

Máster en Estudios Avanzados de Literatura y Cine en Lengua Inglesa 61656 - Cinema, culture and society: A critical reading of key texts in English

Course 2015 - 2016

Curso: 1, Semestre: 1, Créditos: 7.5

Basic information

Teachers

- **Celestino Sigifredo Deleyto Alcalá** cdeleyto@unizar.es
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Recommendations to attend this course

The main aim of this course is to provide students with the necessary critical tools to analyze the most relevant cultural and social features of English-speaking countries by using approaches from the field of Film Studies. Students are, therefore, advised to take the compulsory course, "Working with Film in English." It will also be useful to have some previous basic knowledge of the theory and practice of film analysis, such as that provided in the cinema modules taught in the English Studies Degree at the University of Zaragoza or at any other similar institution.

Course Schedule and Deadlines

- 1) Introduction and discussion of the theoretical approaches included in the program.
- 2) Film analysis of the listed films (see course schedule) from the theoretical approaches and critical tools studied in the course sessions.
- 3) Presentation of a 3,000-word essay. Due: Date published in the Faculty's exam timetable.

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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 is able to produce a critical analysis and provide logical conclusions in clear and proper English, aimed at both specialized and non-specialized audiences.
- 2:** The student is capable of establishing thematic connections between various subjects and of applying theoretical frameworks and methodologies suitable for the analysis and interpretation of a specific group of films in English.
- 3:** The student knows how to conduct, in an autonomous way, a research project in English within the Film Studies field.
- 4:** The student knows how to relate issues of Film Studies with those of Cultural Studies in English by using the appropriate theoretical framework and methodology for the interpretation of audiovisual and film texts in various socio-historical contexts.
- 5:** The student has knowledge of the main cultural aspects regarding sex and gender and their representation in cinema.
- 6:** The student has knowledge of the most relevant cultural aspects regarding social class and their representation in cinema.
- 7:** The student has knowledge of the main cultural aspects regarding race, racism and ethnicity and their representation in cinema.
- 8:** The student has knowledge of the main cultural aspects regarding the interrelation of gender, sex, class, ethnicity and their representation in cinema.

Introduction

Brief presentation of the course

The main aim of this course is to provide students with the necessary critical tools that will allow them to develop the skills required for the analysis of the most relevant aspects in the culture and society of English-speaking countries from the perspective of Film Studies. This course, together with the other three in the syllabus belonging to the field of Film Studies ("Working with Film in English", "English and US Film Genres" and "Issues in Representation"), seeks to provide students with a broad introduction to Film Studies by acquainting them with some of the most relevant theories, approaches and methodologies of film analysis. More specifically, this course explores some of the most significant social and cultural debates in contemporary societies that have had a strong impact both on cinema in English and on film theories and methodologies. Both the cinema and Film Studies have developed specific strategies to deal with social and cultural phenomena in their specific historical contexts. This course explores some of these strategies.

Competences

General aims of the course

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

The objectives set for this course seek to complement and expand those proposed for the compulsory course, "Theory and Practice of Film Analysis in English," along with the other two optional courses, "Film Genres" and "Representation". They aim to acquaint students with the most significant aspects of the field of Film Studies, and, in each case, to provide them with the adequate tools to carry out a research project within this field within the academic context of English Studies. More specifically, this course, as has been mentioned above, explores the techniques, methods and theories used in Film Studies to represent and analyze the most significant social and cultural phenomena of our time.

The capacity to elaborate and apply original ideas within a research and academic context is also essential to conduct research projects within Film Studies in English. Equally important is the development of specific skills such as the capacity to interrelate concepts from different thematic areas, the capacity to handle complex information, to apply the appropriate theoretical frameworks and methodologies, to express informed critical views and provide pertinent conclusions in clear and proper English, aimed at both specialized and non-specialized audiences, and to know how to elaborate a research project in an autonomous way. All these skills are fundamental for any future researcher.

