

## AMERICAN CINEMA (2020/2021)

Instructor: Vicente Rodríguez Ortega

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Class Hours: Online 15h to 16:30h Tuesdays

17.1.01, Onsite 10:45h to 12:15h Wednesdays

Office hours:

Tuesdays (online): 16:30 to 18:30h or by appointment

### **Week 1, February 9 (online): Introduction & American Cinema in the 1970s**

### **Week 2, February 17 (onsite): Violence, Race & Exploitation: from "Blaxploitation" to *Jackie Brown* (Quentin Tarantino, 1997)**

Readings / Videos:

Lawrence, N. *Blaxploitation Films of the 1970s: Blackness and Genre*, selected pages  
Indietrix, "Blaxploitation 101: How black filmmakers took on the system and got shafted" (Video essay).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPHWcXNUFho>

### **Week 3, February 23 (online): Conspiracies & Paranoia: from the Watergate Scandal to the *The Parallax View* (J.A. Pakula, 1974)**

Readings:

Nelson, John S. "Conspiracy as a Hollywood Trope for System".

### **Week 4, March 3 (onsite): From "The Horror" to Horror: from *Apocalypse Now* (F.F. Coppola, 1979) to *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1979) & *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979)**

Readings / Videos:

Full Fat Videos: "Alien: The Horror You Don't See"

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5MH6TGF\\_nU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5MH6TGF_nU)

### **Week 5, March 9 (online): Weird is Good: *Blue Velvet* (David Lynch, 1986)**

Readings / Videos:

What's so Great about that? "David Lynch: The Treachery of Language" (Video essay)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fflIV6-aqWU&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fflIV6-aqWU&feature=emb_title)

The Cinema Cartography, "David Lynch- The Elusive Subconscious" (Video essay)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mhwQdV2iYQ&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mhwQdV2iYQ&feature=emb_title)

## **Week 6, March 17 (onsite): Boom!!!!: The Disaster Blockbuster**

Readings:

Shone, Tom. "Oops, Apocalypse", from *Blockbuster: How Hollywood Learned to Stop Worrying and Love The Summer*

## **Week 7, March 23 (online): What's Indie Film?: The Case of Richard Linklater.**

Readings / Videos:

Kogonada, "Linklater // On Cinema & Time" (video)

<https://vimeo.com/81047160>

Ashton, Christopher. "Dazed and Confused: Excitement and Mundanity" (video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Rj65hSBA38>

Perren, Alisa. "Sex, Lies and Marketing: Miramax and the Development of the Quality Indie Blockbuster"

## **HOLY WEEK VACATION**

## **Week 8, April 6 (online): Genre, the City & Sickness: *Se7en* (David Fincher, 1995)**

Readings:

Luhr, William. *Film Noir*, pp. 191-214.

## **Week 9: April 14 (onsite): History, Affect & the Nation through the lens of Steven Spielberg: from *Schindler's List* (1993) to *Munich* (2005)**

Readings:

Friedman, Lester D. "You Must Remember This: History as Film/Film as History"

Schatz, T. "Spielberg as Director, Producer, and Movie Mogul"

## **Week 10: April 20 (online): Queer & Performance: from *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (John Cameron Mitchell, 2001) and *Carol* (Todd Haynes, 2015)**

Readings:

Henry, Matthew, "A One-Inch Mound of Flesh: Troubling Queer Identity in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*"

Reichardt, Jeff, "*Carol*: The Touch"

<http://www.reverseshot.org/reviews/entry/2116/carol>

## **Week 11: April 28 (onsite): It's About Money, Stupid!: from *Margin Call* (J. C. Chandor, 2011) to *The Big Short* (Adam McKay, 2015)**

## **Week 12: May 4 (online): Teenagers: from *We need to talk about Kevin* (Lynne Ramsey, 2011) to *American Honey* (Andrea Arnold, 2016)**

Readings / Videos:

Zhou, Tony. "Lynne Ramsay: The Poetry of Details" (Video-Essay)

