FS/CM 325 CENSORED! ISSUES AND TENSIONS IN MEDIA CENSORSHIP IN BRITAIN
IES Abroad London

DESCRIPTION:
This course examines the role of formal and informal censorship in British media since the early 20th century and its role in policing the moral, sexual and political status quo. Through the study of key texts (media artifacts, such as film, books and latterly the internet the course will chart cultural and political change in Britain and the responses of British audiences, political bodies and regulatory institutions. The course adopts a case study approach to important debates raised by this contentious issue, focused around a single film or media text or platform as illustration.

Students will discuss extracts from controversial texts and examine the motives of the institutions that produced and censored them. A strong emphasis is placed on studying the context in which the texts were originally circulated and consumed, and the debates that they provoked. The course provides opportunities to utilize the resources of the British Film Institute library and there will be a range of key readings provided by the professor regarding. Students are encouraged to make every effort to pursue recommended readings and to undertake original research in their academic writings, and must not rely solely on the Internet.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
- Lectures
- Presentations
- Readings
- Selected excerpts from film and television

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
- Course Participation - 10%
- Midterm Assignment - 25%
- Final Research Poster Presentation - 35%
- Group Research Project - 20%
- Annotated Bibliography - 10%

Course Participation
Participation in class discussion including the preparation of reading and responses to course content

Midterm Assignment
An out of class essay focused on the early history of the BBFC and a case study (approx. 1500 words)

Final Research Poster Presentation
Presentation with 1000 word written evaluation of research process

Annotated Bibliography
Includes at least five independently selected sources and use of reading list

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:
- research, prepare and present on a selected area of the course showing an understanding of wider reading and how to analyse a media text
- explain the different concepts of censorship and regulation as terms that pertain to different media institutions and in history, society and culture
- analyse how conceptions of childhood, youth, parental and state responsibility have changed over time
- demonstrate a close understanding of how political debates evolve and gain traction
- conceptualize the link between media as a technology, media as a means of representation of ideas and media as entertainment
- evaluate how concerns about new technologies recur over time

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Regular class attendance is mandatory. Irregular attendance may result in a lower grade in the course, and/or disciplinary action. The IES Abroad London class attendance policy does not allow for unexcused absences, and grades will be docked one-half letter grade for each such absence. Rare exceptions will be made for the following reasons:

- The student is too sick to attend class. In this instance, the student must call the IES Abroad Centre before class to notify any of the IES Abroad staff. It is not sufficient either to email, send a message with a friend or call the Centre after the class has started.
- A serious illness or death in the immediate family requiring a student to travel home. This requires written approval from the Centre Director before departure.

Arriving more than 10 minutes late to class may count as an unexcused absence. Immigration laws in the UK are extremely strict, and we jeopardize our legal status in hosting students who do not regularly attend class. Students who do not attend class regularly will be reported to the appropriate officials and risk dismissal from the program and deportation from the UK. If a student incurs absences representing 25% of the total class hours, they will be contacted by the Academic Programmes Manager (APM) and Centre Director (CD). If these absences are made up exclusively of unexcused non-attendance, this will trigger a disciplinary review. If these absences are made up of excused non-attendance, a meeting will be held to discuss the underlying reasons for lack of attendance, and to discuss ways it can be maintained for the duration of the term. If the 25% threshold is reached due to a mixture of excused and unexcused absences, students will also be asked to attend a meeting to discuss.

CONTENT:
IES holds all of the films set for viewing in class. A room is available after class to view films. The course offers an overview of matters that have drawn the attention of the censors over time: politics, violence, sex, drugs and bad language, as well as a close examination of the duty to protect children and have a role in public decency.

IES does not condone the illegal downloading of films to watch for class. However, if you have access to *iTunes, Netflix, Amazon Prime* or other platforms for screening the films, you are free to do so in your own time. There are distinct advantages to watching films collectively, however, as it is a proximate experience to attending a movie theatre, a social experience.

