



FS345 REPRESENTATIONS OF IDENTITY, NATION AND VALUES 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 engage with film events in London, e.g., *London Film Festival* in the Fall Semester, and the *BAFTA Film Awards* in the Spring. Additionally, the course provides opportunities to know of the work of the British Film Institute archive and 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

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COSTS: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Lectures
- Presentations of readings
- Selected excerpts of film clips

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Participation in course discussion and presentation on a single film - 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:

- Analyze 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

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:

Week	Content	Assignments
<p>Week 1</p>	<p>Introduction to British Cinema</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> British Cinema: history, economics, and aesthetic constraints. A brief introduction to British Cinema, the course, and each other. What is distinctively British about British cinema? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Christie (2013) 'What is National Cinema Today and Do We still Need it?' <i>Film History: An International Journal</i>. Vol.25 No.1-2 pp19-30 H/W: students will explore the recent picture on British cinema as detailed in the BFI Statistical Handbook 2017 http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-top-films-of-2016-2017-06.pdf
<p>Week 2</p>	<p>Passion Repressed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch <i>Brief Encounter</i> (dir. Lean, 1945) prior to the session. Dyer R (1983) <i>Brief Encounter</i> London: BFI Harper S (2000) 'Control and Evasion' in <i>Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know</i>, London: Continuum 2000 pp30-50 Melanie Williams 'Women in Love (1945), The Passionate Friends (1945) and Summer Madness (1955) in <i>David Lean</i> Manchester University Press, 2014 pp88-101 Nick Davis 'The Object of Desire' <i>FilmComment December 2015</i> pp31-35
<p>Week 3</p>	<p>Heritage Films and British Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This session will provide an overview of how the royal family and the subject of monarchy has been a rich source of material in British cinema. In this session students will explore the key terms of 'heritage' versus 'historical drama' and explore notions of film-as-tourism, film-as-nostalgia, and film-as-ideology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Film: <i>The King's Speech</i> (2011) Tom Hooper <i>Comparative Films: The Queen</i>, (Fears, 2009), <i>Elizabeth</i> (Kepur, 1998); <i>Room with a View</i> (Merchant/Ivory, 1984) and <i>Gosford Park</i> (Altman, 2001) Katherine Byrne (2013): 'Rethinking History Adapting heritage: Class and conservatism in Downton Abbey' <i>Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice</i> pp1-13 Vidal B (2012) <i>Heritage Film: Nation, Genre and Representation: Columbia University Press NY Chapter 1, pp 7-51</i> Monk C (2011) <i>Heritage Film Audiences</i> Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Chapter 1 'The Heritage Film Debate' pp 10-28

