FILM 274: GLOBAL HOLLYWOOD

Yale Summer Session B: meeting times TBD
Course Format: Online via Zoom

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines 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 1920’s and has always been “global” to some extent. The processes of globalization 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. We will examine where Hollywood makes its films and the different forms of transnational labor that go into making the films. We will also challenge the claim that Global Hollywood is a recent and unique phenomenon by examining the global presence of Hollywood in the 1920’s and 30’s, as well as contemporary alternative global film and media cultures, such as the Chinese industry, Bollywood, and Japanese animation.

Week 1: Introduction: Basic Concepts, Hollywood History

Meeting # 1
Introduction to the course. What do we mean by “Global Hollywood”? In what ways is Hollywood global? What other concepts and approaches can we use to analyze the relationship between cinema and globalization?


Meeting #2
A bit of film history. How and why did Hollywood become global? Discussion of major approaches including cultural imperialism, cognitivism, vernacular modernism, and political economy. Some clips from the classical Hollywood period and early attempts at creating anti-Hollywood global cinemas, such as German-Japanese film collaborations of the 1930’s.

Film: The Cocoanuts, dir. Robert Florey and Joseph Santley, 1929.
Clips from Kappore jinsei, dir. Yagura Shigeo, 1936.

Burton Crane, “Japan Goes Hollywood” form Cue, November 21, 1936, pp. 6-7, 34.

Week 2: Representing Globalization: Hollywood’s take on a post-9/11, post-pandemic world

Meeting #3
How does Hollywood represent globalization and the role of the U.S. in the world? How has this changed with the triumph of neoliberal economics and in the post-9/11 era? Clips from Syriana and Iron Man.


Meeting #4

Film: Contagion, dir. Steven Soderbergh, 2011.

Reading: Salti, Rasha. “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night: Film Festivals, Pandemic, Aftermath” Film Quartlery, Vol. 74, No. 1, pp. 88-96.
Week 3: Global production. Where is Hollywood today?

Meeting #5

Where are Hollywood films being made? Does Hollywood as a geographical location matter, has it ever mattered, or is “Hollywood” better understood in terms of film style, a set of genres, or a brandscape?


Meeting #6

Continued discussion of global production, particularly rise of co-productions. What forms of transnational labor go into making Hollywood movies, and how does this affect what we see (or do not see) in the films? Discussion of co-productions, “faux-productions,” history of multiple language versions. Discussion of global genres and the rise of certain genre hybrids, especially martial arts.


Week 4: Distribution and audiences

Meeting #7

Who consumes Hollywood films today, and how do they do so? Continuing discussion of significance of China as a new market for Hollywood films, in addition to becoming a more powerful player in global media production. Whose interests does the opening of doors to new markets serve, and which audiences and filmmaking practices are left behind? What role does the changing composition of audiences have on Hollywood genre?


Sean Fennessey, “The End of Independent Film As We Know It,” *The Ringer*, April 10, 2017.

**Meeting #8**
Focus today on the rise of streaming platforms. How does streaming change what we watch, and how? Are streaming services a blessing or curse for independent productions? How does having a supposedly instantaneous, global audience change the content and aesthetics of Hollywood?

**Film**: *Roma*, dir. Alfonso Cuarón, 2019.


**Week 5: Other Global Cinemas?**

**Meeting #9**
To what extent does Hollywood have competition as a global brand? Are Chinese films, Bollywood films, and Japanese animation global film cultures/industries? Are there multiple global industries, or only regional ones? How can other cinemas help us rethink the globality of Hollywood?

**Film**: *Dangal* (dir. Nitesh Tiwari, 2016)


**Meeting #10. ***Final Research Paper due in class***

Discussion of Japanese animation in the context of global film and television.

**Film**: *Demon Slayer: Mugen Train* (dir. Haruo Sotozaki, 2020)
ASSIGNMENTS

Class Format:

Each class will begin with a short lecture by the instructor on the day’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. Students should view each session’s film through Canvas and complete the readings before each class meeting.

Required Readings and Screening:

The readings and films for each week will be available online on Canvas.

Bi-weekly Screening/Reading Responses:

At least two hours before the beginning of every class (except for the first class), please post one question or comment about the film we have watched as well as a 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 may, if you like, respond to the following prompts:

• What did you find most striking or surprising about the film/the reading? Was there a scene/a passage 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? Does the film offer something the reading is missing?

• What is your “take away” from the reading?

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. Some questions you might try to answer:
• 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.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Grading:**

- Participation, Weekly Responses, and Attendance – 50%
- Class Presentation on a Film’s Reception – 20%
- Final Paper (6-8 pages) – 30%

**Participation:**

Absences (including excessive tardiness) will affect your grade negatively, while active participation will affect your grade positively. Please email me to let me know if you will need to miss a class.

**Penalty for late work:**

Other than the short responses, the only substantial written work for this course is the final paper. Yale Summer Session does not allow work to be turned in after the final day of class. You may miss one of the pre-class questions/comments without seeing a negative effect on your participation grade.
Writing Tutoring:

The Yale Center for Teaching and Learning 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.

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.

We will go over how to cite your sources together in class. If you are not sure how to quote from a text or cite another’s ideas properly after that, 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 after class. Further information is available at the Resource Office on Disabilities website: http://yalecollege.yale.edu/content/resource-office-disabilities.