

English 432.001 (21659) -- History and Aesthetics of Film: The 60s & 70s

Gerald Duchovnay Spring 2016 TR 2-4:20, HL 203

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Course Description: English 432.001 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 considerations of relevant history and culture. 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. These films also dealt with and created myths, Hollywood being one of the great mythmakers of our culture. As we consider aspects of the "aesthetics" of film, we will also consider how the films reflect the diverse ideology and culture of the U.S., how they were impacted by international influences, how they are important in film history, and how these films are still be influencing our lives and movies.

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 time. The presentations will involve some lecturing, but primarily we will discuss what you are reading and seeing.

Many of the films of the 60s and 70s (the 70s often described as the finest decade of U.S. filmmaking) are reflections or reactions to prior decades, so history and culture are important to our understanding of these films and their times. There are many films that are historically and culturally important, including some produced in other countries. Here 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.* I do not claim to know all of the films made during this period. You may very well be familiar with movies that I 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.

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 60s or 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 we move through the course and your presentations and papers, we will consider how the films are reflections of the 60s and 70s and their significance to/in film history, to culture, and history in general.

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

Kirzner, Jonathan. *Hollywood's Last Golden Age*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-8014-7816-1

Handouts

Items on reserve In particular: Friedman, Lester. Ed. *American Cinema of the 1970s*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2007, Gerald Mast, *A Short History of Movies*.

Materials on the web (as announced)

A wikispace for selected readings may be set up.

Other Recommended Books (on reserve):

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.

Giannetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*. Most recent edition available to you on reserve.

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

Mast, Gerald and Bruce Kavin. *A Short History of the Movies*. 11th Ed. Boston: Longman/Pearson, 2011.

--for a quick overview of films and listings of directors and actors and other information, there is: imdb.com

--In print, there are various editions of the following: Maltin, Leonard. *Movie and Video Guide, 2015*. New

York: Signet, 2015; or, *Video Hound's Golden Movie Retriever, 2015*. Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2014. A useful collection of interviews with filmmakers is: Duchovnay, Gerald, ed. *Film Voices*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004, but there are numerous other such collections of interviews with filmmakers.

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

Access to films via Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, the Media Center is beneficial.

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. 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 through written materials such as responses, papers, and examinations;
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, brief response to study questions, a magazine review, an oral presentation, and abstracts of your papers.

Exam 1=15%; Exam 2=15%; Paper 1=15%; Paper 2=15%; abstracts=2%; Oral presentations=8%; Responses to St Ques=15%; Magazine review=10%; Class Participation=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.

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) plus two substantive (350 words+) movie reviews. These sources **do not** include the film, Wikipedia, general references (dictionary, bible, etc.). The substantive sources should support your thesis and your ideas, but they don't have to focus solely on your film. The second paper will be 6-10 pages, and will focus on films of the 70s. Same requirements: six substantive sources and two reviews. 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. 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.

Oral Presentations: Because of the size and makeup of the class, most likely there will be one oral presentation. The orals will be eight (8) 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 eight-minute presentation) of film clips or powerpoint images from your film to support your key idea(s).

Responses—You will be asked to write 2-4 paragraph responses to study questions based on the films or readings. In addition, feel free to keep a list of questions you would like to discuss related to the films and readings. On occasion you may be asked to write up some study questions based on the texts. These responses are an important component of the class.

Annotated bibliography: Honors students will, in addition to the other class assignments, be responsible for submitting an annotated bibliography. Specific details will be shared with those students to whom this assignment is applicable.

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 DVD and are available on campus or sources such as Netflix, Hulu, Family Video, Hastings, or elsewhere. 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. 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.

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness: In order to measure the level of compliance with the university's Institutional Effectiveness guidelines, throughout the semester, I will collect via your submission to me via attachment one or more substantive texts you produce for the class. This is solely an assessment of program effectiveness and in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs. The texts will be part of a portfolio created on your behalf and will be measured to ensure that our program "promotes practices that result in higher student academic achievement; an enhanced student experience; aligned and transparent decisions; and readily available information for improvement, accountability, and accreditation" (see "Department of Institutional Effectiveness," <<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutus/institutionalEffectiveness/default.aspx>>

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.

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.

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. Common courtesy says you do not receive or answer calls during class. If you are expecting an emergency call, please let me know ahead of time, put your phone on vibrator mode, and sit close to the exit so you can leave discreetly to take the call. **No texting, tweeting, or Facebook exchanges during class.** If you are texting, you will be asked to leave the class. Procedure 34.05.99.R1 now prohibits the use of vapor/electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff and chewing tobacco inside and adjacent to any building owned, leased, or operated by A&M – Commerce.

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

Class Schedule: The key words here are "tentative" and "flexible." I anticipate we will view one feature per week, as well as film clips. Because of logistics, availability, time constraints, the failure of technology, inclement weather, 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 as we progress through the semester.

Key Dates:

Feb, 18—Magazine Assignment Due

March 1 & 3, First set of orals, films of the 60s

March 3—Paper 1 due + abstract (two copies of each)

March 10—Midterm examination

March 15 & 17--Spring Break

May 3—Paper 2 due+ abstract (two copies of each)

May 10, HL 203, 1:15-4:00, Final Examination

Schedule abbreviations: AC60=American Films of the 60s; HLGA=Hollywood's Last Golden Age; AC70=American Cinema of the 70s. NOTE: Some readings will be added to this tentative schedule. They may be on reserve, loaded to a wiki, (if we use one), handed out, or assigned in an e-book or other documents.

