

BA PROGRAMME
AMERICAN STUDIES
 2ND YEAR OF STUDY, 2ND SEMESTER

COURSE TITLE	SOCIETY AND COMMUNICATION 2: AMERICAN FILM STUDIES
COURSE CODE	SA2042
COURSE TYPE	full attendance
COURSE LEVEL	1st cycle (BA)
YEAR OF STUDY, SEMESTER	2 nd year of study, 2 nd semester
NUMBER OF ECTS CREDITS	5
NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK	4 (2 lecture hours + 2 seminar hours)
NAME OF LECTURE HOLDER	Dr. Veronica Popescu, Lecturer
NAME OF SEMINAR HOLDER	Dr. Veronica Popescu, Lecturer
PREREQUISITES	Advanced level of English
A	GENERAL AND COURSE-SPECIFIC COMPETENCES
	<p>General competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The ability to comment on a film scene from a narratological perspective → The ability to contextualise, reframe, and make connections among various cultural phenomena, as reflected in a work of art → The ability to do independent research and to prepare a presentation on a given topic <p>Course-specific competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The ability to use concepts and theoretical approaches specific to Cultural Studies → The ability to make connections between historic events and cultural paradigm shifts and the film productions in a given moment of Hollywood history → The ability to apply the interpretive and critical thinking skills from literature classes in film analysis
B	LEARNING OUTCOMES
	<p>At the end of this class students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Explain the relationship between Hollywood productions and American society, as it is reflected in representative films from various historical periods → Comment a film scene from the point of view of its historical and cultural relevance, its ideological stance, as well as its artistic qualities → Analyse, with an eye for detail, certain film scenes or an entire film from various perspectives (aesthetic, technical, cultural)
C	LECTURE CONTENT
	<p>1. Introductory course. A brief presentation of class syllabus and class requirements. Film as art and film as business: the paradoxes of Hollywood. 1-2. A brief overview of the history of American cinema, part I: Three great minds of American silent cinema: D.W. Griffith, Mark Sennett, and Charlie Chaplin. 3. A brief overview of the history of American cinema, part II. The transition from silent cinema to the talkie. The rise of Hollywood studios - the Studio Era (I). Stars and stardom in Hollywood cinema. The star system in contemporary American cinema. 4-5. A brief overview of the history of American cinema, part III. The Studio Era (continued). Main genres of the Studio Era. Genre theory; film genre and genre film. The role and impact of the Western and the Musical on American culture. Different facets of the American Dream as reflected in these iconic American genres. 6. The dark side of the American Dream: the crime/gangster film. 7-8. Postwar cinema I: film noir and its place in the American culture of the 1940s and 1950s. A feminist approach to film noir: reconsidering the femme fatale in the Hollywood films of the 1940s and 1950s. The impact of film noir on European culture. Echoes of noir film aesthetics in later American productions. 9. Postwar cinema II: The collapse of the Hollywood system; struggling to keep the dream alive: Hollywood in the 1950s (the Golden Age of the Musical and and of the classical Western, the</p>

