

English 432.01H (20820) Honors/ History and Aesthetics of Film: 60s & 70s

Gerald Duchovnay & MichelleTvette Spring 2014 TR 2-4:20, HL 203

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Course Description: English 432.01H, satisfies the university's Visual and Performing Arts requirement. We will exam aspects of U.S. film history of the 60s and 70s, with glances at international influences on the period and links to other issues, including aspects of history and culture. In part because it takes time to get a film produced, and in part because films of the early 70s--often considered the finest decade in U. S. film history--include many films that are reflections of or results of the 60s. As we consider aspects of the "aesthetics" of film, we will also consider how films reflect the ideology and culture of our country and how the films we see or that you talk about have been important in film history and consider if these films and their ideas are influencing our lives and our movies today.

No background in film studies or filmmaking is needed for this course. We meet only twice a week and will need to make very good use of all available class and lab time (viewing films or film clips). Our presentations will involve some lecturing, but primarily we will discuss what you are reading and seeing.

In the U. S. and abroad, the 60s and the 70s produced hundreds, if not thousands, of feature films and documentaries that entertained or educated, or both. They also dealt with and created myths, Hollywood being one of the great myth makers of our culture. We do not claim to know all of the films made during this period. You may very well be familiar with movies that we or others in the class have not heard of or seen. Don't hesitate to make references to those movies in class. If things go according to schedule, we will have the opportunity to see more than a dozen historically and culturally significant films as well as clips, shorts, and some documentaries.

There are many titles we might see and discuss that are historically or culturally important, including some produced in other countries.. What follows, though, is a highly selective list, mostly, but not exclusively, U.S. films for the decades under review. For the 60s: *Psycho*, *The Graduate*, *In Cold Blood*, *Oliver*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Apartment*, *La Dolce Vita*, *The Misfits*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *West Side Story*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, *The Miracle Worker*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Birds*, *Dr. Strangelove*, or, *How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, *Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, *Easy Rider*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *The Learning Tree*, *Z*, *The Wild Bunch*, *Tom Jones*, *Goldfinger*, *My Fair Lady*, *Doctor Zhivago*, *The Sound of Music*, *Blow Up*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Zorba the Greek*. For the 70s: *M*A*S*H**, *The Conformist*, *Woodstock*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *Patton*, *The Conversation*, *The Parallax View*, *Lenny*, *Young Frankenstein*, *Jaws*, *Woodstock*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Harold and Maude*, *The French Connection*, *Straw Dogs*, *Cabaret*, *The Candidate*, *Deliverance*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Carrie*, *All the President's Men*, *Rocky*, *Star Wars*, *The Deer Hunter*, *Superman*, *Halloween*, *Midnight Express*, *All That Jazz*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Breaking Away*, *The Tin Drum*, *Norma Rae*, *Being There*, *Sounder*, *The Exorcist*, *Last Tango in Paris*, *The Way We Were*, *Sleeper*, *The Sting*, *Little Big Man*, *The Godfather*, *The Deer Hunter*, *Mean Streets*, *The French Connection*, *Nashville*, *American Graffiti*, *Chinatown*, *Being There*, *Taxi Driver*, *Network*, *Kramer vs. Kramer*, *Star Trek*, *Annie Hall*, *Alien*, and *Amarcord*.

You are welcome and encouraged to see as many films as you can on your own. In addition to our discussions, you will have an opportunity to explore aspects of film history in two papers. Your findings for these papers will be shared with the class through either abstracts or summaries or brief oral presentations. The oral presentations will introduce us to films that we might not otherwise discuss or see. The exact nature of the two film papers will be discussed in class, but the first one will focus on films from the 60s and the second paper will be on a film from the early 70s. The actual focus of the paper may relate to how the film is representative of the period, aspects of film history (genre, director, etc.), the aesthetics of film, or other aspects that we will talk about in class. As the titles suggest, there is no shortage of films to discuss. As we move through the course and your presentations and papers, we will consider some of these films (and

possibly others not on the list) as we examine how they are reflections of the 60s and 70s and their significance to/in film history and to culture and history in general.

Textbooks: The textbooks for this course are a collection of essays on the films of the 60s, and a readable guide to aspects of film aesthetics.

REQUIRED: Giannetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*. 13th edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon/Pearson, 2014. ISBN: 9780205856169

Grant, Barry Keith. Ed. *American Cinema of the 1960s*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2009. ISBN: 9780393932645

Handouts and items on reserve. In particular:

Friedman, Lester. Ed. *American Cinema of the 1970s*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2007.

