

FILM 274: GLOBAL HOLLYWOOD

Yale Summer Session A: May 28 – June 30, 2018

Monday/Wednesday 1 – 5:00pm

Location: WLH 112

Instructor: Masha Shpolberg

Email: masha.shpolberg@yale.edu

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday mornings. Please send me an email to arrange an appointment. We will meet at Book Trader café (1140 Chapel Street).

Communication: Email is the best way to reach me if you have questions or concerns, or to schedule appointments. I will answer weekday emails within twenty-four hours and any emails that I receive over the weekend by 12 pm on Monday.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Hollywood did not acquire its empire by accident: it had competitors, and it colonized or destroyed them all” – Louis Menand, “Paris, Texas,” *New Yorker* (February 17, 2003)

This course focuses on the ways in which Hollywood both participates in and represents the processes of globalization. We begin by examining what exactly made the Hollywood studio system a “system”, and seeing how the industry has adapted – sometimes successfully, other times unsuccessfully – to major geopolitical changes. Hollywood has dominated world screens since the 1920s and has always been “global” to some extent. The processes of globalization and Americanization have significantly sped up, however, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the triumph of transnational capitalism.

As the most popular form of mass entertainment, film has been at the forefront of this process. Hollywood filmmakers have begun actively producing films abroad that draw on local cultures and embrace narrative and aesthetic hybridity. At the same time, a number of both American and foreign filmmakers working within the Hollywood system have drawn on the mass appeal of Hollywood cinema to warn viewers of the dangers and the human cost involved in global capitalism.

Through a series of case studies, we examine the dynamics of the Hollywood industry today, including Hollywood’s strategies for securing emerging film markets such as China and multiplying its revenue streams through product placement, branding, franchising, and merchandising. Will Hollywood refashion the world in its image or will the requirements of pleasing diverse world audiences refashion Hollywood?

WEEKLY MEETINGS

WEEK 1. Introduction: “Global Hollywood” and the Social Problem Film .

Monday, May 18.

What do we mean when we talk about “global Hollywood”? How did **Hollywood** evolve into the industry we know today? What makes something a “Hollywood film”? Finally, what is the economic, cultural and political logic of contemporary Hollywood?

Screening: *Babel*, dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2006.

Reading: Look over film analysis vocabulary handout.

Deborah Shaw, “*Babel* and the Global Hollywood Gaze,” *Situations, Project of the Radical Imagination*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2011, pp.11-31.

David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton, “Globalization”, *Global Governance*, Vol. 5, No. 4, October-December 1999, pp.483-496.

Wednesday, May 30.

Part 1: What is “**globalization**”? How do we represent it? Group analysis of *Babel*.

Part 2: How do we analyze a film? How do we perform a **close reading** of a scene?

Review of film analysis vocabulary. Group analysis of one or two scenes.

Screening: *Syriana*, dir. Stephen Gaghan, 2005.

Reading: Rahul Hamid, review of *Lord of War* and *Syriana* in *Cinéaste*, Vol. 31, No. 2, Spring 2006, pp. 52-55. (Concentrate on the parts dealing with *Syriana*)

Robert Siegel, interview with Robert Baer, “Ex-CIA agent Robert Baer, Inspiration for ‘Syriana’”, *NPR*, December 6, 2005, pp. 1-6.

Andrew deWaard. “The Global Social Problem Film.” *Cinephile*. Vol.3, No.1, Spring/Summer 2007, pp.13-18. <<http://cinephile.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/gspfilm.pdf>>

WEEK 2. Melancholy White Women Wandering around the World .

Monday, June 4.

Part 1: How does Hollywood envision America’s role in the world, and the relationship of individuals to the complex systems through which resources and power circulate?

Class discussion of *Babel* and *Syriana*. **Influence of 9/11** on Hollywood.

Class presentations on film reception begin

Part 2: How do we analyze/talk about **narrative structure**?

Screening: *Lost in Translation*, dir. Sofia Coppola, 2003.

Reading: Homay King, “Lost in Translation,” *Film Quarterly* Vol.59, No.1 (Fall 2005), pp. 45-48.

Amy Murphy, "Traces of the Flâneuse: From *Roman Holiday* to *Lost in Translation*," *Journal of Architectural Education* Vol. 60, No. 1 (September 2006), pp. 33-42.

Todd Kennedy, "Off With Hollywood's Head: Sofia Coppola as Feminine Auteur," *Film Criticism* Vol. 35, No. 1 (Fall 2010), pp.37-59. (Read only the parts related to Sofia Coppola's biography and the film; feel free to ignore the last few pages dedicated to *Marie Antoinette*).

Wednesday, June 6.

Part 1: Discussion of *Lost in Translation*. What is an **auteur**? **Gender** in Hollywood.

Part 2: The contemporary gamut of films: blockbusters, studio independents, and real independents. Implications of **industry structure** on ideology and form. Clips from:

- *The Darjeeling Limited*, dir. Wes Anderson, 2007.
- *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, dir. John Madden, 2011.

Screening: *Eat/Pray/Love*, dir. Ryan Murphy, 2010.

