



Boston University Study Abroad
London

Boston University British Programmes
British Cinema and Society
COM FT 317 (*Elective B*)

SPRING 2016

Instructor Information

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| A. | Name | Prof. Mo Dodson |
| B. | Day and Time | Mondays, 1.15PM – 5.15PM (except for 6 April) |
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| G. | Office hours | By appointment |

Overview

This course will look at British films since 1945 as evidence for a social and cultural history of Britain, as well as cultural artefacts in their own right. The screened films will be taken from the major generic categories of British film, without any intention of claiming an exhaustive survey of British film types.

This course will aim to enable students from a variety of backgrounds to experience ‘British’ culture and society as a complex and problematic phenomenon. This will have a special resonance with American students, whose history and culture has been deeply inflected by our British colonial past. America’s own pre-eminence as a globalizing power is in a problematic continuity with the British Empire and its European analogues. The culture, oral, popular and high, of Britain can only be understood within this historical context.

Students will be encouraged to look at films as part of the larger set of the world’s narrative traditions. These traditions have as their main purpose the creation of meanings that make sense of the universe and our place in it.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, students will have:

- * A detailed knowledge of some key films in British film history
- * Skills in analysing films in a social and historical context
- * The ability to write projects using the above skills and knowledge

Course Methodology

Classes will typically begin with a lecture/discussion and class exercises in analysing films (e.g. recreating a story board or writing a film report), and then screening of clips.

There will be one or more guided Study Visits relevant to the class: indicative visits and guest lectures:

- Visit to Notting Hill area to see locations of famous films, (e.g. *Notting Hill*; *Performance*)
- Guest Lecture by R. Perkins (author of *British Film Editors; the heart of the movie*) and J McAllister (Editor and Producer, credits include *The Pleasure Principle* and many tv documentaries) and visit to Soho Post-Production Facility
- Visit to famous West End Cinemas
- Visit to oldest purpose built cinema in Britain, The Phoenix, East Finchley
- Visit to Cine Lumiere

Students are required to watch films outside of class time.

In the Fall Term, London hosts the Film Festival – for more information on this: www.lff.org.uk. There are free educational events: see www.lff.org.uk/education.

Self-guided study visits will also be suggested to enhance the learning experience of students in London.

Teaching Schedule

1. FEB 22: Introduction to Course: the language of film, and film studies and film history.
Exercises and film screenings
2. FEB 29: Exercises, Review of course work and film screenings
3. MAR 7: Exercises, Review of course work and film screenings
4. MAR 14: Exercises, Review of course work and film screenings
5. MAR 21: Exercises, Review of course work and film screenings
6. MAR 28: NO CLASS
7. APR 4 Exercises, Review of course work and film screenings
8. APR 11: Exercises, Review of course work and film screenings
9. APR 12, TUESDAY: Exercises, Review of course work and film screenings
10. APR 18: Review for Exam
11. APR 21, THURSDAY: Exam and Hand In of Finals

***Contingency Class Date: Wednesday 20th April.** Students are obligated to keep these dates free to attend class should any class dates need to be rescheduled.

This course will cover the following areas:

1. UK Film history
2. The relation of this to UK and global ‘reality’.
3. UK films as works of art in their own right: the practice of film

Assignments

Assignments will be both In Class Exercises, occasional tests, Course Work, Mid Term Papers and a Final Paper.

A Detailed Assessment Guide will be handed out in class.

Attendance Policy

Classes

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, seminar, and field trip in order to fulfill the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme. This may result in the student having to take a medical leave of absence from the programme or withdraw from the programme.

Authorised Absence:

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorized Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness for more than one day. In this situation students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor's note as soon as possible). **Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence**

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- **Illness (first day of sickness):** If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office (who will in turn contact the student's lecturer).
- **Illness (multiple days):** If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must call into to the BU London Student Affairs Office each day the student is ill. Students must also provide the Student Affairs office with a completed Authorised Absence Approval Form and sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class.
- **Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)**
- **Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).**

The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

Unauthorised Absence:

Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to their final grade for the course whose class was missed. This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

Lateness

Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalised.