Wiki: <http://historyoffilm.wikispaces.com/>

Other Highly Recommended Books:

Biskind, Peter. *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998.

Giannetti, Louis and Scott Eyman. *Flashback: A Brief History of Film*. 6th Edition.

Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2010. On reserve. Breaks down film history into decades, U.S. and International. Good for an overview of the decades and film history.

Hoberman, J. *The Dream Life: Movies, Media, and the Mythology of the Sixties*. New York: The New Press (Macmillan), 2003.

--for quick overview of films and listings of directors and actors and other information-- Maltin, Leonard.

Movie and Video Guide, 2014. New York: Signet, 2014; or, *Video Hound's Golden Movie Retriever*, 2014. Detroit:

Thomson/Gale, 2010. A useful collection of interviews with filmmakers is: Duchovnay, Gerald, ed. *Film*

Voices. Albany: SUNY Press, 2004, but there are other such collections of interviews with filmmakers. See also <imdb.com>

See the Reserve List at the Gee Library for this class and other applicable titles.

Also: Access to films via Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, the Media Center, etc.

I will on occasion give you some study questions related to the text and/or films, and a list of names and terms to know that come from our readings, discussions, and viewings; this material should also serve as a solid foundation for learning about key aspects of the development of film history during the period under review and for preparing for the examinations. Please keep up with the reading assignments and bring questions about the material to class.

Student Learning Outcomes: Learning outcomes are what you are able to do as a result of the activities, readings, instruction, etc. that have occurred in this course -- these are my expectations of you, the learner in this course:

1. You will demonstrate an understanding of the history of motion pictures in the U.S. (primarily) in the 60s and 70s;
2. You will demonstrate skills in visual literacy – being able to read films – in a way that you could not before this class;
3. You will demonstrate a familiarity with ways of discussing and evaluating films as reflections of cultures and periods of history;
4. You will participate in a “community” interested in discussing/analyzing films beyond the surface level of narrative or character.

Evaluations: Grades will be determined by two examinations, two short papers, class participation, response to study questions, an oral presentation or two and abstracts on your papers.

Exam 1=15%; Exam 2=20%; Paper 1 =15%; Paper 2=15%; Oral presentations=10%; Responses to St Ques=10%; Class Participation=10%; abstracts=5%.

Examination Policy: The tests will be given on the dates indicated on the class schedule, unless we decide

otherwise. In-class tests will consist of short answer and essay questions.

Make-up Exams: Except for extraordinary circumstances, make-up examinations--which I dislike--will be given only once, at a time and place to be announced.

Final Examination: The final examination will consist of questions that focus on the materials from the second half of the term (similar format to the first exam) plus a cumulative essay question that brings together materials from the entire semester.

Attendance: Please try to attend all classes. Without being in class you lose the benefit of participating or listening to responses to the films. Class absences will have a negative effect on the evaluation of classroom participation. I will note your absences; absences in excess of three will contribute to the lowering of your grade. After six absences you will be dropped from the class. If there are truly extraordinary circumstances, it is incumbent upon you to notify me about your situation to see if you are able to remain in the class. *It is my understanding that those who are dropped from class without having attended regularly and who are on financial aid may be required to repay their financial aid.* In some quarters there is the notion that some absences are excused and others are not. I consider any absence an absence, whether it be sleeping late, car trouble, work, a doctor's appointment, a family emergency, or a university athletic event.

We meet only twice a week, and it is unlikely that material shown in class will be re-shown at a future time. Some of the films we will be seeing are on videotape or DVD and are available from Hastings, Blockbusters, or other video stores. Some, by coincidence, may be shown on such stations as AMC, TBS, Showtime, Cinemax, The Movie Channel, Independent Film Channel, Starz, Encore, etc. Those presented with commercials may be edited for tv, and even, occasionally, stations without commercials may edit a film for content. Some of the films may be available at the Media Center on campus. (A place to study films for your papers if the films are on DVD or video and you don't have access to equipment.) I encourage you to view a film more than once. If you read film history, you will discover how filmmakers such as Tarantino, Scorsese, Truffaut, Godard and countless others came to film by carefully watching films, some as many as twenty times or more. (See, for example, what Tarantino says about some of his influences on *Kill Bill, Parts 1 & 2.*) Many films, like other "texts" (books, paintings, photographs, etc.), are worth multiple viewings, or like music, multiple listenings. The more you look at films and think about them, the more you will see. Occasionally, it is possible that classes may run a bit longer than scheduled--until the completion of a film or the end of a discussion. Since some of you may have rides or another class, I will try not to let that happen, and if I know in advance it will occur, I will notify you. If you have a problem with attendance policy or a long lab day, please let me know. I do not intentionally try to keep you over.