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Context/Importance of the course for the master degree

In the teaching organization of the master degree, "Cinema, culture, and society" is the only optional course on cinema offered in the first semester, along with the compulsory course, "Working with Film in English" and the two remaining compulsory courses in the master degree. This course, together with the two other optional courses on cinema, to be taught in the second semester, as well as the TFM, is part of the field of Film Studies. All these courses seek to provide students with specialized knowledge that will allow them to: 1) analyze critically film texts; 2) understand and interpret the socio-historical relevance and meanings of the culture from which the film productions emanate and understand its impact on the contemporary cinema in English, and 3) develop the research techniques and oral and written skills necessary to carry out a piece of research within the English Studies context.

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

- 1:**
CG3: to express a critical view and provide conclusions from the analysis of literary and filmic texts in English using language correctly and assuming both specialized and non-specialized audiences.
- 2:**
CE1: to analyze the social and cultural reality through filmic representations.
- 3:**
CE2: to understand the workings of generic conventions in British and US American films and their connection with cultural phenomena.
- 4:**
CE3: to analyze British and US American film texts from formal and cultural perspectives.
- 5:**
CE4: to correlate various knowledge fields in the analysis of film texts.
- 6:**

CE5: to assimilate knowledge and manage the complexity of elaborating critical views from incomplete or limited information by including arguments and thoughts on the social and ethical implications associated to the application of various methodologies and frameworks to the study of audiovisual and film texts.

- 7:** CE6: to be aware of the implications of various cultural aspects such as sex, gender, social class, race, racism, ethnicity in the analysis of film texts.

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 original and leading research in English successfully within the English Studies field. The specific aims of this course, "Cinema, culture and society," are to make sure that students know, understand, and apply the concepts, methodologies and trends existing both within Film Studies and other closely-related disciplines such as Cultural Studies and Social Studies, theories on gender, race and class, post-colonialism and multiculturalism, urban space and frontier, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism, among others. Similarly, this course aims to train students to acknowledge the dynamic and complex character of the interrelation between the film texts and their cultural and social milieu. This will allow them to analyze social changes and the relevance of culture in them through cinema and from Film Studies perspectives.

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 (if applicable)
- b) Global examination (to be determined in the academic calendar)

Assessment Task 1: Prepare and write brief critical essays on the required readings and films that have been set during the course. Students will be assessed on their capacity to understand theoretical concepts and to apply them to the texts to be analysed, as well as on their correct use of academic English (at a C1 level). These activities are directed towards achieving learning objectives 1, 2, and 3 = 10%.

Deadline for the submission of the brief written essays: as per exams schedule of the Faculty.

Assessment Task 2: Write an essay in English. Students are required to write a 3000 word essay on an aspect related to the contents of the course using correct English (at a C1 level). The topic of the essay will be previously agreed on with the teacher. This essay is expected to demonstrate that the students have achieved the course's global objectives (1, 2, 3, and 4). The essay will be graded 0-10, and will account for 90% of the student's final mark.

Deadline for the submission of the essay: as per exam schedule of the Faculty.

Assessment criteria

- Definition of key concepts. Initial hypothesis. Use of a theoretical framework and methodology. Use of primary sources. Literature review. Well-argued discourse and relevant conclusions = 40%.
- Independence, originality and critical examination = 10%.
- Information structure and organization of the essay. Text layout. Correct use of English language and style appropriateness = 20%.
- Reasoning capacity to exemplify, illustrate, propose textual evidence and defend the student's own point of view critically = 30%.

II. Second Official Announcement

Assessment Task 1: Prepare and write brief critical essays on the required readings and films that have been set during the course. Students will be assessed on their capacity to understand theoretical concepts and to apply them to the texts to be analysed, as well as on their correct use of academic English (at a C1 level). These activities are directed towards achieving learning objectives 1, 2, and 3 = 10%.

Deadline for the submission of the brief written essays: as per exams schedule of the Faculty.

Assessment Task 2: Write an essay in English. Students are required to write a 3000 word essay on an aspect related to the contents of the course using correct English (at a C1 level). The topic of the essay will be previously agreed on with the teacher. This essay is expected to demonstrate that the students have achieved the course's global objectives (1, 2, 3, and 4). The essay will be graded 0-10, and will account for 90% of the student's final mark.

Deadline for the submission of the essay: as per exam schedule of the Faculty.

