FS 345 PASSIONS AND REPRESSIONS: CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS OF BRITISH IDENTITY IN BRITISH CINEMA
IES Abroad London

DESCRIPTION: This course examines the role of British cinema in providing a window into the changing nature of British identity and society since World War Two. Through the study of key films across the past sixty years it charts the progress of political, social and cultural change in Britain as represented in British film. Students examine the changing economic fortunes of British cinema and its effect on the development of British film style during each period. A strong emphasis is placed on studying the contexts in which the films were originally circulated and read. The course provides opportunities to utilize the resources of the British Film Institute archive and library, as well as steering students towards researching the locations, the stars and directors of the London-based film.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

PREREQUISITES: None

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
- Lectures
- Presentations of readings
- Selected excerpts of film clips

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
- Participation in course discussion and research (20%);  
- Mid-term essay paper (approximately 1,500 words) (30%);  
- Group research project (15%);  
- End of semester essay paper (approximately 2,000 words) (35%)

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:
- Analyse film in detail using a formal method
- Understand the material, historical, ideological and economic elements of British life interface with the way that British film represents British identity
- Learn about the influence of Hollywood on production, distribution and reception of feature film in the UK

CONTENT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction to British Cinema</td>
<td>Background reading on the Internet to read before the first class:</td>
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</tbody>
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Week 2

Passion Repressed
This iconic British film of repressed desire and extra marital infidelity throws up debates about ideology and the way that film represents British identity at a critical moment in British history. There will be an introduction to formal film language analysis. Report back on Brief Encounter.

- http://www.britishcinemagreats.com/cinema_history/pre_british/page1.htm


- Film screening: Brief Encounter, David Lean, 1945

- Comparative text: The End of the Affair, Neil Jordan, 1999

Week 3

Museum Visit
This field trip to Imperial War Museum will help to explore the history of WW2 and The Blitz Experience, the context for the production of Brief Encounter. Entry to the museum is free. Nearest tube station is Lambeth North, Bakerloo line; directions will be provided.


Week 4

Passion Versus Duty
This award-winning historical heritage drama portrays the monarch in very contemporary ways. Debates focus on faithfulness to historical fact, the spectacle that is the monarchy and the representation of femininity. Report on Elizabeth.


- Film screening: Elizabeth, Sheka Kapur, 1998

- Comparative text: The Queen, Stephen Frears, 2006

Week 5

Passion Denied
This is a Mike Leigh film about sexual morality and back street abortion in 1950’s London. Oscar nominated performances. Report on Vera Drake.

  http://www.channel4.com/film/reviews/feature.jsp?id=140270
  http://www.veradrake.com/ Video interview with Mike Leigh
  http://www.bfi.org.uk/features/interviews/leigh.htm

- Film screening: Vera Drake (Mike Leigh) 2005

- Comparative text: Dance With A Stranger, (Mike Newell), 1985.
| Week 6 | A Passionate Defense  
The north of Ireland is a fiercely contested political and ideological space, at once part of and at war with the British state. Based on real events, this film aims to represent the difficulty of being Irish in the UK at a time when the IRA and other paramilitary groups are bombing the mainland. Report on In The Name of the Father. | • Reading: Traditions of Representation: Political Violence and the Myth of Atavism, Chapter 3, Irish Film, Martin McLoone, BFI Publishing, 2000; Hunger review; [http://www.dirtysweatsoul.com/2009/04/hunger-film-review.html](http://www.dirtysweatsoul.com/2009/04/hunger-film-review.html)  
• Film screening: In The Name of the Father, Sheridan, 1993  
• Comparative text: Hunger, Steve McQueen, 2008 |
| Week 7 | Hybrid Passions  
This is one of the first British films to feature Pakistanis as protagonists. It examines the way in which black and white relationships were affected by the policies of Margaret Thatcher’s government (1979 -1990) and the struggle of children born of immigrants in Britain to define their identity. Report on My Beautiful Launderette. | • Reading: John Hill ‘Race and Cultural Hybridity’ & John Hill ‘Film and Television: A New Relationship in British Cinema in the 1980s (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999); Dirty Linen, Jamal, ICA Documents;[http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/475617/index.html](http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/475617/index.html)  
• Film screening: My Beautiful Launderette, Stephen Frears (1985)  
• Comparative text: Bhaji on the Beach, Gurinder Chada, 1993 |
| Week 8 | Culture Clash  
This Ken Loach film looks at interracial and inter-religious relationships in Glasgow. We examine Loach’s social realist style and his unique approach to post 9/11 Britain. Report on Ae Fond Kiss | • Reading: Class, Politics and Gender: High Hopes and Riff Raff, chapter 9, British Cinema of the 1980’s, John Hill, Clarendon Press, 1999.  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/collective/A3009098](http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/collective/A3009098) BBC audio interviews with Ken Loach and information on the film.  
• Film: Ae Fond Kiss, Ken Loach, 2004  
• Comparative text: My Name is Joe, Ken Loach, 1998 |
| Week 9 | Happy Endings  
This remains one of the most successful films in British cinema history. It is a US/UK financed production featuring Hugh Grant. We examine the fairy tale nature of the films in this sub-genre and the nature of stardom, using Hugh Grant as a case study of star quality. Report on Notting Hill. | • Reading: Citylife: Urban Tales in Late 90’s British Cinema, Robert Murphy, British Cinema Book Chapter 35; A path through the moral maze, Robert Murphy in British Cinema of the 90s, BFI:2000; The Reluctance to Commit: Hugh Grant and the new British Romantic Comedy, Andrew Spicer, Chapter 6 in The Trouble With Men, ed. Powrie, Davies, Babington, Wallflower Press 2004.  
• Film screening: Notting Hill, Roger Michell (1999)  
• Comparative text: Sliding Doors, Peter Howitt. |
| Week 10 | Racial Passions  
Very few British films have featured the Afro Caribbean community. This film, directed by a | • Reading: Beyond ‘The Cinema of Duty’? The Pleasures of Hybridity a: Black British Film of the 1980’s; 1990’s, Sarita Malik, chapter 13 in Dissolving |
young white man and featuring a successful rapper, Asher D, caused a minor sensation when it was released for its truthful and disturbing representation of the life of young black inner London males. We will explore the history of black British representation. Report on Bullet Boy

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<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>A Passion for Dance</th>
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<td>DEADLINE FOR HANDING IN FINAL PAPER</td>
<td>A young working-class woman, desperately looking for her identity, teaches herself in the hope of moving up and out of her no-hope environment. Very well received in Cannes, this woman-directed film lays it bare for contemporary British youth, with a gritty awareness combined with sensitivity. Small films about big issues: perhaps the future of the British film industry? Report on Fish Tank.</td>
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Week 12

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<th>Group Research Presentations</th>
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<td>Students will present PowerPoint presentations of their group research.</td>
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REQUIRED READINGS:

- Harper, S., Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know, Continuum, 2000
- Hurd, G., National Fictions, London, BFI
- McLoone, M., Irish Film, BFI Publishing, 2000
- Murphy, R., ed. British Cinema in the Second World War, Continuum, 2000

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Dyer, R., Brief Encounter, BFI, 1993

Journals:
• Close Up: The Electronic Journal of British Cinema
• Journal of Popular British Cinema
• Sight and Sound (monthly British Film Institute publication)