Máster en Estudios Textuales y Culturales en Lengua Inglesa
60708 - British and U.S.Film Genres

Course 2012 - 2013

Curso: 1, Semestre: 2, Créditos: 7.5

Basic information

Teachers

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Recommendations to attend this course

The main aim of this course is to provide an introduction to genre as a methodological approach of film studies, with particular emphasis on British and US American cinema. Knowledge of the English language will be required. Students will be expected to be able to understand film texts and take part in the classes, which will be held in English.

Course Schedule and Deadlines

Presentation and discussion of the theoretical approaches included in the programme and application of the main tenets of these approaches to the analysis of various types of film texts (see course planning).

Group analysis of a selection of film texts from the perspective of the critical approach of genre presented in the theory sessions (see course planning).

Presentation of a 3,000-word essay: last day of the second semester.

Home

Learning outcomes that define this course

The student, in order to pass the course, will have to show her/his competence in the following skills:

1:
The student can use the basic critical tools to understand and analyse film texts in English.

2:
The student is capable of testing the explanatory power of the most relevant critical approaches to film through their application to a corpus of film texts in English.

3:
The student is capable of developing skills in the use of English in a scholarly and critical environment.

4: The student can provide a critical response to film texts.

Introduction

Brief presentation of the course

The main aim of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the generic approach to film texts.

Competences

General aims of the course

The expected results of the course respond to the following general aims

The main aim of this subject is to provide students with an introduction to some of the genre approaches to film texts and to test their explanatory power through close analysis of a selection of film texts in English. The specific aims of this subject are the following: i) to provide the students with basic critical tools to understand and analyse genre films in English, ii) to familiarise the students with the critical approach of film genre, iii) to test the explanatory power of this approach through its application to a corpus of film texts in English, iv) to improve the students' skills in the use of English in a scholarly and critical environment, v) to reinforce the students' critical response to film texts.

Context/Importance of the course for the master degree

Together with the subjects "Issues in Film Studies" (first semester) and "Cinema, Culture and Society: A Critical Reading of Key Texts in English" (also an optional subject in the second semester) it introduces students to relevant critical approaches and the critical analysis of texts in English, and seeks to develop students' critical response to these texts. Together with the subject "Issues in Representation: Forms, Methods and Problems" (also an optional subject in the second semester), it introduces students to the application of the basic critical tools to the understanding and analysis of texts in English and to the development of skills in the use of English in a scholarly and critical environment.

After completing the course, the student will be competent in the following skills:

1:
Developing and applying original ideas in both a professional and research context.

2:
Understanding and applying acquired knowledge to solve problems related to professional and social contexts as well as to broader multidisciplinary contexts.

3:
Being able to interrelate knowledge from different subjects, handle complex information, apply the proper methodology and frameworks, express informed critical views and provide conclusions in the form of written essays and oral presentations, in clear and appropriate English, aimed at both specialised and non-specialised audiences.

4:
After acquiring the required critical and methodological skills, students are expected to possess the ability to carry out a piece of research in an autonomous way.

Relevance of the skills acquired in the course

The proposed aims of this course are crucial to provide students with a sound theoretical and methodological background that will allow them to conduct research in English successfully. Similarly, the specific aims of this subject are essential skills to carry out the research process (i.e. using critical tools for understanding and analysing generic film texts in English, applying critical approaches to a corpus of film texts and developing a critical response to these texts).

The ability to develop and apply original ideas in a professional as well as in a research context is a fundamental skill to conduct successful research in the field of English studies. The same applies to the ability to interrelate knowledge from different subjects, handle complex information, apply the proper methodology and frameworks, express a critical view and provide conclusions in both written essays and oral presentations, in clear and appropriate English, aimed at both specialised and non-specialised audiences, and the ability to conduct work (research) in an autonomous way.

Evaluation

Assessment tasks

The student will prove that he/she has achieved the expected learning results by means of the following assessment tasks:

1:

I. FIRST OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

A) ONGOING ASSESSMENT:

Assessment task 1. Students are required to write **short critical essays** on literary works or films, or on linguistic analyses of texts (depending on the subject) and present them orally in the class. In these essays students are expected to understand theoretical concepts and apply them to the texts under analysis. Correct use of academic spoken and written English (at a C1 level) is expected. These activities will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. Short essays will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **20%** of the final score of the student.