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Activities and resources

Course methodology

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

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The course has been specifically designed to familiarize students with those theories, methodologies and debates in Film Studies that are pertinent to the study of the most significant cultural and social phenomena of our time. Likewise, the course is designed to train researchers in filmic theories and critical practices. To this purpose, the proposed activities (the critical analysis of films and the comments on, presentations of, and discussions of those analyses from various theoretical perspectives) are aimed at the application/use of the fundamental principles of the most relevant critical and theoretical approaches in Film Studies. For this reason, 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 films 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 "Cinema, culture and society". (30 hrs/ 1.2 credits). Onsite

Theoretical and analytical seminars aimed at introducing the main theoretical approaches in the fields of Film Studies and Cultural Studies. These seminars will be conducted following the "guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars."

2. Tasks/activities. (30 hrs/1.2 credits). Onsite.

Classroom activities will provide students with models for film analysis. Students will discuss both individually and in groups the textual and critical analyses of a selection of films. 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 consist in: group analysis conducted by the teacher; small groups will work on various specific analytical aspects that will be presented to the rest of the class; written individual answers to questions prepared by the teacher and their later presentation to the class for discussion. Students need to read and work on the compulsory readings before attending the classes according to a scheduled reading list given during the introduction of the course.

3. Tutored assignments. (45 hrs/1.8 credits) (Offsite and online)

Essay writing. Students will write an original essay on a topic related to the syllabus. The specific topic of the essay must be discussed and agreed on with the teacher beforehand. The essay must incorporate the critical tools and methodologies discussed in the sessions devoted to film theory. Students will also attend tutorial sessions devoted to this task.

4. Individual Tasks. (82,5 hrs/3.3 credits) (Offsite and online)

Students will read/study the compulsory texts and watch the compulsory films required for the participation in the class discussions as scheduled. Students will also read supplementary texts and watch other films necessary for the elaboration of their essays.

Course Contents:

1. Introduction: The Matter of Images: Film Practices and Theories and the Socio-Historical Context.

2. British Cinema, U.S. Cinema and World Cinema: From national to transnational cinema.

3. Place, space and ideology in the cinema.

4. Race and Class in Film History and Theory.

5. Gender and Sexualities in Film History and Theory.

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1:

1) Class activities:

-Lectures (30 hours/ 1,2 credits): Theoretical and analytical seminars aimed at introducing the main theoretical approaches in the fields of Film Studies and Cultural Studies.

-Practical sessions (30 hours/ 1,2 credits): Classroom activities will provide students with models for film analysis. Students will discuss both individually and in groups the textual and critical analyses of a selection of films. 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 consist in: group analysis conducted by the teacher; small groups will work on various specific analytical aspects that will be presented to the rest of the class; written individual answers to questions prepared by the teacher and their later presentation to the class for discussion. Students need to read and work on the compulsory readings before attending the classes according to a scheduled reading list given during the introduction of the course.

2) Guided Activities:

Essay writing: 45 hours/1,8 credits. Students will write an original essay on a topic related to the syllabus. The specific topic of the essay must be discussed and agreed on with the teacher beforehand. The essay must incorporate the critical tools and methodologies discussed in the sessions devoted to film theory. Students will also attend tutorial sessions devoted to this task.

3) Autonomous activities:

Individual study: 82,5 study/ 3,3 credits. Students will read/study the compulsory texts and watch the compulsory films required for the participation in the class discussions as scheduled. Students will also read supplementary texts and watch other films necessary for the elaboration of their essays.

Syllabus

1. Introduction: The Matter of Images: Film Practices and Theories and the Socio-Historical Context.
2. British Cinema, U.S. Cinema and World Cinema: From national to transnational cinema.
3. Place, space and ideology in the cinema.
4. Race and Class in Film History and Theory.
5. Gender and Sexualities in Film History and Theory.

Course planning

Calendar of actual sessions and presentation of works

Calendar of the actual sessions and presentation of assignments

This is a ten-week course in which two weeks (four two-hour sessions) will be allotted to each of the five topics in the programme. The dates for the handing in of the essays will appear in the Faculty's exam cale

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Bibliographic references of the recommended readings