
THE MESSAGE AND THE MOVIES

CINEMA AS IDEOLOGY

OVERVIEW

Cinema has long been a tool of apologists, political extremists and social commentators. So, while film is essentially an escapist art form, its accessibility has meant that it can be utilised to shape opinion, challenge societal norms and offer alternative discourse or narratives. From the war propaganda films of the silent years and beyond, we will examine how Hollywood filmmakers specifically have inserted their own belief systems and ideology into movies to create controversial, or more subtle means of critiquing or supporting the status quo. The course will take deep dives into Queer representation, racist depictions, feminist viewpoints, pro and anti-capitalist texts versus more progressive 'woke' narratives. Films discussed will include work as diverse as *Wings*, *Casablanca*, *JFK*, *Top Gun: Maverick*, *Robocop*, *Starship Troopers*, *Dracula's Daughter*, *High Noon*, *Shock Corridor*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, *Get Out* and many, many more.

WEEKLY OUTLINE

Week 1: The Great War and The Great Depression

Wings (1927) *It Happened One Night* (1934) and *Modern Times* (1936)

Week 2: Queer Fears

The Old Dark House (1932), *The Black Cat* (1934) and *Dracula's Daughter* (1936)

Week 3: War Time Propaganda and PTSD

The Maltese Falcon (1941), *Casablanca* (1942), *The Blue Dahlia* (1946)

Week 4: McCarthy and the Movies

High Noon (1952), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) and *Shock Corridor* (1963)

Week 5: Civil Rights and Cinema

To Kill a Mockingbird (1962), *In the Heat of the Night* (1967) and *Shaft* (1971)

Week 6: Paranoia and the Pictures

Soylent Green (1973), *The Conversation* (1974) and *Network* (1976)

Week 7: Verhoeven's America

Robocop (1987), *Total Recall* (1990) and *Starship Troopers* (1997)

Week 8: Sexual Politics and the Nymphet Syndrome

Lolita (1962), *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Alien* (1979)

Week 9: Consume, Conform, Obey!

They Live (1988), *JFK* (1993) and *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999)

Week 10: What is Woke?

Get Out (2017), *Top Gun: Maverick* (2022) and *Barbie* (2023)

Notes will be shared on the notice board after each session

Suggested Reading List

- Alford, M. (2010) *Reel Power: Hollywood Cinema and American Supremacy*, Pluto Press, London.
Atkins, T.R (Ed) (1975) *Sexuality in the Movies*, Da Capo Press Inc., New York
Benshoff, H.M. (1997) *Monsters in the Closet*, Manchester University Press, New York.
Creed, B. (1993) *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, Routledge, London.
Doherty, T. (1999) *Pre-Code Hollywood*, Columbia University Press, New York.
Frank, A.G. (1974) *The Movie Treasury Horror Movies: Tales of Terror in the Cinema*, Octopus Books, London.
Gifford, D. (1973) *A Pictorial History of Horror Movies*, Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd, Middlesex.
Janiss, L. K. (2012) *House of Psychotic Women*, FAB Press Ltd, Surrey.
Peirce, A. (2013) *After Dracula: The 1930s Horror Film*, I.B. Tauris, London.

- Pool, W. S. (2022) *Dark Carnivals: Modern Horror and the Origins of American Empire*, Counterpoint, Berkley, USA.
- Russo, V. (1981) *The Celluloid Closet*, Harper and Row, New York
- Sinclair, M. (1988) *Hollywood Lolitas: The Nymphet Syndrome in the Movies*, Henry Holt and Company, New York
- Skal, D. J. (1993) *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror*, Plexus Publishing Ltd, London.
- Strick, P. (1979) *Science Fiction Movies*, Galley Press, Cathay Books, London.
- Vieira. M.A. (2019) *Forbidden Hollywood*, Running Press, New York
- Zinoman, J. (2012) *Shock Value*, Duckworth Overlook, London.