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 1	**Introduction** • A general introduction to, and discussion of, the legal, historical, economic and moral constraints placed on cultural producers and audiences in the UK by the formal practices of censorship.	• Petley J (2009) 'Death and Destruction' in Censorship Oxford: OneWorld Press pp 8-27

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Week	Content	Assignments
Week 2	**The establishment of the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) in 1912 and its history to date (presentation).** • A review of the changing forms and concerns of regulation and the screening of a range of censored extracts.	• Brown S (2012) 'Censorship under siege: The BBFC in the Silent Era' in <u>Behind the Scenes at the BBFC: Film Classification from the Silver Screen to the Digital Age</u> ed. Lamberti, Ed London: BFI pp3-15 • Kuhn A (1988) 'The Birth of Film Censorship in Britain' *in* <u>Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality 1909-1925</u> London: Routledge pp16-33 • Jeffrey Richards British Film Censorship, , Chapter 16, The British Cinema Book, Robert Murphy, BFI, 1997
Week 3	**The BBFC and Early Film** **Case Study: *Battleship Potemkin*** • The banning of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) represented a perceived threat to the political status quo during an unstable period of politics in the UK and across Europe in the 1920s. • What does the banning of this film suggest about British power and authority during this period?	• Simon Brown Censorship under siege: The BBFC in the Silent Era' in <u>Behind the Scenes at the BBFC: Film Classification from the Silver Screen to the Digital Age</u> ed. Lamberti, Ed London: BFI) p16 • Morris Dickstein 'Battleship Potemkin: Film and Revolutionary Politics' *Dissent, vol.58, no.3, Summer 2011 pp90-95* • Masha Shpolberg 'Troubled Times on the Potemkin Steps The Odessa International Film Festival' *Film Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (Winter 2015)*, pp. 55-59 **Viewing: *Battleship Potemkin, Eisenstein, 1925*** **MIDTERM PAPER about establishment of Censorship in the early years set here.**
Week 4	**Course-related trip** (timing of this session subject to booking availability each semester) • This will change each semester depending on screenings and other factors but will usually link to a focus on the work of the BBFC Examiners and their decision-making.	• Petley, J (2009) 'Councillors and Classifiers' in <u>Censorship</u>, Oxford: *Oneworld Publication pp74-97* • Richards, J (1997) , 'British Film Censorship' in <u>The British Cinema Book</u>, ed. Robert Murphy, London: BFI

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 5	**From Liberalisation to Exploitation** **The Swinging Sixties: Sexual representation on screen** • The 1960s is largely viewed as a groundbreaking decade where changes in the political and economic sphere were felt in the cultural sphere. This session will draw on a range of clips from films screened in the 1960s to illustrate the rapidity of social and cultural change and the ways in which this was seized upon as a great opportunity by filmmakers. As the decade closed, all of the previously "banned" issues on screen were present: sex, sexuality, violence, bad language and drug use.	• Sian Barber 'Blue is the Pervading Shade: Re-Examining British Film Censorship in the 1970s' *Journal of British Cinema and Television* (2009) Vol no.3 pp349-69 • Hargreaves Tracy (2012) 'The Trevelyan Years: British Censorship and 1960s Cinema *in Lamberti E (eds) <u>Behind the Scenes at the BBFC: Film Classification from the Silver Screen to the Digital Age</u> (London: BFI/Palgrave) pp53-70 Possible focus films: *Victim (1961); Saturday Night, Sunday Morning (1960; Alfie, (1966); Performance (1968); A Clockwork Orange (1971)* Possible Visit to The Kubrick Archive (UAL) to explore artefacts from *A Clockwork Orange* – depending on availability **Deadline for Midterm Essay between Weeks 5 and 6**
Week 6	**Case Study: Lolita** (this case study may change with a focus on other films of the period) • We will commence this session with a close focus on a theoretical paper: *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* and make our focus films the two versions of *Lolita* (Kubrick, 1962, Lyne 1997) to explore how representation has changed from implication to explicit showing of sexual behaviour on screen. What do these shifts reveal about social change in Britain over time?	• Lury K (2010) 'The Child in Film' London: IB Taurus & Co Ltd, pp73-87 • Mulvey L 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Reading (1999) Eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York/Oxford: pp833-44* • Fleur Gabriel 'Presumed Innocent: The Paradox of Coming of Age and the Problem of Youth Sexuality in *Lolita* and *Thirteen,' Journal of Media and Communication. Vol 1, July 2009 pp47-65*
Week 7	**Knowing the Child Audience** • A recurring feature of debates in film censorship is the concern for 'effects', but audience research shows that these 'effects' can be in many different forms: emotional, ideological and possibly behavioural. This session will explore how both audience research methodologies have changed and developed in explorations of media effects and influences; as well as explore the ways in which new technologies are feeding those shifts in conceptions of audience activity. The focus in this session is the move to home technologies in the 1980s and beyond.	• Mary Jane Kehily (2008) An Introduction to Childhood Studies. McGraw Hill Educational Press, 2008 pp1-21 • Buckingham D (1996) 'Distress and Delight': Children's Experience of Horror in *Moving Images: Understanding children's emotional responses to television*, Manchester: Manchester University Press pp95-135 • See here for a summary of Albert Bandura's 'Bobo Doll' Experiment https://www.simplypsychology.org/bobo-doll.html

