

HH4015 – Film: A Global History

Monday 14:30-18:30

Room: S3-SR5

Two ideas animate this course: firstly that film was the major international cultural form of the twentieth century. Secondly, that historians of the twentieth century need to be able to deal with sources beyond the textual.

HH4015 brings together these two ideas by grounding students in key debates about the history, aesthetics and philosophy of film. It also challenges students to take advantage of the recent mass film digitization programmes of the early twenty-first century – the aim being to give you the skills, experience and confidence to produce historical arguments with visual sources

In terms of structure, the first five weeks of the course give an overview of early film history, this is followed by a series of practically-orientated workshops and then three aesthetically, historically and philosophically distinct national case studies. The assessments comprise a short essay (which includes a shot-by-shot analysis), a group exercise for which you will be required to use archival clips, and then either a visual essay or a small group film project.

Readings will be uploaded to the course site each week. A full timetable of the assessments can be found below.

Useful overviews

M Cousins, *The Story of Film*

G. Nowell-Smith, *The Oxford history of world cinema*

R. Allen and D. Gomery, *Film history: theory and practice*

L. Enticknap, *Moving image technology: from zoetrope to digital*

January 15 – Week 1

Introduction

Screening: *Life in a Day* (2011)

January 22 – Week 2

Early cinema: History, Technology and Theory

Screening: *The Lost World of Mitchell & Kenyon* (2005)

Reading: Extracts from: Thomas Elsaesser (Eds.) *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*

January 29 – Week 3

Early non-narrative cinemas

Screening: *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) & others

Reading: Extracts from M. Cowan, *Walter Ruttmann and the Cinema of Multiplicity: Avant-garde – Advertising – Modernity*

February 5 – Week 4

Early Documentary and civic activism

Screening: *Housing Problems* (1935) & others

Reading: Extracts from J. Corner *The art of record: a critical introduction to documentary* & others

February 12 – Week 5

Colonial cinemas

Screening: *Voices of Malaya* (1948) & others

Reading: Extracts from I. Aitken, *The British official film in South-East Asia: Malaya/Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong* & others

February 19 – Week 6

Workshop 1: Images and narrative (with Nan Triveni Achnas)

Preparation: All students need to bring a series of images or sounds from their personal history. These can be web content, archival footage, photographs, music or sound effects.

February 26 – Week 7

Workshop 2: Documenting Singapore (with Ben Slater)

Screening: *Tony's Long March* (2015)

Reading: Extracts from Tilman Baumgärtel (Ed.) *Southeast Asian Independent Cinema*

March 5: Recess week

March 12 – Week 8

Workshop 3: Rhetorics and revisionism (with Peter Kuznick)

Screening: *The Untold History of the United States* (2012)

Reading: TBC

March 19 – Week 9

Class Presentations

March 26 – Week 10

Case study: French Auteurism and the essay film

Screening: *The Gleaners and I* (2000)

Reading: Extracts from T. Corrigan, *The Essay Film. From Montaigne, After Marker* and M. Rabiger, *Directing the Documentary*

April 2 – Week 11

Case study: The New Iranian Cinema

Screening: *Ten* (2002)

Reading: Extracts from G. Andrew, *Ten*, G. Nowell-Smith, *The Oxford history of world cinema* & others

April 9 – Week 12

Case study: The Cold War and SEA film (With Darlene Machell de Leon Espena, NIE)

Screening: *Huk sa Bagong Pamumuhay* (1953)

Reading: TBC

April 16 – Week 13

Essay film workshop

Assessments

I: Film archive essay and analysis (30% - circa 2,000 words)

Task given 29 January, due date 12 February, 1pm

II: Class presentation using archival film (20%)

Topics and groups given 12 February, presentations in class on 19 March

III: Plan of visual essay (10%)

Task given 19 March, deadline: 9 April, 1pm

IV Visual essay (40%)

Deadline: 4 May, 5pm

//A note on attendance

You are expected to attend every class and keep up with the readings and between class tasks. This is especially important bearing in mind the hybrid nature of a Film course and its assessments. Please notify me if you are unable to attend a session. Attendance at guest workshops is mandatory and failure to attend will result in a marks deduction at the end of the semester.