Assessment task 2. Students will also be required to write a **3,000 word essay** in correct academic English on a specific aspect of the course contents, on a topic previously agreed on with one of the teachers. With this essay the students are expected to demonstrate that they have assimilated the critical approaches presented by the teachers and to prove their ability to use those approaches in the analysis of specific texts. The textual analysis and critical discussion of the readings will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. This essay will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **80%** of the final score of the student in the course. A pass mark in this essay is a *sine qua non* condition to pass the subject.

Assessment criteria:

Definition of key concepts. Initial hypothesis. Use of a theoretical framework and a methodology. Use of primary sources. Literature review. Argumentation and conclusions = 70%

Independence, originality and critical examination = 10%

Information organization structure of the essay. Layout of the text. Accuracy in the use of language and appropriateness of style = 20%

B) GLOBAL EXAMINATION (to be determined in the academic calendar):

Assessment task 1. Students will be required to write a **3,000 word essay** in correct academic English on a specific aspect of the course contents, on a topic previously agreed on with one of the teachers. In this essay the students are expected to assimilate the critical approaches to literary texts, films or corpus of texts presented by the teachers and to prove their ability to use those approaches in the analysis of those texts. The textual analysis and critical discussion will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. This essay will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **70%** of the final score of the student in the course. A pass mark in this essay is a *sine qua non* condition to pass the subject.

Assessment task 2. **Interview in English**. The student will debate with the teachers relevant aspects of the analysis and interpretation of the compulsory readings. In the interview, the students are expected to apply the theoretical approaches and the analytical methods studied to the analysis of various types of literary, filmic or linguistic texts. The textual analysis and the critical discussion of the readings will prove that the

students have achieved learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. The interview will be assessed following the established assessment criteria and the established level of exigency. It will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **30%** of the final score of the student in this subject.

Assessment criteria for Global Examination (both for essay and for the interview):

Use a C1 level of English (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically, in analyses, explanations and discussions of aspects and issues related to the subject/discipline = 30%

Use relevant theoretical frameworks critically and apply methodological approaches appropriately to a corpus of texts in English = 40%

Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustrations, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims and defend critically one's point of view = 30%

2:

II. SECOND OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

A) ONGOING ASSESSMENT

Assessment task 1. Students are required to write **short critical essays** on literary works or films or on linguistic analyses of texts (depending on the subject) and present them orally in the class. In these essays students are expected to understand theoretical concepts and apply them to the texts under analysis. Correct use of academic spoken and written English (at a C1 level) is expected. These activities will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. Short essays will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **20%** of the final score of the student.

Assessment task 2. Students will also be required to write a **3,000 word essay** in correct academic English on a specific aspect of the course contents, on a topic previously agreed on with one of the teachers. With this essay the students are expected to demonstrate that they have assimilated the critical approaches presented by the teachers and to prove their ability to use those approaches in the analysis of specific texts. The textual analysis and critical discussion of the readings will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. This essay will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **80%** of the final score of the student in the course. A pass mark in this essay is a *sine qua non* condition to pass the subject.

Assessment criteria:

Definition of key concepts. Initial hypothesis. Use of a theoretical framework and a methodology. Use of primary sources. Literature review. Argumentation and conclusions = 70%

Independence, originality and critical examination = 10%

Information organization structure of the essay. Layout of the text. Accuracy in the use of language and appropriateness of style = 20%

B) GLOBAL EXAMINATION (to be determined in the academic calendar):

Assessment task 1. Students will be required to write a **3,000 word essay** in correct academic English on a specific aspect of the course contents, on a topic previously agreed on with one of the teachers. In this essay the students are expected to assimilate the critical approaches to literary texts, films or corpus of texts presented by the teachers and to prove their ability to use those approaches in the analysis of those texts. The textual analysis and critical discussion will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2, 3 and 4. This essay will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **70%** of the final score of the student in the course. A pass mark in this essay is a *sine qua non* condition to pass the subject.