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 4	Field Trip <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Fall Semester students will attend some part of the London Film Festival examining the showcasing of British film in an international event In the Spring Semester the focus will be on the awards season and the focus is on Outstanding British film category at BAFTA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In either field trip students will explore the organization and significance of these events for British Film B Ruby Rich (2013) 'Why do Film Festivals Matter' in <i>The Film Festivals Reader</i>, ed. Iordanova. St Andrews University Press: pp157-65 Stephen Follows 'What kinds of films win BAFTA awards?' www.stephenfollows.org.uk
Week 5	Heritage Film (2) Adapting the novel to screen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This session will commence with a continuation of our look at the successful heritage genre of British cinema. In this focus film the story of love lost across the class divide is a significant and recurring theme in British cinema. Additionally, you will have a chance to think about the issues of literary adaptation and turn a piece of the novel into a short piece of film on storyboard, thinking about creative decisions, camera movement and sound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Film: <i>Atonement</i> (dir. Joe Wright, 2007) (NB: whilst the choice of film may be updated to reflect development in British film, the focus of this session will remain on literary adaptation. Schiff J (2012) 'Reading and Writing on Screen: Cinematic Adaptations of McEwan's <i>Atonement</i> and Cunningham's <i>The Hours Critique</i>, 53: 164-173 Fitzgerald, John (2010) 'New Heritage Cinema – Red Buses in the Rain' in <i>Studying British Cinema: 1999-2009</i> pp 59-71
Week 6	Gay Lives on Screen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of scholars (Bourne, 1996; Dyer, 2002; Medhurst, 1984) attribute the landmark 1961 film <i>Victim</i> as encapsulating the debates and issues for gay men at the time. and is often credited as being a driving force behind the 1967 Act and decriminalization of homosexuality. This film will be used to explore the opening of representation of gay lives on screen and will make 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Film: <i>Victim</i> (Basil Dearden, 1961); - the focus film might rotate each semester to make a comparative film the main focus. Stephen Bourne 'Victim' in <i>Brief Encounters: Lesbians and Gays in British Cinema 1930-1971</i>, London: Cassell Publishing, 1996: pp155-162 John Hill 'Race and Cultural Hybridity' in <i>Film and Television: A New Relationship in British Cinema in the 1980s</i> (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999) Joanna Di Mattia 'Some Thoughts on the Erotica Aesthetic' in Luca Guardagnino's 'Desire Trilogy' <i>Sense of cinema</i>, March 2018, Issue 86 pp1-13 <i>Comparison Films My Beautiful Laundrette</i> (dir. Frears, 1985), through to <i>God's Own Country</i> (dir. Francis Lee, 2017) or <i>Call Me By Your Name</i> (dir. Guardagnino 2017). NB: <i>Call Me By Your Name</i> was both partially financed in UK and had a UK screen writer.

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 7	<p>Black Lives in British Cinema</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Britain is frequently represented as a single entity, rather than, as Higson (2007) puts it ‘a diaspora of peoples’ occupying different stories and cultures and experiences. This session examines debates about representation and is an opportunity to explore some of the success of black lives both on screen and behind the camera 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus filmmakers are Amma Asante (<i>Belle, 2013, A United Kingdom</i>), Steve McQueen (from <i>Hunger</i> to <i>Twelve Years a Slave</i>), Idris Elba (<i>Yardie, 2018</i>) Higson A (2006) ‘The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema’ in Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (eds) <i>Transnational Cinema, The Film Reader</i> Abingdon: Routledge Amma Asante: ‘I’m here to disrupt expectations’ Interview in <i>The Guardian, October 2016</i> Clive James Nwonka ‘Diversity Pie: Rethinking Social Exclusion and Diversity Policy in the British Film Industry <i>Journal of Media Practice, 2015, Vol. 16 No. 1 pp73-90</i>
Week 8	<p>This week will be a chance to explore the representation of life in another region of the UK. The case study film will alternate each semester.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland’s troubled history has been a rich pool of stories for filmmakers from the 90s with <i>Cal</i>, and the Award-winning <i>The Crying Game</i>, through representations of the troubles on screen, like <i>In the Name of the Father</i>. Long after the troubles have finished directors have found new ways to explore the history. This week the focus film is ‘71 and plays as a thriller. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Film: ‘71 (dir. Yann Demange, 2014) Comparative Films: <i>The Crying Game (1992); Hunger (2008); In the Name of the Father (1994)</i> Adam Nayman ‘Troubles and Strife’ (Sight & Sound, November 2014, pg 10) Martin McCloone ‘Violence and the Myth of Atavism, Chapter 3 <i>Irish Film</i> BFI Publishing, 2000 pp 12-26 Jason Wood and Ian Haydn Smith (2015) <i>Interview with Yann Demange</i>, in <i>New British Cinema</i>: London Faber & Faber pp53-63
Week 9	<p>British Auteurs and the Social Realist Tradition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This week the focus is on the significance of social realism as a key part of British cinema success, examining the award-winning work of Ken Loach (or could look at Mike Leigh or other new filmmakers working in social realist tradition) Loach is a man very revered in film circles and yet one who struggles to sell at the British box office. The focus film, set in Scotland brings together two concepts significant in the course, that of realism and constructions of nation on screen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Film: <i>The Angel’s Share</i> (dir. Ken Loach, 2012); <i>Comparative Film: I, Daniel Blake</i> (dir. Ken Loach, 2015) Andrew Sarris ‘Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962’ pp1-5 Bert Cardullo (2012) ‘A Cinema of Social Conscience: An Interview with Ken Loach’ <i>Minnesota Review</i> pp81-85 Lay S (2002) <i>British Social Realism: from Documentary to Brit Grit</i> London: Wallflower press pp 5-23
Week 10	<p>Female Directors making their mark in British Film</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work of Andrea Arnold explores the different manifestations and restrictions of femininity. Using a social realist lens, this work explores the story of Mia, seeking escape from her world through dance. A follow-up work <i>American Honey</i> had a very successful reception on the film festival circuit including the director’s prize at Cannes in 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Film: <i>Fish Tank</i> (2009, dir. Andrea Arnold); Comparative films: <i>Red Road (2006); Wuthering Heights (2012); American Honey</i> (dir. Andrea Arnold, 2016). Other recent female directors of interest are Clio Barnard, and Lynne Ramsay Pam Hirsch (2014) <i>Written on the Body, Feminist Media Studies, 14:3, 470-484</i>, Nwonka, C.J (2014) “You’re what’s wrong with me.”: <i>Fish Tank, The Selfish Giant and the language of contemporary British social realism. New Cinemas, 12.3 pp205-22</i>