Grading

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria, attendance requirements and policies on plagiarism:

<http://www.bu-london.co.uk/files/images/ACADEMICHANDBOOKSP11.pdf>

Course Specific Grading Criteria

Form: Grammar, Clarity of expression and structure, Engagement, Appropriate academic style/register (BUT you can use the pronoun 'I' when appropriate)

Content: Strong/relevant question posed, Persuasive argument, Good and wide-ranging evidence, Analysis, interpretation and evaluation of evidence, Logical and relevant arguments, Refutation of contrary evidence and alternative interpretations and arguments

The weighting of the assessment criteria will be such that no work can receive a higher grade than that achieved for content

Terms and Conditions

*****Attendance at all classes and visits is mandatory. Students must check their email and the weekly Student Newsletter for field trip updates and reminders. Students missing lectures without a doctor's letter or authorisation from the Director or from the EUSA Placements' Team will automatically be docked a – or a + from their final grade. Persistent lateness will also be penalised in the final grade. A register of attendance will be taken at the beginning of each session and marks will be awarded for attendance. Absence can be conveyed either by advising a senior member of staff in the Academic Affairs Office with a request that the information be passed on to me; or by email prior to class. Leaving it to another class member to convey messages will not be acceptable. Appointments for interviews for internships should not conflict with attendance at classes.***

Any student who is unable to attend a class, or take part in an assignment because of religious reasons, must give notice in advance of class. He/she will be required to make up for time lost. In this situation arrangements must be made with another student for class notes to be shared. Written papers must be delivered before agreed deadline, failure to hand in the paper will result in deducted marks.

Readings

Additional readings may be posted on the course webpage:

<http://www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/ft317> (you must be logged in to view materials).

There are no set books for the course. You are therefore encouraged to find readings and other sources independently. *Texts will be handed out in class as basic readings.*

The Harrington Gardens Library has a number of relevant books.

Background Bibliography

There are essentially four types of literature that you will be looking for:

Historical and social studies of Britain, Cultural history, Film studies and history; and Practical theories of film making

Examples of Historical and social studies of Britain:

Highly recommended:

A Sampson *Who Runs this place?*

A Scott, *Who Rules Britain*

R McKibbin *Classes and Culture: England 1918-1951*(see chapter on film)

Reference:

A Marwick, *British Society since 1945*

K Morgan, *The People's Peace*

D Childs, *Britain since 1945: A Political History*

A Sked, *Post-War Britain*

K Fox, *Watching the English: the hidden rules of English behaviour*

J Glancey, *London: bread and circuses*

D Coates, *The Context of British Politics*

Cannadine, D. *Class in Britain*

Day, G. *Class*

Smith, A. *Nationalism* (Oxford Reader)

Anderson, B. *Imagined Communities*

Examples of Cultural History and Art History:

Recommended:

M Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*

J Berger, *Ways of Seeing*

R Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*

Useful for reference:

R Blythe, *The Age of Illusion: England in the Twenties and Thirties 1919-1940*

C Booker, *The Neophiliacs:..English life in the fifties and sixties*

R Hewison, *In Anger: British Culture in the Cold War 1945-1960*

Too Much: Art and Society in the Sixties 1960-1975

R Williams, *Key Words*

Examples of Film Studies and History:

Recommended to be dipped into:

**R Perkins and M Stollery *British Film Editors: the heart of the movie*
(The author of the above will come in as a guest lecturer)**

R Murphy *The British Cinema Book*

BFI *Film Handbook* (annual, but no longer in print)

N Haeffner *Alfred Hitchcock*

J Curran and V Porter, *British Cinema History*

Reference:

The following books are examples of the type of Continental (mainly French) film theory that

dominated cinema studies from the 1970s until the 2000s (a pick and mix bag of structuralist and post structuralist versions of Marx and Freud, and Postmodernism). Only to be looked at if you want to explore the more esoteric varieties of film studies.

A Higson, *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema*

J Hill, *Sex, Class and Realism: British Cinema 1956-1963*

P Cook, *The Cinema Book*

S Hayward, *Cinema studies: the key concepts*

Rogue Theorists:

David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson and Noel Carroll. These three Americans have argued against the type of theory referred to immediately above, with some success, but they have not written on British film specifically, and their work will mainly be of interest to those with an interest in further studies in film theory.

Examples of Practical Theory:

M. Dale *The Movie Game*

K. Dancyger and J. Rush *Alternative Screenwriting*

Syd Field *The Screenwriter's Handbook*

R. McKee *Story*

SM Moore *The biz: the basic business, legal and financial aspects of the film industry*

C. Moritz *Scriptwriting for the Screen*

C. Vogler *The Writer's Journey*

Related to Practical Theory:

J. Campbell *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*

C. Jung: see A Stevens *Jung*

Other Sources for Reading Materials

There are Reference Libraries and Public Libraries in London that will have important collections of material, including: -

British Film Institute Library

21 Stephen Street

London, W1T 2LN Tel: 020 7255 1444

Tube: Tottenham Court Road

Westminster City Council Central Reference Library

35 St. Martins Street

London, WC2 Tel: 020 7641 4636

Tube: Leicester Square

Bookshops such as Waterstone's in Malet Street will have extensive collections as well.