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Week	Content	Assignments
Week 8	**Knowing the Child Audience II** • Students will research and present an example of a film given certification at 12A (the mid-child audience showing understanding of how debates about regulation have shifted to acknowledge changes to conceptions of childhood and parenting and a development of regulation from the State or State-sponsored bodies to the home. • (Examples of films: *The Lovely Bones; Woman in Black; Any Superhero film; Juno;)*	• David Buckingham & Helle Strandgaard Jensen (2012) 'Beyond "Media Panics"', *Journal of Children and Media, 6:4 pp413-429* • Reading will be drawn from the recommended reading list below to support the further study in this area. Students are awarded for independent research in this area so not all reading is set. **Student Group Presentations**
Week 9	**The Audience in the Internet Age: What can be done, if anything, to regulate the use of/effects of *Social Media?*** • From the euphoria surrounding the introduction of social media, the UK is now engaged in a range of debates from social media addiction to child exploitation through social media. Concerns of the 'effects' of new media on audiences are familiar from 'panics' expressed around film but the question of how to regulate transnational conglomerates in an age of digital proficiency is taxing politicians of all stripes. This session will commence with a lecture and overview of the issues around disintermediation and the debates and discussions around the difficulty of regulating new media. This will be detailed to afford students a chance to select, research and investigate an area of interest to present on. Students might wish to focus on how to protect audiences, or how to enforce social media institutions to put in regulatory processes.	• Nick Couldry and Jose Van Dijck 'Researching Social Media as if the Social Mattered' *Social Media and Society, July-December 2015, pp1-7* • Jenkins H (2006) <u>Convergence Culture, Where Old Media and New Media Collide</u> NY: NYU Press Chapter 6 pp202-240 • Kant T (2014) 'Giving the 'Viewser' a voice? *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 58:3* • Lamberti E (ed) (2012) <u>Behind the Scenes at the BBFC: Film Classification from the Silver Screen to the Digital Age</u> London: BFI/Palgrave Macmillan Chapter 11 pp181-201 • Van Dijck (2009) 'Users like you? Theorizing agency in user-generated content' *Media, Culture and Society, 32 (1) pp41-58*

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 10	**Research Skills Session** • Students convene to begin the process of mapping their research. This is a directed taught session where research methodologies will be presented as well as research processes explained. • Focus in this session is on searching and finding relevant literature; focusing research questions and identifying a case study. • Students may work in groups to formulate and refine their research questions (whilst eventually presenting as individuals).	• Reading will be directed from the reading list above and below contingent on topic. Students can investigate issues for organisations and management of content, or they can investigate questions of regulation from the point of view of governments, or from the point of view of families and other user groups. • Students will be assessed on their independence for finding relevant reading and research and for being able to extract the salient issues from the reading. • Students will be expected to show their work to date, be able to formulate clear questions to advance their work and to take on board advice to develop. • Group tutorials will be held here for students to report the progress of their enquiry.
Week 11	**Symposium on Digital Regulation**	• Students present their findings in a research poster format and panels will be put together for students to answer questions on their area, to debate outcomes and findings.
Week 12	**Final Session** **Course-related trip**	• Course Evaluations • Students hand in Annotated Bibliography (10%) • Poster and Evaluation of research process (35%)

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:
These are contingent on availability and screening times if related to film viewing, but in the past have included:
  • Trip to the British Board of Film Classification offices and an illustrated seminar by one of the Classification Officers
  • Visit to the Stanley Kubrick Archive and Design Museum
  • Visit to the British Film Institute or other repertory cinema to see archival material when/where it is shown
  • Visit to the Regent Street Cinema – the first dedicated cinema in the UK (still a cinema but with some museum features)

