

## **ENGLISH 277**

### **World Cinema**

Mondays 5-7:50

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Office Hours: MWF 11-12 and by appointment

### **Course Description**

The most powerful means of communication in the last century has been film. Through it we learn cultural values, definitions of humanity, gender roles, artistic visions, situational framing, possible life trajectories, myths, dreams, and everything else in between. The visceral power of the medium ensures that these will be deeply embedded lessons. Cultures and individuals may be reflected in films, but films most certainly transform them in return. So what does it mean to examine film from a global perspective? What can we learn about other cultures from popular cinema? Further how do those film industries interact with and influence one another? By looking at some common global genres, we can begin to understand diverse definitions and approaches to core questions about the human experience and the needs of increasingly multicultural audiences.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Demonstrate a broad knowledge of global issues, processes, trends, and systems,

Communicate effectively across contemporary cultural boundaries, and

Work effectively in a variety of cross-cultural environments.

### **Texts**

*World Cinema through Global Genres*, William V. Costanzo

Recommended texts: *The Global Film Book* and *Contemporary World Cinema*

### **Films**

We will analyze four full-length films together as a class—*Way of the Dragon*, *Monsoon Wedding*, *Ring*, and *The Motorcycle Diaries*. Other films will be assigned to pairs for exploration, research, and presentation to the rest of the class.

## **Assessment**

- 1) Admission tickets: Whenever there is an assigned unit, students must write a one to two page, double-spaced response to the reading. Each ticket is worth a potential 10 points.
- 2) 2 Class Presentations: These may be done in pairs or solo. Each presentation is worth 25 points and will explore a particular film's approach to one of the genres covered in class. We will do the first genre together as a class, and students should pick two of the other three genres  
vered for their opportunities to teach us what they have learned. Groups will hand in detailed outlines with a list of works cited.
- 3) 2 Take-home Essay Exams—These essays will offer the student opportunities to make connections between the theoretical readings and the films studied as well as providing a closer study of one particular film or film market with relevant research. Each exam is worth 40 points.
- 4) All students will be expected to engage in class discussion.

## **Late Work Policy**

As in the "real world," late work will jeopardize your position in the class as well as make you unprepared for class discussions. You are allowed two late admission tickets. Any further delays should be documented with a doctor's excuse, police citation, court order, obituary or other relevant paperwork.

## **Attendance Policy**

According to Woody Allen, "Seventy percent of success in life is showing up." If he's right, regular attendance should at least help you get into the "C" range.

## **Course Outline**

### **Introduction --January 24-31**

Why global film? Why not world cinema? How do we approach film generally? How do we create a multifaceted view of diverse filmmaking, more a hologram than a diagram, as your textbook frames it?

In-class film shorts from around the world

Reading: Introduction to *World Cinema*

Writing Assignments: A list of questions generated from reading the introduction

Your Film Autobiography

### **Unit One—February 7-14**

Genre One: The Warrior Hero—How are heroes defined around the world? How are their actions shaped by the cultures they represent, the storytelling traditions of those cultures, and the trends in filmmaking?

Deep Focus on Chinese Cinemas with full analysis of *Way of the Dragon*

Reading: Unit One in *World Cinema*

Writing: Response to the warrior hero trope with examples from one of the case studies

Analysis of feature film

### **Unit Two—February 21-March 7**

Genre Two: The Wedding Film—What is the role of marriage within a culture? What does it reveal about gender roles, family traditions, class status, religious doctrine and other ideologies? Does it seek to redefine or question these ideologies?

Deep Focus on Indian cinema with one feature film, *Monsoon Wedding*

Group Presentations on chosen films within this genre

Reading: Unit Two in *World Cinema* and D2L readings on South Asian cinema

Writing Assignments: Response to the wedding film as genre

Midterm Take-home Essay Exam Due March 14

### **Unit Three—March 14-April 4**

Genre Three: The Horror Film—What terrifies us defines us. One of the most visceral genres, horror relies on our fear of the unknown which is only enjoyable because it's on film and not in real life. How universal is fear? How useful is Western psychology in understanding other cultures' expressions of horror?

Deep Focus on Japanese cinema with one feature film, *Ring*

Group Presentations on chosen films within this genre

Reading: Unit Three in *World Cinema*

Writing Assignments: Response to the horror film as genre

SPRING BREAK March 21--25

#### **Unit Four—April 11-25**

**Genre Four: The Road Movie**—A metaphor for the journey of life, the road movie provides a low-budget opportunity to develop a few characters and their interactions with a wide variety of people and situations. Although it promises freedom and adventure, the road film often ends in death.

Deep Focus on Latin American cinema with one feature film, *The Motorcycle Diaries*

Group Presentations on chosen films within this genre

Reading: Unit Four in World Cinema and D2L readings on Latin American cinema

Writing Assignments: Response to the road movie as genre

#### **Other Genres--May 2-9**

**Final Take-home Essay Exam due by Final Exam Period**