

QUENTIN TARANTINO

FILM S167

INSTRUCTOR: Kirsty Sinclair Dootson (kirsty.dootson@yale.edu)

CLASS MEETS: Tuesday, Thursday, 9:00am - 12:15pm, Session B

OFFICE HOURS: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers the entire directorial career of Quentin Tarantino, from his first film *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), to his most recent, *The Hateful Eight* (2015). Perhaps one of the most controversial directors working in Hollywood today, Tarantino's films are known for their graphic violence, postmodern irony, unusual narrative construction, complex racial politics, and knowing deployment of pop-cultural references. This class will not only examine the formal elements that comprise Tarantino's auteur style, but will pay particular attention to his deployment of genre tropes, and scrutinize the way race and gender are treated in his films. Students will encounter a range of methodological approaches to Tarantino's films, in order to interrogate why his films are both lauded and condemned.

CONTENT WARNING

Students should be advised that Tarantino's films contain graphic violence, including sexual violence, and hate-speech (dialogue that is considered racist, homophobic and misogynistic).

SESSIONS

Each session will focus on a single film from Tarantino's career, beginning with a screening and followed by discussion.

READINGS & ADDITIONAL VIEWING

All readings will be available in PDF form on the class website. Typically students will be required to engage with one long or two short readings. Students will also be required to watch one additional film each week outside of class. These films will be available on reserve at the Yale Film Study Center. Students unfamiliar with Tarantino and/or film analysis may find Mary Pratt's book useful as an introductory text, but it is not required reading: Mary K. Pratt, *How to Analyze the Films of Quentin Tarantino*. (Edina, MN: ABDO, 2011).

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Short Paper - 20%

Students will submit a short (4 page) paper using close visual analysis to assess the central claim of one reading we have studied in class. Due in class, session 6.

Final paper – 40%

Final papers of 8 to 10 pages are due the last day of class. Students can either select a paper topic from the list provided, or decide upon their own topic, in discussion with the course instructor. Papers should examine one film directed by Tarantino and demonstrate both close analysis skills and a thoughtful engagement with the critical debates surrounding his work. Students should cite at least three additional sources to those we have studied in class.

Presentation – 20%

Students will be required to deliver a short presentation based on their final paper in the last class. The length will be determined by enrollment but they should be no longer than ten minutes. This should leave us time for discussion at the end.

Participation – 20%

Participation is not simply attendance but behaving as a good class “citizen”, both contributing ideas and being attentive to those offered by your classmates. To receive a good participation grade students must demonstrate they have read and engaged with the assigned readings and films, arriving at class ready to discuss them in detail.

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please abide by all Yale College regulations on academic integrity and plagiarism, including the use of original work, appropriately citing sources, and restriction of collaboration unless given the permission of the instructor. You may not submit the same work to multiple classes without express permission of both instructors. Work that does not follow Yale’s standards of academic integrity cannot be accepted and will result in a failing grade or more serious action. See the Yale Writing Center for information on academic integrity: <http://yalecollege.yale.edu/new-students/class-2019/academic-information/intro-undergrad-education/academic-honesty>

CLASS SCHEDULE

CLASS 1. RESEVOIR DOGS : WHAT IS AN AUTEUR?

Tuesday 4 July

Class screening *Reservoir Dogs* (1992)

Additional viewing *Natural Born Killers* (dir. Oliver Stone, 1994)

Reading Janet Staiger, “Authorship Approaches.” In *Authorship and Film*. Edited by David A. Gerstner and Janet Staiger, New York: Routledge, 2003, 27–60.

CLASS 2. PULP FICTION : VIOLENCE & MASCULINITY

Thursday 6 July
Class Screening *Pulp Fiction* (1994)

Additional viewing *True Romance* (dir. Tony Scott, 1993)

Reading Susan Fraiman, "Quentin Tarantino: Anatomy of Cool." In *Cool Men and the Second Sex*. By Susan Fraiman, 1–16. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Bell Hooks, "Cool Cynicism: *Pulp Fiction*", *Reel to Real: Sex, Race, Class at the Movies*, London: Routledge, 1996.