	<p>youth culture phenomenon and the changes in viewing practices; the somber tones of Cold War paranoia in American SF movies). 10-11. The death of the Hollywood system and the rise of the director in the 1960s and 1970s. The impact of international arthouse cinema on American young filmmakers (Italian Neorealism, Japanese cinema, the Nouvelle Vague); cinema's response to the profound social and cultural changes in American society during the Vietnam War and the Hippie Movement. Important contributions to American arthouse cinema. 12-13. Two co-existing tendencies in the Hollywood of the 1980s and 1990s: the realistic depiction of American social and political realities (social dramas, dystopias) and escapism (Sci-Fi, fantasy and a new mythology). Contemporary American cinema, in and outside the Hollywood system. 14. Women's break in Hollywood since the 1990s. Women filmmakers that have left their mark: from Nora Ephron to Jane Campion, Julie Taymor, Sophia Coppola and Kathryn Bigelow. Concluding remarks.</p>
D	<p>RECOMMENDED READING FOR LECTURES</p>
	<p>Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson - Film Art. An Introduction. 5th ed. New York: The McGraw Hill Companies Inc, 1997.</p> <p>Grant, Barry Keith (ed.) – The Film Genre Reader III. Austin: University of Texas Press. 1986.</p> <p>Mast, Gerald and Bruce K. Kawin – A Short History of the Movies. 11th edition. Pearson. 2011.</p>
E	<p>SEMINAR CONTENT</p>
	<p>1. Introductory seminar. Discussion topics: students' experience of Hollywood cinema and of American independent cinema; students' viewing practices and expectations; personal top 10s of American movies. 2. Screening and discussion of scenes from early slapstick comedies, as well as Charlie Chaplin's <i>Modern Times</i> (1936) and <i>The Great Dictator</i> (1940). 3. Screening and discussion of <i>Singing in the Rain</i> (1952), dir. by Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly. 4.-5. Screening and discussion of John Ford's <i>Stagecoach</i> (1939) and <i>The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance</i> (1962). Discussion of various scenes from 1930s and 1940s musicals, focusing on the features of the genre that made it so popular in the Studio Era and well into the 1950s and 1960s. 6. Discussion of various scenes from 1930s and 1940s crime/gangster movies focusing on the key features of the genre and its artistic limitations, as well as on its subversive ideology. 7-8. Discussion of various scenes from noir films of the 1940s and 1950s [Billy Wilder's <i>Double Indemnity</i> (1944)]. Alfred Hitchcock's and Orson Welles' contribution to the classicization of film noir (<i>Vertigo</i>, <i>The Lady from Shanghai</i> and <i>Touch of Evil</i>). Neo-noirs. Examples of noir features in films across a wide range of genres: Ridley Scott's <i>Blade Runner</i> (1982), David Lynch's <i>Mullholland Drive</i> (2001), Richard Rodriguez's <i>Sin City</i> (2005), Joel and Ethan Coen's <i>No Country for Old Men</i> (2007), Tim Burton's Sweeney Todd's <i>Sweeney Todd</i> (2007), Christopher Nolan's <i>The Dark Knight</i> (2008) and Martin Scorsese's <i>Shutter Island</i> (2010). 9. Screening of various scenes from representative films of the 1950s, among which Vincente Minnelli's <i>An American in Paris</i> (1951), Nicholas Ray's <i>Rebel without a Cause</i> (1955), William Wyler's <i>Ben Hur</i> (1959), and Don Siegel's <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i> (1956). 10-11. Screening and discussion of key scenes from Stanley Kubrick's <i>2001: A Space Odyssey</i> (1968). Screening and discussion of key scenes from <i>Apocalypse Now</i> (1979), dir. by Francis Ford Coppola. 12-13. Screening and discussion of key scenes from Ridley Scott's feminist road movie <i>Thelma and Louise</i> (1991), Barry Levinson's political satire <i>Wag the Dog</i> (1997), and Jonathan Demme's social drama <i>Philadelphia</i> (1993). Screening and discussion of key scenes from the <i>Star Wars</i> films, Wolfgang Petersen's <i>The NeverEnding Story</i> (1984), <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> trilogy (2001-2003) and James Cameron's <i>Avatar</i> (2009). 14. Screening and discussion of key scenes from Nora Ephron's <i>Sleepless in Seattle</i> (1993), Jane Campion's <i>The Piano</i> (1993), Julie Taymor's <i>Frida</i> (2002) Sophia Coppola's <i>Lost in Translation</i> (2003) and Kathryn Bigelow's <i>The Hurt Locker</i> (2008).</p>

F	<p>RECOMMENDED READING FOR SEMINARS</p> <p>Grant, Barry Keith (ed.) – The Film Genre Reader III. Austin: University of Texas Press. 1986. Mast, Gerald and Bruce K. Kawin – A Short History of the Movies. 10th edition. Longman. 2007.</p> <p>Internet Movie Database (IMDb) http://us.imdb.com/ Tim Dirk's filmsite http://www.filmsite.org/genres.html Rotten Tomatoes http://www.rottentomatoes.com/ David Bordwell's website on cinema http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/</p>
G	<p>EDUCATION STYLE</p>
LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS	Frontal teaching, in-class screenings, class discussions; individual study
ASSESSMENT METHODS	Class participation (50 %) + written exam (50%)
LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION	English