Sets of notes by the Tutor will also be handed out, so please check that you have these

Self Guided Study Visits

The following is indicative:

1. 'Central' London (Kensington to The City; Westminster to Camden Town)

POSH AND COMMON IN THE CENTRE

In many areas of London, rich and poor often live close to each other, and a rich area can

become poor, and a poor area can become 'gentrified' with amazing speed.

Two posh areas that are seemingly immune to impoverishment are *Belgravia* and *Mayfair*. Belgravia has Buckingham Palace on its Eastern edge, and Mayfair has the US Embassy in its middle. Still arguably in Mayfair is the Wallace Collection in Manchester Square which is a preserved-as-it-was house of a late 19th century aristocrat (Wallace, the son of the Marquess of Hertford). You can visit this for free.

(Relevant films would include *The House of Mirth*; *The Age of Innocence*; *The Golden Bowl*; *The Europeans*; slightly more distantly, any film about the British Upper Class in the last 120 years, such *Gosford Park*; *Mrs Brown*; *Remains of the Day*). Belgravia has an early 19th century aristocratic house that is open to the Public: Apsley House (was the Duke of Wellington's house) But Mayfair is bounded on its East by Soho. Soho is still famous for its sleazy sex industries as well what many old fashioned English would call sleazy as well, the Media Industries. Relevant films here would include *Expresso Bongo* and *Absolute Beginners*. Also, in terms of the pop-music industry in general, *Quadrophenia*; *Tommy*; *24 Hour Party People* (the last is of course set in Manchester music club scene: but Soho itself also had many important music venues such as the Marquee Club at 90 Wardour Street) In Soho is Berwick Street, which has a street market, vinyl record shops and at its bottom end, strip clubs and sex-shops.

Belgravia is bounded on the South by Pimlico, which is still strongly working and lower middle class (see the film *Passport to Pimlico*).

The Strand and Soho make up most of what is known as The West End, the area known for its up to the minute entertainments, from the glamorous and expensive Theatres and Cinema Theatres, to brothels, sex-shops and strip clubs, and everything in between. Working Class Londoners, many of whom lived in the East End, would come to the West End on Saturdays, to go to the Cinema and to Dance Halls and music clubs – going 'Up West' it was called.

Westminster, St James and the Tower contain many of the Royal residences of London. As the Thames was the most salubrious and comfortable method of travel in London until recently many more Royal Palaces are on the Thames, from Richmond Palace and Hampton Court to Windsor. Films like *Elizabeth*, *Richard the Third*, *Henry the Fifth*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *Cromwell* are set in the palaces and churches of these places, such as Westminster Abbey, the Palaces of Westminster (so-called 'Houses of Parliament'), St James's Palace, the Banqueting Hall, Greenwich, The Tower of London, and the above mentioned upper Thames palaces.

2. Outside the Centre:

In almost all other areas, rich and poor areas exist side by side, except for the East End, which was almost exclusively working class until recently.

In West London, there are very rich palaces and stately homes (Syon House; Osterley Park; Marble Hill; Ham House; Richmond Palace; Kew Gardens) and next to these residential areas of working and lower middle class status, such as Ealing, Fulham and Southall. Relevant films would be *Gosford Park*; *Remains of the Day*...

Hampstead and Highgate Villages are next to working class areas, while they themselves became artistic residential areas for writers as famous as Coleridge, Keats and JB Priestley lived in Highgate or Hampstead. Hampstead Heath itself is a 'commons' waste land, and was (and still is I believe) accessible to commoners who needed to graze their livestock and collect raw materials such as wood. At the top of Hampstead Heath is Kenwood House and Park (one scene from *Notting Hill* takes place at Kenwood), which was an aristocrat's home and its grounds, and is now open to the public (with its priceless paintings and objets d'art). In the summer,

Kenwood hosts open air classical concerts. Meanwhile, a few hundred yards below, a 'vulgar' fun fair is usually held in the warmest weeks of summer on the Heath. Peasant and Lord still live on strangely in modern times! Rural life is very badly represented in British films, and perhaps the most complete of these is *Far From the Madding Crowd*. What we now call London was mostly rural, and Hampstead Heath gives us a small glimpse of the rural in London. At the top of the Heath there was a small farm that was eventually bought by an artist who was a great friend of William Blake. Blake would walk from 'London', passing a farm that is now on the East and West of Tottenham Court Road on his way to Hampstead (most people walked distances of less than c.50 miles until the late 19th century), to reach the farm in Hampstead, where he told stories to the children of his friend, some of which may have become his famous poems.