Reading:

Sandip Roy, "The New Colonialism of *Eat, Pray, Love*", *Salon.com*, August 14, 2010. URL: <http://www.salon.com/2010/08/14/i_me_myself/> (Reprinted from *New America Media*).

Ruth Williams, "*Eat, Pray, Love*: Producing the Female Neoliberal Spiritual Subject," *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 47, No.3, 2014, pp. 613-631.

Kendra Marston, "The World is Her Oyster: negotiating Contemporary White Womanhood in Hollywood's Tourist Spaces," *Cinema Journal* Vol. 55, No.4, 2016, pp. 3-27.

WEEK 3. Hollywood, Elsewhere

Monday, June 11.

Class discussion of *Eat, Pray, Love*. What is the "tourist gaze"? Trope of Westerners searching for themselves and for meaning in "the Orient". Introduction to **orientalism** and **neoliberalism**. Clips from:

- *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, 2008
- *An African City*, dir. Nicole Amarteifio, 2016.

Screening: *Slumdog Millionaire*, dir. Danny Boyle, 2008.

Reading:

Sharma, Alpana. "'Slumdog Millionaire'": The Film, the Reception, the Book, the Global," *Literature/Film Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 3, 2012, pp.197-215.

Anjaria, Ulka and Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria, "*Slumdog Millionaire* and Epistemologies of the City," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 45, No. 24, June 12-18, 2010, pp.41-46.

Wednesday, June 13.

Class discussion of *Slumdog Millionaire*. How can Hollywood movies address world poverty and social problems without romanticizing or exoticizing indigenous people and locations? Background on **Bollywood** as an alternative model.

Screening: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, dir. Ang Lee, 2000.

Reading:

Christina Klein, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: A Diasporic Reading." *Cinema Journal*. Vol. 43, No. 4, Summer 2004, pp.18-42.

James Schamus, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: The Polyglot Task of Writing the Global Film." URL:

<<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/11/05/arts/05SCHA.html?ex=1168318800&en=aaa3a6806f1a1129&ei=5070>>

"China's Film Industry: A Blockbuster in the Making," *Knowledge @Wharton*, February 17, 2016. <<http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/lights-china-action-how-china-is-getting-into-the-global-entertainment-business/>>

WEEK 4. China Rising

Monday, June 18. ** Theses for final research paper due in class **

Part 1: Discussion of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and the gatekeeper function played by US distributors. Background on **the wuxia genre**.

Part 2: Workshopping final paper theses together in-class. What makes for a good thesis?

Clips from:

- *Hero*, dir. Zhang Yimou, 2002.
- *House of the Flying Daggers*, dir. Zhang Yimou, 2004.

Screening: *The Great Wall*, dir. Zhang Yimou, 2017

Reading:

Pamela McClintock, Stephen Galloway, "Matt Damon's 'The Great Wall' to Lose \$75 Million; Future U.S.-China Co-productions in Doubt," *Hollywood Reporter*, 2 February 2017. URL: <<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/what-great-walls-box-office-flop-will-cost-studios-981602>>

Kenneth Turan, "Matt Damon's 'The Great Wall' crumbles in epic fashion," *L.A. Times*, February 16, 2017. URL: <<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/la-et-mn-great-wall-review-20170213-story.html>>

Hannah Beech, "How China is Remaking the Global Film Industry," *TIME*, 26 January 2017. URL: <<http://time.com/4649913/china-remaking-global-film-industry/>> **Please read this online as the article contains photographs and videos**

Wednesday, June 20.

Discussion of *The Great Wall*, and why it was such a great flop. Presentation of regulations currently governing **China's film industry** as well as imports and exports. The importance of **stars** to international **co-productions**.

Clip from: *The Clouds of Sils Maria*, dir. Olivier Assayas, 2014

Screening: *Kung-Fu Hustle*, dir. Stephen Chow, 2004.

Readings: Raechel Dumas, "Kung Fu Production for Global Consumption: The Depoliticization of Kung Fu in Stephen Chow's *Kung Fu Hustle*," *Style*, Vol. 43, No.1, Spring 2009, pp.65-85.

WEEK 5. Genre Hybridity

Monday, June 25. ** Draft of Research Paper due in class **

The long history of **Kung Fu films** and their co-optation by Quentin Tarantino and the Wachowski brothers in *The Matrix*.

Screening: *Kill Bill, Vol.1*, dir. Quentin Tarantino, 2003.

Reading:

David Mendelsohn, "It's Only a Movie: *Kill Bill – Volume I*," *The New York Review of Books*, 18 December 2003. URL: <

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2003/12/18/its-only-a-movie/>>

David Kipen, "Offshoring the Audience", *The Atlantic*, June 2004. URL:

<<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2004/06/offshoring-the-audience/302965/>>

Christina Klein, "Is 'Kung-Fu Hustle' Un-American?", *Los Angeles Times*, 27

February 2005. URL: <<http://articles.latimes.com/2005/feb/27/opinion/op-ousource27>>

Wednesday, June 27. ***Final Research Paper due in class***

Part 1: Discussion of *Kill Bill*, particularly gender dynamics and genre hybridity.