CLASS 3. JACKIE BROWN : RACE, GENRE & SOUND

Tuesday 11 July

This week the class will examine Yale's own 35mm print of the film with Archivist and Special Collections manager Brian Meacham.

Class screening *Jackie Brown* (1997)

Additional Viewing *Coffy* (dir. Jack Hill, 1973)

Reading Jans B. Wager, "*Jackie Brown* (1997): Gender, Race, Class, and Genre." In *Dames in the Driver's Seat: Rereading Film Noir*. By Jans B. Wager, 143–154. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.

CLASS 4. KILL BILL VOL. 1 : VIOLENCE & FEMININITY

Thursday 13 July

Class screening *Kill Bill Vol. 1* (2003)

Additional Viewing *Lady Snowblood* (dir. Toshiya Fujita, 1973)

Reading Lisa Coulthard, "Killing Bill: Rethinking Femininism and Film Violence" in *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*, ed. Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007, pp. 153-175

CLASS 5. KILL BILL VOL. 2 : GENRE

Tuesday 18 July

Midterm papers due today.

Class screening *Kill Bill Vol. 2*.

Additional Viewing *Kozure Ōkami: Kowokashi udekashi tsukamatsuru*

(dir. Kenji Misumi, 1972)

Reading Jenna Ng, "Cinephilia, Homage, and *Kill Bill*." In *Cinephilia: Movies, Love and Memory*. Edited by Marijke de Valck and Malte Hagener, 65–82. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005.

CLASS 6. DEATH PROOF : TARANTINO AS FEMINIST

Thursday 20 July

Class screening *Death Proof* (2007)

Additional Viewing *Planet Terror* (dir. Robert Rodriguez, 2007)

Reading David Roche, "Quentin Tarantino's *Death Proof* (2007): Subverting Gender through Genre or Vice Versa?", in Maria del Mar Azcona and Celestino Deleyto, *Generic Attractions: New Essays on Film Genre Criticism*, pp. 337-353.

CLASS 7. INGLORIOUS BASTERS : VIOLENCE & ETHICS

Tuesday 25 July

Class screening *Inglorious Basterds* (2009)

Additional Viewing No additional viewing this week. *Inglorious Basterds* is long and we will have limited time for discussion.

Reading Charles Taylor, "Violence as the Best Revenge: Fantasies of Dead Nazis." *Dissent* 57.1 (Winter 2010): 103–106.

Ben Walters, "Debating *Inglourious Basterds*." *Film Quarterly* 63.2 (Winter 2009): 19–22.

CLASS 8. DJANGO UNCHAINED : RACE & GENRE ??

Thursday 27 July

Class screening *Django Unchained* (2012)

Additional Viewing *Twelve Years a Slave* (dir. Steve McQueen, 2013)

Manthia Diawara, "Black Spectatorship, Problems of Identification and Resistance", *Screen* 29, no. 4 (Autumn, 1988)

Adilifu Nama, "Inglorious Basterds and *Django Unchained*", *Race on the QT, Blackness in the Films of Quentin Tarantino*, University of Texas Press: Austin, 2013) pp.104-120

CLASS 9. THE HATEFUL EIGHT : WIDESCREEN & THE WESTERN

Tuesday 1 August

Class screening *The Hateful Eight* (2015)

Additional Viewing *The Searchers* (dir. John Ford, 1956)

Reading André Bazin, "The Western or the American Film Par Excellence",
What is Cinema vol.2, trans. Hugh Gray, University of California
Press: Berkely, 2005, pp. 140-148

Donato Totaro, "The Hateful Eight : The Big Show Returns",
Offscreen, March 2016, Vol. 20 Issue 3.

CLASS 10. THE HATEFUL EIGHT PART II.

Thursday 3 August

Due to the long running time of *The Hateful Eight* (187mins) we will continue our discussion this week.

Students will deliver presentations based upon their final papers.

Final papers due today.