Common Decency All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. In addition, you are requested to turn off your cell phone or put it in vibration mode before entering the classroom. Please, no text messaging while in the classroom. If you are text messaging, you will be asked to leave the class.

Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services / Texas A&M University-Commerce / Gee Library, Room 132 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148

The Writing Center. The Writing Center is dedicated to helping writers take advantage of all opportunities for learning related to the writing process; to that end, the Center can assist writers at any stage of the writing process. In addition to your instructor, this is the place to go for additional assistance with your reading and writing projects at TAMU-Commerce. The Center can help you with your papers and digital texts for your classes. The Center has two locations: (1) on the ground floor of the Hall of Languages (room 103), and (2) by the circulation desk in Gee Library. To schedule an appointment, come to HL 103 or call (903) 886-5280, or check out the hours at the Gee Library.

Papers: Specific films and assignments will be worked out in the weeks ahead. As indicated above, the first

paper will focus on films from the 60s, and the second will be on films of the 70s. Actual film choices may be made based on your interests in such things as history, politics, music, film genre, or the like. I will distribute guidelines for each paper during the semester.

Format: The first paper will be 6-8 printed pages, double-spaced, plus documentation. The first paper must use **6 (six)** different substantive sources (in the paper), but those sources do not include the film, Wikipedia, general references (dictionary, bible, etc.). These substantive sources should support your thesis or your ideas. The second paper will be 6-10 pages, and will focus on films of the 70s. For your benefit, the films and key idea for your papers should be approved by your instructor at least two weeks prior to the due date.

Oral Presentations: Because of the size of the class, you may be able to do two oral presentations. The orals will be nine (9) minutes long, and will focus on one or two key aspects of the film you are writing about for your paper. You must include 2-3 minutes (in the nine-minute presentation) of film clips or powerpoint images from your film to support your key idea(s). In addition to the presentation, each paper must include an abstract. Abstracts are one or two paragraphs that touch on the key points of your essay. We will talk about the orals and abstracts in class. These abstracts are to be sent to everyone in the class.

Plagiarism/Academic Honesty: Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]).

Our word plagiarism is derived from a word that means "to kidnap." Plagiarism is a form of kidnapping someone else's ideas, opinions, arguments, or research, and presenting them (it) as your own. Plagiarism "includes (but is not limited to) failure to indicate the source with quotation marks or footnotes where appropriate if any of the following are reproduced in the work submitted: 1. A phrase, written or musical; 2. A graphic element; 3. A proof; 4. Specific language; 5. An idea derived from the work, published or unpublished, of another person" or group.

Much of the confusion and unintentional dishonesty in undergraduate papers results from ignorance or carelessness with regard to attribution of sources. When you borrow from what others have said, you are obligated to acknowledge your sources. We all solicit opinions about our writing from family, friends, or colleagues. Your indebtedness to others for sharing ideas with you about your paper or for reading and commenting on it can be indicated in an acknowledgements page accompanying each formal assignment. If you go beyond conversations with friends or colleagues to other outside sources, you need to acknowledge these sources in your paper and in a Works Cited page. If you are uncertain about your documentation, please see your instructor before you submit your paper. Intentional plagiarism will result in a zero for the work and appropriate disciplinary action.

Teacher Certification: A number of you may be seeking certification to teach. *If you plan to seek certification in English, Spanish, Bilingual, an endorsement in ESL, or in other areas at TAMU-C, you must pass the required tests.* You should contact the appropriate certification advisor in your discipline by the beginning of your junior year, if not sooner. If you plan to be certified or pursue Alternate Certification to teach in the public schools, you need to become familiar with all the details of the competencies and requirements as early as possible in your academic career. Read: NOW.

Class Schedule: The key words here are tentative and flexibility. I anticipate we will view one feature per week, as well as film clips. Because of logistics, availability, time constraints, the failure of technology, possible guests, and your preferences, we may make changes as we progress during the semester. The film titles will be announced as we move along and also based on what you will be working on. More on this the first day.