Discussion of the cultural effects of the blockbuster; the deleterious effects of "**offshoring the audience**" and the lack of films that speak to national concerns (cultural, political, and economical) within the U.S.

Part 2: Looking forward to *Avatar/Life of Pi*: Why have some of the most successful films around the globe in recent years been based in the fantasy and sci-fi genres? How do those genres in particular help us think about globalization?

Screening by class vote: *Avatar*, dir. James Cameron, 2009

Life of Pi, dir. Ang Lee, 2012

or *Black Panther*, dir. Ryan Coogler, 2018

ASSIGNMENTS

Class Format:

Each class will begin with a short lecture by the instructor on that week's theme or topic and a presentation by one of the students. Then, we will open the class up to discussion of that week's films and readings. There will be a ten-minute break half-way through. The second half of each class will consist of a film screening.

Required Readings:

The readings for each week will be available online on our Canvas course website under the "Files" tab.

Bi-weekly Screening/Reading Responses:

After every class, please post two questions or comments about the film we have watched as well as one question or comment about that day's reading. Each question or comment should not be longer than a short paragraph or 4-5 sentences. You should post these questions/comments on the Canvas Discussions Board **by 6pm every Sunday and Tuesday.**

You may, if you like, respond to the following prompts:

- What did you find most striking or surprising about the film?
Was there a scene that stood out for you? Why?
- What do you think the film is trying to accomplish? What motivated the director to make the decisions he or she made? Is the film successful in its purpose? Why or why not?
- What are the values the film is promoting? Do you agree with those values?
- How does the film relate to the central theme of the course? What connection do you see between this week's films or readings?

Class Presentation on Film Reception:

On the first day of class, please choose one film off of the syllabus that you would like to research. A week before that film is screened, please read reviews of that film in the popular press as well as any scholarly articles you can find. Then, on the day we will be discussing the film, please prepare a 10-minute presentation on your findings.

- How was the film received in the U.S.?
How was it received overseas/in its country of production?
- Did it generate debate or controversy?
What were the different sides in that debate?

The goal is to situate the film in its historical context, and to understand why it was received in a particular way at that time. Reliable sources of film reviews include the following: *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Variety*, *Roger Ebert*, *The Guardian*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, etc.

Academic articles may be found on JSTOR or using Yale Quicksearch:
<<http://search.library.yale.edu>>.

Final Research Paper (6-8 pages):

Choose one film we have watched or will be watching in class. This will be a research paper that integrates close analysis and reception history. Additionally, this assignment will ask you to think about the form of the film as a whole and to articulate an original argument about how the film works. Does the film conform to genre conventions? Mix genres together? Impose traditional Hollywood narrative on a local culture or create a hybrid narrative, mixing local aesthetic approaches with those of classical Hollywood? What is the vision of “the world” and/or “globalization” that it articulates? What are the implications of that vision for human agency and experience? We will workshop your argument ideas and first drafts together as a class.

Please send all the written assignments to me by email before the due date AND please bring a hard copy of your assignments to class that last Thursday.

COURSE POLICIES

Grading:

Participation, Weekly Responses, and Attendance – 40%

Class Presentation on a Film’s Reception – 30 %

Final Paper (6-8 pages) – 30 %

Participation:

Absences (including excessive tardiness) will affect your grade negatively, while active participation will affect your grade positively.

Penalty for late work:

I can grant deadline extensions, but only if you send me an email explaining extenuating circumstances in advance of the official due date. Work submitted later than the deadlines listed above will lose half a letter grade per day. Yale Summer Session does not allow work to be turned in after the final day of class.

Writing Tutoring: the Yale Center for Teaching and Learning (301 York Street) offers one-on-one guidance with writing your final essays. They can help non-native speakers just learning how to write academic papers in English and native speakers hoping to better structure their essays. The center is located on the mezzanine level of Sterling Library. When you go through the York Street entrance, take the stairs up immediately to your right. Tutoring drop-in times are:

Monday 11am – 1pm • Tuesday 2pm-4pm • Thursday 6pm-8pm

Classroom policies:

- No laptops, ipads, cell phones or other electronic devices in class.
- Please print out all the past week’s readings and bring them to class.
- Please be respectful of your classmates.

Academic Honesty Policy:

Yale has a zero-tolerance policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. All work you submit for this class must be your own. No one else may write your papers and assignments for you. Additionally, if you are quoting from another text or relying on another author's ideas, you must CITE them. Failure to cite or quote the ideas of others will be considered an instance of plagiarism. You will receive a failing grade on the assignment and may be expelled from the class depending on the gravity of the case.

If you are not sure how to quote from a text or cite another's ideas properly, do not hesitate to meet with me, and we can go over it together.

Accessibility Statement

I am committed to creating a learning experience that is as accessible as possible for all students. If you anticipate any problems regarding the materials, format, or requirements of this course, please let me know. If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Yale and wish to have an accommodation made for you in this class, also please see me. Further information is available at the Resource Office on Disabilities website: <http://yalecollege.yale.edu/content/resource-office-disabilities>.