Schedule (subject to change):

Week 1

- 1/19 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>](http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/09/13/specials/maynard-mag.html)
- 1/21 Influences of the 50s and 60s: Coming of Age in 1960s
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 22-43 (1960)
 HLG, Chpt. 1, 4-22

Week 2

- 1/26 Early 60s/Discussion
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 44-66(1961)
- 1/28 Early 60s--Changing Cultural Norms
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 67-88 (1962)
Assignment: particular year in one magazine—Due 2/16/16

Week 3

- 2/2 Early 60s / Discussion
 Presentation: Laura Cathrine--doing film research
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 89-109 (1963)
 HLG, Chpt 2 (partial), 23-37
- 2/4 Mid 60s/Discussion
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 110-129 (1964)
 : *Mise en Scène*, wiki

Week 4

- 2/9 Mid 60s --Discussion
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 130-149 (1965)
- 2/11 Mid 60s--
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 150-171 (1966)
 : HLGA, 44-49
Magazine assignment due 2/18

Week 5

- 2/16 Mid 60s--One View on Race Issues
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 172-192 (1967)
- 2/18 Mid 60s--Another View of Race in the U.S. + Discussion
 Collect: Magazine Reviews
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 193-216 (1968)
 : HLGA, Chpt. 3, 52-75

Week 6

- 2/23 1968: A Most Important Year = Discussion
 Read for Next Time: AC60, 217-238 (1969)
- 2/25 Late 60s *Film or Discussion or early orals*

Week 7

- 3/1 Orals
- 3/3 Orals Paper 1 Due
 Read for Next Time: HLGA, 41-44, 49-51
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 Week 8 Cold War/ Cuban Missile Crisis/ *Atomic Cafe*

3/8 Remaining Orals+ Violence, Allegory, & Comedy
Next Time: EXAM

3/10 **Midterm EXAM**

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

 Week 9 Spring Break

3/15 & 3/17

 Week 10—

3/22 What the 60s Wrought?

Read for Next Time: "Violence American Style" 25-59 (wiki)

Bonnie and Clyde very short pieces--

Academy on *Bonnie and Clyde* (wiki)

Notes on *Bonnie and Clyde* (wiki)

HLGA, 1-3

Friedman, "Introduction: Movies and the

1970s" (*American Cinema of the 70s*--library reserve)

Kirshner, *Hollywood's Last Golden Age*, pp. 26-33

on French New Wave (on library reserve)

"Legacy Went Searching for a Film: Dennis Hopper & *Easy Rider* (wiki)

Easy Rider reviews--Ebert and *NY Times* (wiki)

3/24 Early 70s

Read for Next Time: "Hollywood Renaissance: 1964-76" --really impt
 in *A Short History of the Movies*, 11th edition
 (on library reserve), 485-527

Reviews: *The Wild Bunch* (by Wilmington) in *The A List*, 315-318
 (on library reserve) + Ebert Review (wiki)

Sam Peckinpah by Gabrielle Murray (on wiki)

Wild Bunch discussion (on wiki)

Peckinpah overview (on wiki)

 Week 11 --

3/29 Early 70s--Discussion-The Changing Ethos: *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Easy Rider*, *The Wild Bunch*

Read for Next Time: HLGA, Chapter 5, 102-132

: Sherman Alexie, poems ("How to Write the Great American
 Indian Novel" + "Evolution" (on wiki)

: Marubbio, *Killing the Indian Maiden*, pp. 178-183 (wiki)

: "Nixon Coverup of My Lai?" (wiki, 2pp.)

: Youtube: My Lai Massacre (9 mins--Seymour Hersh

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWchy6ykNnQ>

+ google: my lai massacre 60 Minutes Overtime (14 mins)

<<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/document-points-to-nixon-in-my-lai-cover-up-attempt/>>

3/31 Early 70s-- Myths and Native Americans

Read for Next Time: James Mottram, "Jungle Fever: How Vietnam Changed the Hollywood War
 Movie," (in *Under Fire*, 145-160) wiki

Ex-Marine on *Platoon* (wiki)

Possible Recommended viewing on your own: *Born on the Fourth of July* and/or *Coming Home*

 Week 12

4/5 War on Film

Read for Next Time: "The Stepford Wives and the Gaze" (on wiki)

HLGA, Chpt 4, 76-101

"Gloria Steinem Turns 80" (wiki)

4/7 Where is June Cleaver?: The Feminist Revolution and Film

 Week 13

4/12 Discussion: Vietnam on Film/Women in the 70s

Read for Next Time: HLGA, Chapter 6, 133-165
 Steven Soderbergh: A Director Looks at *ATPM* (wiki)
 "Nixon Library / Watergate," 2pp (wiki)
All the President's Men, from *Past Imperfect* (wiki)

4/14 Politics and Paranoia

Possible Recommended Viewing on your own: 3 Days of the Condor

Week 14

4/19 Discussion--

Read for Next Time: HLGA, Chpt. 7, 166-188

"Cine' Paranoia: Conspiracies Unmasked, 1973-1975" (in *The Dream Life*, by J. Hoberman, 384-99), on the wiki and on reserve in the library.

"Disaster and Conspiracy," by Peter Lev, in *American Film of the 70s*, 40-59, wiki, on reserve in the library, and available via e-book from the library.

4/21 Paranoia and Politics Revisited

Read for Next Time: "Dirty War," Wikipedia (for an overview)

Week 15

4/26 International Turmoil and Conspiracy in the 70s

Read for Next Time: HLGA, Chpt. 8, 189-216

4/28 Media Then and Now: A Prophetic View?

A: Oral presentations and Papers Due

Week 16

5/3 PAPERS DUE+oral presentations

5/5 Oral presentations + post-assessment

Week 17 Finals Week

Final Examination, Tuesday, May 10, HL 203, 1:15-4:15 pm

January 14, 2016