Other famous green areas would include Highgate Wood; Epping Forest; Barnes Common; Richmond Park; Regent's Park...but there are all over London many parks and green areas

Working class London can be seen, however inadequately, in the following films:

Nil by Mouth

Naked

Kidulthood

Alfie (also many other areas)

Up the Junction

The Leather Boys

Passport to Pimlico

Wonderland (also the West End)

Secrets and Lies

Lock Stock and 2 Smoking Barrels

Snatch

The Long Good Friday

Get Carter

Street markets are an important part of working class life in London, and they can be found everywhere, even in the heart of Westminster (Strutton Ground market, off Victoria Street)! The most famous markets include Petticoat Lane, Shepherds Bush, Brixton, Whitechapel Market, Walthamstow Market, Church Street Market. Some street markets carry antiques, and have attracted more affluent customers. These would include Portobello Road (at its South end) and Camden Town Market. Both of these attracted alternative, rock and hippie cultures in the 1960s, and some of that flavour still exists today.

Many affluent Londoners in the 17th Century objected to open streets and green areas where ordinary people could gather, sell goods, relax, etc. So the London residential square was invented: a rectangle of green area surrounded by rich terraced houses, accessible only to the residents of the square. Elegant quiet was certainly achieved, but the life went out of these areas. These squares still exist all over London, and it is one of these in West London that Julia Roberts and Hugh Grant sneak into at night illegally in *Notting Hill*.

NOTTING HILL (relevant to the Notting Hill Study Visit)

***The Blue Lamp* (Ladbroke Grove)**

***London Kills Me* (Kensington Park Road)**

***A Hard Day's Night* (Lancaster Road)**

***The Bill* (TV series, everywhere)**

***10 Rillington Place* (Ruston Mews)**

***Alfie* (Ladbroke Grove)**

***The Italian Job* (Portobello, and White City further on obviously)
The Lavender Hill Mob (Bramley Road)
Blow Up - (Holland Park)
Withnail and I (Tavistock Crescent)
Sliding Doors (All Saints Road)
Performance (Powis Square).
Kidulthood (Ladbroke Grove) and
Notting Hill.**

For more information on film locations: www.reelstreets.com

3. Cinema Theatres

a) Repertory Cinema Theatres: There used to be hundreds of repertory cinema theatres in Britain, but now there are only a few. The most important private one is *The Prince Charles* off Leicester Square.

The BFI Film Theatre (formerly the National Film Theatre): a state owned film theatre, attached to the British Film Institute (our national archive of film and library material in film). This is a must for all film students in London. In the Fall, they run the London Film Festival.

There are a few smaller specialist repertory cinemas, the most convenient for BU students being the *Cine Lumiere*, which is attached to the Institut Francais Royaume-Uni, owned by the French Government (equivalent to the British Council), near South Kensington Tube Station.

b) West End Cinemas: mainly clustered around Leicester Square, and Piccadilly Circus. These exist for the most important premieres of block busting films. The most important of these are the *Odeon Leicester Square*, and the *Odeon West End* (the latter under threat of being demolished by the vandalism of our current Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, whose Philistine myopia has allowed many of our important architectural sites in London to be demolished. So visit it while you can.).

c) Local cinemas. Some of these are still independently owned (Phoenix; Electric; Everyman Hampstead), and still exhibit films. Others are or were owned by chains (though some were independents to begin with). Two extraordinary examples of this type are the *ABC, Islington* designed as an Egyptian temple, now a Bingo Hall; and the *Odeon Kensington*, still showing films, in art-deco/neo-classical style. The old Finsbury Astoria (Art Deco style) is now a Mosque. There exists a firm that will give guided tours of old cinemas.

d) Art House cinemas have decreased dramatically. *The Hampstead Everyman; The Phoenix; the Electric. The Screen on the Green and the Screen on the Hill* are still 'art house', but they are NO LONGER repertory cinemas, and only by a stretch of lexical imagination can they be called art house.