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 11	Happy Endings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the successes of the 1990s where Hugh Grant played a series of roles as Romantic lead, the quest to get back to a successful formula for romance continues...this session will explore the economics of Rom-com in the British context with a look at the production company <i>Working Title</i> – and exploration of creating a star – and draw on the model to explore how to create modern Rom-Com. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Film: <i>Notting Hill (1999)</i> Comparative Film: <i>Man Up (2015)</i>; <i>Bridget Jones' Baby (2016)</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2YoUbAEFTI Ben Roberts 'Box Office Actually' <i>Sight & Sound, September 2015 pp36-37</i> Spicer A (2004) 'The Reluctance to Commit: Hugh Grant and the new British Romantic Comedy,' in <i>The Trouble With Men</i>, ed. Powrie, Davies, Babington, London: Wallflower Press Wayne M (2006) 'Working Title Mark II: A Critique of the Atlanticist Paradigm for British Cinema' <i>International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics Vol 2 No. 1 pp59-73</i>
Week 12	Going Global! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Returning to issues introduced in Session 1 this final session will be a chance to review the different kinds of British film encountered on the course and to look ahead to the new economy of British film making including co-productions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Evaluations Final Group Field Trip to a screening

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Curran, J. & Porter, V., eds. *British Cinema History*, Wiedenfield, 1983
- Harper, S., *Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know*, Continuum, 2000
- Higson, A., ed. *Dissolving Views*, Cassell, 1996
- Higson, A., *British Cinema, Past and Present*, Routledge, 2000
- Hill, J., *British Cinema in the 1980s*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999
- Hurd, G., *National Fictions*, London, BFI
- McLoone, M., *Irish Film*, BFI Publishing, 2000
- Murphy, R., ed. *British Cinema Book*, BFI publishing, 2001
- Murphy, R., ed. *British Cinema in the Second World War*, Continuum, 2000
- Powrie, P., et al, *The Trouble With Men, Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema*, Wallflower Press, 2004
- Watson, G., *The Cinema of Mike Leigh*, Wallflower Press, 2004

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Chibnall, S., & Murphy, R., eds. *British Crime Cinema*, Routledge, 1999
- Dyer, R., *Brief Encounter*, BFI, 1993
- Friedman L., ed. *British Cinema and Thatcherism*. London: UCL Press, 1996
- Higson, A., & Ashby, J., eds. *British Cinema Past and Present*, London, Routledge, 2000
- Phillips, P., *Understanding Film Texts*. London: BFI, 2000.
- McKnight G., ed. *Agent of Challenge and Defiance: the Films of Ken Loach*. 1997.
- Murphy, R., *British Cinema of the 1990s*. London: BFI, 2000.