Assessment task 2. **Interview in English**. The student will debate with the teachers relevant aspects of the analysis and interpretation of the compulsory readings. In the interview, the students are expected to apply the theoretical approaches and the analytical methods studied to the analysis of various types of literary, filmic or linguistic texts. The textual analysis and the critical discussion of the readings will prove that the students have achieved learning objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4. The interview will be assessed following the established assessment criteria and the established level of exigency. It will be graded from 0 to 10, this grade representing **30%** of the final score of the student in this subject.

Assessment criteria for Global Examination (both for essay and for the interview):

Use a C1 level of English (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically, in analyses, explanations and discussions of aspects and issues related to the subject/discipline = 30%

Use relevant theoretical frameworks critically and apply methodological approaches appropriately to a corpus of texts in English = 40%

Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustrations, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims and defend critically one's point of view = 30%

Guidelines

Guidelines for preparing the essay and participating in seminars

The students may find it useful to follow the following guidelines:

"Documento de referencia para la elaboración del ensayo"/"Guidelines for writing the essay"

1. Define appropriate key concepts and apply them appropriately to the field of research.
2. Prepare the literature review (i.e. what other scholars have stated about the topic of the essay, or about related topics). Make sure that the literature review is sufficient in scope and relevant regarding the topic under investigation.
3. Define a thesis statement / Define the research questions.
4. State and justify the theoretical framework.
5. Define clearly the analytical categories (where appropriate, indicating overlapping or problematisation of those categories).
6. Describe the analytical methodology used for the study of the topic of the essay.
7. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
8. State a conclusion in accordance with your arguments and relate it to a wider context.
9. Show independence in reading and researching, originality and critical examination.
10. Follow the information and style conventions of the subdisciplinary field (literature, film studies, cultural studies or linguistics).

"Documento de referencia para el desarrollo de los seminarios teóricos y analíticos/"Guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars"

1. The theoretical part of the seminar, imparted by the teacher, will provide an active learning environment in which students can develop the ability to read/view/analyze critically and conceptually, and therefore to speak and write in the classroom.
2. The seminar will provide general introductions to theoretical frameworks or an application of a given research methodology/framework to a selection of texts/films.
3. Students should bring to the seminar a draft or notes on the text or film under analysis and participate actively in the classroom discussion.
4. Questions can be posed to improve the quality of discussion.
5. Assignment of formal presentations and critical comment may also be requested for stimulating discussion.

(Adapted from *www.oid.ucla.edu/students/cutf/cutfguidelines.doc)*

Guidelines

The students may find it useful to use the following guidelines:

"Documento de referencia para la elaboración del ensayo"/"Guidelines for writing the essay"

1. Use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically.
2. Define appropriate key concepts and apply them adequately to the field of research.
3. Prepare the literature review (i.e. what other scholars have stated about the topic of the essay, or about related topics). Make sure that the literature review is sufficient in scope and relevant regarding the topic under investigation.
4. Define a thesis statement / Define the research questions.

5. State and justify the theoretical framework.
6. Define clearly the analytical categories (where appropriate, indicating overlapping or problematisation of those categories).
7. Describe the analytical methodology used for the study of the topic of the essay.
8. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
9. State a conclusion in accordance with your arguments and relate it to a wider context
10. Show independence in reading and researching, originality and critical examination.
11. Follow the information and style conventions of the subdisciplinary field (literature, film studies, cultural studies or linguistics).
12. Participants are expected to use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically.

"Documento de referencia para el análisis y la discusión de las lecturas obligatorias" / "Guidelines for the analysis and discussion of compulsory readings"

1. The theoretical part of the seminar, taught by the teacher will provide an active learning environment in which students can develop the ability to read/view/analyse critically and conceptually and, therefore, to speak and write in the classroom.
2. The seminar will provide general introductions to theoretical frameworks or an application of a given research methodology/framework to a selection of texts.
3. Students should bring to the seminar a draft or notes on the text or film under analysis and participate actively in the classroom discussion.
4. Questions can be posed to improve the quality of the discussion.
5. Assignment of formal presentations and critical comment may also be requested for stimulating discussion.
6. Participants are expected to use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically.