<https://vimeo.com/127199422>

Fandor, "Andrea Arnold's Women in Landscapes" (Video-Essay)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aG4jUVsSzXw>

Brody, Richard. "American Honey's Silent Youth"

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/american-honey-s-silent-youth>

**Week 13: May 12 (onsite): Borders & Terrorism: from *Zero Dark Thirty* (Kathryn Bigelow, 2012) to *Sicario* (Denis Villeneuve, 2015)**

Readings:

Nayman, Adam. "Sicario: Postcards from the Edge"

<http://reverseshot.org/reviews/entry/2098/sicario>

Reichert, Jeff. "Zero Dark Thirty: Desert of the Real"

<http://www.reverseshot.org/reviews/entry/1686/zero-dark-thirty>

**Week 14: May 18 (online): New Voices in Horror: From *It Follows* (David Robert Mitchell, 2014) to *Hereditary* (Ari Aster, 2018)**

## READINGS AND FILMS.

Weekly assigned readings and screenings are mandatory. It is very important to read the texts and watch the videos and films before attending the weekly lectures. This way you will be able to actively participate in the sessions, and take fully advantage of them, as you will NEED to express your opinions about class contents, as well as propose other examples or ideas related to them.

Readings / video links will be available on Aula Global before the sessions. If there's any trouble downloading them, please contact me.

## EVALUATION

Exam: 60%

Video-Essay (groups of 2/3): 40%

**Exam, DAY SPECIFIED BY UNIVERSITY (I'll let you know)**

It will consist of three questions (2 points each) about required films, class contents, and readings / video essays.

**Required films** (to watch on your own):

*The Parallax View* (J.A. Pakula, 1974)

*Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979)

*Blue Velvet* (David Lynch, 1986)

*Schlinder's List* (1993)

*Se7en* (David Fincher, 1995)

*Margin Call* (J.C. Chandor, 2011)

*Sicario* (Denis Villeneuve, 2015)

*American Honey* (Andrea Arnold, 2016)

## **Video-Essay**

Each video essay is devoted to one film. The key assignment is to explain why it is important or relevant within the history of US cinema, contextualizing it accordingly. Of course, you can refer to other films, genres, trends, movements etc. but your main focus of analysis should be the featured film.

- a. To be done in groups of 2/3.
- b. It is due on May 12th in the Google Drive of the course, .mov or .mp4 format (no .avi!!!!)
- c. 6-8 minutes (plus credits).
- d. It must have the names of all group's participants and title (please try to be creative!).
- e. It must include a list of bibliography and video/film sources in the end.
- f. The video may use a voiceover, intertitles or other audiovisual techniques for argumentative purposes.
- g. The main idea is not to shoot any new material but to utilize existing sounds and images to put forth your arguments.
- h. If the students fail to turn in the assignment on the specified date, they will lose 5 points (out of 40) per day.
- i. We will select the topic for each group in class, randomly.

## **Video essay topics:**

1. *Blood Simple* (Coen Brothers)
2. *Pink Flamingos* (John Waters)
3. *The Long Goodbye* (Robert Altman)
4. *The Breakfast Club* (John Hughes)
5. *Malcolm X* (Spike Lee)
6. *Die Hard* (John McTiernan)
7. *Kids* (Larry Clark)
8. *Clueless* (Amy Heckerling)
9. *The Virgin Suicides* (Sofia Coppola)
10. *Dead Man* (Jim Jarmusch)
11. *Heat* (Michael Mann)
12. *American Psycho* (Mary Herron)
13. *Fight Club* (David Fincher)
14. *Winter's Bone* (Debra Granik)
15. *Being John Malkovich* (Spike Jonze)
16. *Inglorious Basterds* (Quentin Tarantino)
17. *Detroit* (Kathryn Bigelow)
18. *Get out* (Jordan Peele)
19. *Lady Bird* (Greta Gerwig)
20. *She Dies Tomorrow* (Amy Seimetz)