Key Dates:

Feb 25 & 27 , First set of orals, films of the 60s

Feb. 25 & 27 – Paper 1 due + abstract (two copies of paper and two copies of abstract)

March 6 – Midterm examination

March 11 & 13--Spring Break

Apr 29 & May 1--Second set of oral reports, films of the 70s

April 29 or May 1 – Paper 2 due+ abstracts (two copies of paper and two copies of abstract)

May 6, HL 203, 1:15-4:00, Final Examination

Note: in this schedule, the reading assignments listed under, say Jan. 14, are the readings due for the next class (Jan. 16). Abbreviations: UM=Understanding Movies; AC60=American Films of the 60s; AC70=American Films of the 70s. Additional readings, plus handouts will be added. Films to be seen will depend in part on films you will be working on. Some of the titles will be announced during the first week.

The films are top loaded and place holders for now. We may or may not get to view all those listed, and some changes will be inevitable. The readings listed currently should remain the same, but these will be supplemented by handouts or items on the wiki or on reserve in the Gee Libray. Also, we may have guest speakers on occasion that will necessitate modification, and your comments may lead us to alter some offerings. Be flexible.

Week 1

- 1/14 Course Introduction/ Aspects of Assessment/ Reading Films / Film Clip
 Read for Next Time: AC60, Introduction, 1-21
 Joyce Maynard, "An 18-Year-Old Looks Back on Life"
 <<http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/09/13/specials/maynard-mag.html>>
- 1/16 Influences of the 50s and 60s: Coming of Age in 1960s *American Graffiti* (1973)
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 22-43 (1960)
 Giannetti, Story, 327-367

Week 2

- 1/21 Early 60s/Discussion of *American Graffiti* *Manchurian Candidate* or *Forrest Gump*
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 44-66(1961)
- 1/23 Early 60s--Discussion of *American Graffiti* and *Forrest Gump* *The Sixties*(doc)
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 67-88 (1962)
 : Giannetti, Ideology," Chapter 10, pp. 404-448.
 Assignment: particular year in one magazine

Week 3

- 1/28 Early 60s
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 89-109 (1963) *Psycho*
- 1/30 Mid 60s/Discussion/*Psycho* Doc-TBA
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 110-129 (1964)
 : Giannetti, *Mise en Scene*, 46-94

Week 4

- 2/4 Mid 60s *Nothing But a Man*
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 130-149 (1965)
- 2/6
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 150-171 (1966) *Atomic Café*(or *JFK* (segments) or *Dr. Strangelove*
 : Giannetti, *Dramatization*, 284-326

Week 5

- 2/11 Mid 60s *Mississippi Burning* or *4 Little Girls*
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 172-192 (1967)

2/13 Mid 60s--Discussion
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 193-216 (1968)
 Giannetti, Writing, 368-403

Week 6

2/18 1968: A Most Important Year
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 217-238 (1969)

The Graduate

2/20 Late 60s
 Giannetti, Acting, 232-283

Platoon or *Born on the Fourth of July*
 or *Good Morning, Vietnam*

Week 7

2/25 Orals and Papers

2/27 Orals and Papers

Week 8

3/4 Violence, Allegory, & Comedy
 A: EXAM

Bonnie and Clyde

3/6 EXAM
 Read for Next Time: AC70, Introduction, 1-23 (on reserve or wiki)

Week 9 Spring Break

3/11 & 3/13

Week 10--

3/18 Early 70s--what the 60s Wrought?
 Read for Next Time: TBA

Easy Rider or *The Wild Bunch*

3/20 Early 70s
 Read for Next Time: TBA

Decade Under the Influence (partial)

Week 11 --

3/25 Early 70s
 Read for Next Time: TBA

*M*A*S*H* (1970)

3/27 Early 70s-- Allegory/Comedy/Conflict
 Read for Next Time: TBA

doc--TBA

Week 12

4/1 Early 70s
 Read for Next Time: TBA

Joe (1970)

4/3 Discussion: 1970 and 1971/ M*A*S*H/ JOE
 Read for Next Time: TBA

Patton (opening)

Week 13

4/8 Mid 70s
 Read for Next Time: TBA

Hair or *Woodstock* or *A Hard Day's Night*

4/10 Mid 70s
 Read for Next Time: TBA

Parallax View or *3 Days of the Condor*

Week 14

4/15 Discussion of the films/
Read for Next Time: TBA

4/17 Late 70s (PCA/ACA Conference)
Read for Next Time: TBA

All the President's Men

Week 15

4/22 Late 70s
TBA

America's Most Feared: Ellsberg
Read for Next Time:

4/24 Influence of the 60s & 70s
A: Oral presentations and Papers

The Official Story or *Motorcycle Diaries*

Week 16

4/29 oral presentations and papers+ Course Evaluation = post-assessment
5/1 oral presentations and papers

Week 17 Finals Week

Final Examination, Tuesday, May 6, HL 203, 1:15-4:15 pm