(Adapted from *www.oid.ucla.edu/students/cutf/cutfguidelines.doc)*

"Documento de referencia para el desarrollo de los seminarios teóricos y analíticos"/ "Guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars"

1. Use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically, in analyses, explanations and discussions of aspects and issues related to the subject/discipline.
2. Deal effectively with the most relevant critical approaches through their application to a corpus of texts in English.
3. Address and apply critical theories and methodologies relevant to the analysis of texts in English.
4. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
5. Approach the analysis of different texts critically.

"Documento de referencia para el desarrollo de entrevistas" / "Guidelines for interviews"

1. Use a C1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to hold one's own, critically and academically, in analyses, explanations and discussions of aspects and issues related to the subject/discipline.
2. Deal effectively with the most relevant critical approaches through their application to a corpus of texts in English.
3. Address and apply critical theories and methodologies relevant to the analysis of texts in English.
4. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
5. Approach the analysis of different texts critically.

Activities and resources

Course methodology

The learning process that has been designed for this course is based on the following activities:

This course has been specifically designed to train researchers in criticism and theory in the field of Film Studies. For this

reason, the proposed activities (the analysis of film texts by means of critical tools and the comments on, presentation of, and reflections on these analyses from a theoretical perspective) are aimed at the application of the fundamental principles of the critical and theoretical approach of genre to the analysis of representative British and US American film texts.

The course is organized in three stages: 1. Learning of the critical approaches and analytical tools; 2. Application of the learnt concepts through the analysis and collective discussion of the selected texts in English; and 3. Writing of an individual critical essay, applying the theoretical approaches and methods learnt, as well as the specific tools employed for the development of the selected topic of research.

Outline of the Programme

The programme offered to the students to help them achieve the learning results includes the following activities :

1:

Seminars on “British and US American Film Genres” (30 hours, 15 sessions. 1.2 credits).

Theoretical and analytical seminars aimed at introducing the theoretical approach and critical technique of genre for the analysis of British and US American film texts.

These seminars will be conducted following the “Guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars”

2:

Tasks/activities (30 hours, 15 sessions. 1.2 credits).

Classroom activities will provide students with models for textual and critical analysis. In these tasks students will discuss both individually and in group the textual and critical analyses of a selection of film texts. The aim of the tasks/activities is to learn how to use/apply the critical and textual analytical tools and theoretical approaches dealt with in the course.

These activities will be conducted following the “Reference document for the analysis and discussion of compulsory and recommended readings”.

3:

Essay writing (40 hours. 1.6 cr.).

The concepts explained and developed in the theoretical sessions will be revised so that the student can write an essay by applying them to the analysis of specific texts from the program. The topic will have been previously discussed with the teacher, who will offer the student constant assistance in the elaboration of the essay.

These activities will be conducted following the “Guidelines for preparing the essay”.

4:

Individual study (87,5 hours. 3.5 cr.).

The student will read/ watch/ study the compulsory (printed/ online) texts in the program. The teacher will advise her/him how to use them. Some of these texts will also be available on the subject’s Moodle site.

Course planning

Calendar of actual sessions and presentation of works

Dr. Luis Miguel García Mainar
Session 1- session 18: These sessions will be devoted to the approach of genre studies, and the specific cases of romantic comedy and the crime film. Coinciding with these sessions, classroom activities will involve discussion of this theoretical approach and application of the main tenets of this approach to the analysis of various types of film texts.
Dr. Constanza del Río

Session 19- session 30: These sessions will be devoted to the genres of melodrama and the horror film. Coinciding with these sessions, classroom activities will involve discussion of these theoretical approaches and application of the main tenets of these approaches to the analysis of various types of film texts.
Essays: May 31st 2011

Programme

Programme

1. Genres and texts: Genre theory

Classical approaches to film genres: mise en scène and *auteur* centred theories.

Narrative and historical approaches to film genre. The influence of Wittgenstein

and Derrida. A new approach to film genre.

2. Representing love and sex: Romantic comedy

The origins of romantic comedy. Ideology and determinism. Endings and

middles. Laughter and the space of romcom.

3. Representing the self and society: The crime film

Antecedents and definitions. The contemporary crime film. Melodramatic crime.

