

Martin Shingler, 'Bette Davis and the Ambiguities of Gender', *Screen*, 36:3 (1995).

Martin Shingler, 'Interpreting All About Eve: A Study in Historical Reception', in Maltby and Stokes (eds.), *Hollywood Spectatorship: Changing Perceptions of Cinema Audiences*.

Martin Shingler, 'Now, Voyager: Melodrama Then and Now', in Chapman, Glancy and Harper (eds), *The New Film History*.

Martin Shingler, 'The Fourth Warner Brother and Her Role in the War', *Journal of American Studies*, 30:1 (1996).

#### On Reception Studies:

Mark Glancy, 'The Hollywood Woman's Film and British Audiences: A Case Study of Bette Davis and *Now, Voyager*', in Melanie Bell (ed.), *British Women's Cinema*.

Mark Glancy, 'What Would Bette Davis Do?', *Screen*, 49:1 (2008), pp. 77-85.

Barbara Klinger, 'Film History Terminable and Interminable: Recovering the Past in Reception Studies', *Screen*, 38:2 (Summer 1997).

Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship*.

Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema*.

Janet Staiger, *Perverse Spectators: The Practices of Film Reception*.

Melvyn Stokes, 'Historical Hollywood Spectatorship', in Maltby and Stokes (eds.), *Hollywood Spectatorship: Changing Perceptions of Cinema Audiences*.