REQUIRED READINGS:
  • Sian Barber 'Blue is the Pervading Shade: Re-Examining British Film Censorship in the 1970s' *Journal of British Cinema and Television* (2009) Vol no.3 pp349-69
  • Brown S (2012) 'Censorship under siege: The BBFC in the Silent Era' in Behind the Scenes at the BBFC: Film Classification from the Silver Screen to the Digital Age ed. Lamberti, Ed London: BFI pp3-15
  • Simon Brown Censorship under siege: The BBFC in the Silent Era' in Behind the Scenes at the BBFC: Film Classification from the Silver Screen to the Digital Age ed. Lamberti, Ed London: BFI) p16
  • Buckingham D (1996) 'Distress and Delight': Children's Experience of Horror in *Moving Images: Understanding children's emotional responses to television*, Manchester: Manchester University Press pp95-135

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- Morris Dickstein 'Battleship Potemkin: Film and Revolutionary Politics' *Dissent, vol.58, no.3, Summer 2011 pp90-95*
- Fleur Gabriel 'Presumed Innocent: The Paradox of Coming of Age and the Problem of Youth Sexuality in *Lolita* and *Thirteen,' Journal of Media and Communication. Vol 1, July 2009 pp47-65*
- Hargreaves Tracy (2012) 'The Trevelyan Years: British Censorship and 1960s Cinema *in Lamberti E (eds) Behind the Scenes at the BBFC: Film Classification from the Silver Screen to the Digital Age* (London: BFI/Palgrave) pp53-70
- Jenkins H (2006) Convergence Culture, Where Old Media and New Media Collide NY: NYU Press Chapter 6 pp202-240
- Kant T (2014) 'Giving the 'Viewser' a voice? *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 58:3***Mary Jane Kehily (2008)** An Introduction to Childhood Studies. McGraw Hill Educational Press, 2008 pp1-21
- Kuhn A (1988) 'The Birth of Film Censorship in Britain' *in* Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality 1909-1925 London: Routledge pp16-33
- Lamberti E (ed) (2012) Behind the Scenes at the BBFC: Film Classification from the Silver Screen to the Digital Age London: BFI/Palgrave Macmillan Chapter 11 pp181-201
- Lury K (2010) 'The Child in Film' London: IB Taurus & Co Ltd, pp73-87
- Mulvey L 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Reading (1999) Eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York/Oxford: pp833-44*
- Petley J (2009) 'Death and Destruction' in Censorship Oxford: OneWorld Press pp8-27
- Jeffrey Richards British Film Censorship, , Chapter 16, The British Cinema Book, Robert Murphy, BFI, 1997
- Masha Shpolberg 'Troubled Times on the Potemkin Steps The Odessa International Film Festival' *Film Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 2 (Winter 2015)*, pp. 55-59
- Van Dijck (2009) 'Users like you? Theorizing agency in user-generated content' *Media, Culture and Society,, 32 (1) pp41-58*

RECOMMENDED READINGS:
- Barker, M. & Petley, J, The Newsom Report: a case study in "common sense", chapter 1 in Ill Effects- the media/violence debate, Routledge, 1997
- Blue, J & Gill, M, Peter Watkins Discusses His Suppressed Nuclear Film The War Game, Film Comment, Autumn 1965, Vol. 3:4
- Bourne, S, Victim, pages 155-162, Brief Encounters: Lesbians and Gays in British Cinema 1930-1971, Cassell, 1996.
- Christian Bugge A Clockwork Controversy accessed October 2018 http://www.visual-memory.co.uk/amk/doc/0012.html
- Kramer P 'Movies that Make People Sick' in *Participations: Journal of Audience Studies* Vol. 8, Issue No.2 November 2011
- Kramer P (2011) Controversies: A Clockwork Orange London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Kuhn, Annette, The Birth of Film Censorship in Britain, Chapter 2, Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality 1909 – 1925, Routledge, 1990
- Mathews, Tom Dewe, Living Within the State, Chapter 2, Censored, Chatto & Windus, 1994
- Mulvey, L., Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, Screen Autumn, 1975
- Petley, J., Censorship, Beginners' Guides, Oneworld Publications, 2009
- Richards, J., British Film Censorship, Chapter 16, The British Cinema Book, ed. Robert Murphy, BFI, 1997
- Richards, J. & Aldgate, A., What A Difference a War Makes: The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp, Chapter 5, Best of British Cinema and Society 1930-1970, Blackwell, 1983

Journals
- Sight and Sound, monthly magazine of the British Film Institute
- Close Up: The Electronic Journal of British Cinema

NOTES:
This course is offered during the regular semester and in the summer. For summer sections, the course schedule is condensed, but the content, learning outcomes, and contact hours are the same.