4. Melodrama or the cinema of excess

Definition and development of the genre. The Hollywood family melodrama of

the 1950s: the “family romance”. Formal (excess, hysteria and mise-en-scène)

versus cultural approaches.

5. Psychology and culture: The horror film

Definition and development of the genre. Pleasure and fear in the horror genre.

Spectatorship and gender identification. The socio-cultural unconscious.

Textual analysis:

1. *Singin’ in the Rain* (S. Donen and G. Kelly, 1951)

2. *Manhattan Murder Mystery* (Woody Allen, 1992), *Bullets Over Broadway* (Woody Allen, 1992)

3. *Collateral* (Michael Mann, 2004), *Mystic River* (Clint Eastwood, 2003)

4. *Written on the Wind* (Douglas Sirk, 1957), *Far From Heaven* (Todd Haynes,

2002).

5. *The Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991), *The Ring* (Gore

Verbinski, 2002)

Supplementary films (by topic):

1. *The Apartment* (Billy Wilder, 1960), *White Men Can't Jump* (Ron Shelton, 1992)

2. *Kiss Me Stupid* (Billy Wilder, 1964), *Before Sunset* (Richard Linklater, 2004)

3. *Goodfellas* (Martin Scorsese, 1990), *Heat* (Michael Mann, 1995)

4. *Way Down East* (D. W. Griffith, 1920), *All That Heaven Allows* (Douglas Sirk,

1955)

5. *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978), *Ringu* (The Ring) (Hideo Nakata, 1998)

E-learning platform

E-learning platform

Moodle Universidad de Zaragoza
http://moodle.unizar.es/
In this site students will find contents and resources for the subject.

Bibliography and resources

Bibliography and resources

Compulsory Readings:

1-Genres and texts: Genre Theory

Neale, Steve. 'Questions of Genre'. In Barry Keith Grant, ed. *Film Genre Reader II*.

Austin: University of Texas Press, 159-183.

Altman, Rick. 'Why are Genres Sometimes Mixed?'. In *Film/Genre*. London: BFI, 1999, 123-143.

2-Representing love and sex: Romantic Comedy

Neale, Steve. 'The Big Romance or Something Wild?: Romantic Comedy Today'.

Screen 33, 3 (Autumn 1992) 284-99.

Shumway, David R. 'Screwball Comedies: Constructing Romance, Mystifying

Marriage'. In *Film Genre Reader II*, 381-401.

Krutnik, Frank. 'Love Lies: Romantic Fabrication in Contemporary Romantic Comedy'. In Peter Evans and Celestino Deleyto eds. *Terms of Endearment: Hollywood Romantic Comedy of the 1980s and 1990s*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1998, 15-36.

3-Representing the self and society: The crime film

Leitch, Thomas. 'The Problem of the Crime Film'. *Crime Films*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge UP, 2002, 1-17.

Rubin, Martin. 'Conclusion'. *Thrillers*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999, 259-268.

Fuchs, Cynthia J. 'The Buddy Politic'. In Steve Cohan and Ina Rae Hark eds. *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*. London, New York: Routledge, 1995 (1993), 194-210.

4-Melodrama or the cinema of excess

Williams, Linda. ‘The American Melodramatic Mode’. In *Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O. J. Simpson*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2001, 10-44.

Elsaesser, Thomas (1972). ‘Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama’. In Christine Gledhill, ed., *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in the Melodrama and the Woman’s Film.* London: BFI, 1987, 43-69.

Klinger, Barbara. ‘Selling Melodrama: Sex, Affluence and *Written on the Wind’*. In *Melodrama and Meaning: History, Culture and the Films of Douglas Sirk*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1994: 36-68.

5-Psychology and culture: The horror film

Jancovich, Mark. ‘The Horror Genre and Its Critics’. In *Horror*. London: B. T. Batsford, 1992, 7-17.

Clover, Carol. ‘Her Body, Himself’. In *Men, Women and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1992: 21-64.

Dyer, Richard. ‘Kill and Kill Again’. *Sight and Sound*, vol. 7, issue 9, September 1997: 14-17.

Bibliographic references of the recommended readings