



**Boston University** International Programs  
London

**Boston University British Programmes**  
**British Film and TV Since 1960**  
**COM FT 316 (Core Course)**  
**Summer 2009**

**I. Class Description: COM FT 316**

- A. Name of class: "British Film and TV Since 1960"
- B. Credit hours: Four
- C. Catalogue description: This course aims to provide students with an overview of media in Britain within a social context. Special emphasis is placed on the relationship between media, citizenship and democracy in the context of post-War British society. Consideration will also be given to the relationship between British and US media culture.

**II. Instructor Information**

- A. Name Dr Christine Fanthome and Dr Nick Haeffner
- B. Day and Time Wednesdays & Thursdays: 1:15 – 5:15 pm
- C. Location Wetherby Room, 43 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JU
- D. BU Telephone 020 7244 6255
- E. Office Telephone 020 7263 5618
- F. Email [writingbychristine@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:writingbychristine@yahoo.co.uk), [n.haeffner@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:n.haeffner@londonmet.ac.uk)
- G. Webpage [www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/ft316](http://www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/ft316)
- H. Office hours Phone or email to arrange
- I. Methods Each teaching session will involve a lecture, illustrative material and a class discussion based on the set reading. Students should absorb as much film and television as they can out of class in order to participate fully in seminar discussions.

\*\*Please note: no laptops to be used in class.

**III. Textbooks/Supplies**

You can read selected chapters online at <http://www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/ft316/> (you must be logged in to view materials).

**IV. Course objectives:**

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Understand the cultural context of British film and TV since the 1960s.
- Show awareness of the international economic underpinnings of these industries
- Consider the role of politics in media production, distribution and consumption
- Show awareness of historical controversies surrounding British film and TV's relationship to the US
- Conduct their own research in the field

## **V. Assessment**

Essay 50% graded (by Dr Christine Fanthome)

Exam 50% graded (by Dr Nick Haeffner)

**Report:** This should consist of a 2,000-word essay on a topic covered in class (details to follow from Dr Fanthome). There should be a minimum of 5 *academic sources* (text books, journal articles etc) not including websites. Websites may be used *in addition* to more traditional sources but not instead of them and only academic or industry websites should be used. All quotations and citations should be referenced and include appropriate page numbers. The deadline for essay submission is 3pm Monday 22 June 2009. 50%

**Exam:** This will be a take home paper issued to you on Thursday 25 June by Dr Haeffner and will consist of a range of questions which will require test you on your knowledge of the course and will require some evidence of background reading. 50%

## **VI. 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/ACADEMICHANDBOOKSU09.pdf>

## **VII. Teaching Methods**

There will be lectures/seminars and screenings. Students should absorb as much British media as they can, including films, broadcast and print media.

The normal pattern for a class will include a student led discussion of the reading for each session, and a lecturer led session including film/TV clips and small group discussions.

## **VIII. Course Schedule**

### **Session 1: Wednesday 27 May (Dr Nick Haeffner)**

#### **REALISM: DOCUMENTARY REALISM AND SOCIAL REALISM**

A concern for realism is at the heart of much British film and TV. It's important to remember that there many different types of realism including documentary realism, social realism, surrealism, docudrama and ordinary cinematic realism. The British Film Institute website has this to say about social realism: 'Better than any other genre, social realism has shown us to ourselves, pushing the boundaries in the effort to put the experiences of real Britons on the screen, and shaping our ideas of what British cinema can be. While our cinema has experienced all the fluctuations in fortune of Hollywood's first export territory, realism has been Britain's richest gift to world cinema.' (<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/1037898/index.html>) Nevertheless, as we will see, 'realism' is always a problematic term because everything we see and hear via the media has been framed, edited, pre-interpreted and post-produced.

**Clips:** The British Documentary movement: *Coal Face* (1935), *Trade Tattoo* (1937), 'kitchen sink' realism, Mike Leigh, *Hollywood UK*, *Coronation Street* (1960 -)

**Reading:** Samantha Lay (2002) Chapter 1 from *British Social Realism: from Documentary to Brit Grit* London: Wallflower Press, pp 5-23

## **Session 2: Thursday 28 May (Dr Christine Fanthome)**

### **COMEDY AND ENGLISHNESS**

Over the years classic comedy films and TV programmes have helped to define our British national identity and the British sense of humour to the outside world. It has been an evolutionary process and we shall attempt to analyse and critique it in this session. We shall look at the different forms of comedy, discuss humour theory and outline the conventions of the sit-com before looking at a range of examples from film and television.

#### **Reading:**

Creeber, G. (2001) 'Studying Comedy' in *The Television Genre Book* London: BFI, pp 61-75

Thompson, B. (2004) *Sunshine on Putty: The Golden Age of British Comedy from Vic Reeves to The Office*, Harper Perennial, chapter 16 'The Royle We' pp 272 - 285

**Clips:** (will include a selection of the following): *The Ladykillers*; *Carry on Up the Khyber*; *Four Weddings and a Funeral*; *The Full Monty*; *Bridget Jones*; *Only Fools and Horses*; *Blackadder*; *Absolutely Fabulous*; *The Royle Family*; *The Office*; *Monty Python*; *Little Britain*

## **Session 3: Wednesday 3 June (Dr Christine Fanthome)**

### **CRIME**

We shall look at developments in the crime genre since 1960, and the key changes in social attitudes and perceptions that they reflect. Starting with an assessment of the early depiction of the 'bobby on the beat' and its links with the English national identity, we shall then track the subsequent quest for greater realism, the emergence of the 'rogue cop' theme in the 1970s, the blurring of boundaries between law enforcement and lawlessness in what has been called 'the alternative tradition', and the effects of gender politics, genre hybridisation and nostalgia on mediated crime.

#### **Reading:**

Hill, J. (1999), 'Allegorising the nation: British gangster films of the 1980s' in Chibnall, S. & Murphy, R. *British Crime Cinema*, Oxford: Routledge

McLaughlin, E. (2005) 'From reel to ideal: The Blue Lamp and the popular cultural construction of the English 'bobby'', in *Crime Media Culture*, 1: 11

**Clips:** *The Blue Lamp*; *Get Carter*; *The Long Good Friday*; *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*; *The Sweeney*; *The Bill*; *Prime Suspect*; *Life on Mars*

**Guest Speaker** (subject to availability): Alison Chard, Casting Director, *The Bill*

## **Session 4: Thursday 4 June (Dr Nick Haeffner)**

### **ART FILM AND TV**

For much of its history, British film and TV has differed from its US counterpart in the emphasis that has been placed on artistic success. Many notable British actors, writers and directors have considered financial success less important than peer recognition for their artistic achievements. Although art film and TV tends to appeal to a small niche audience it is nevertheless influential and frequently attracts international interest. From time to time it also enters mainstream consciousness, for instance with the success of the TV series *The Prisoner*.

**Clips:** *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982) *Glitterbug* (1994), *Orlando* (1992), *Morvern Callar* (2002), *A Cock and Bull Story* (2005)

**Reading:** Christopher Williams (1996) 'The Social Art Cinema' in *Cinema: the Beginnings and the Future* London: University of Westminster Press

### **Session 5: Wednesday 10 June (Dr Christine Fanthome)**

#### **FANTASY**

Why has the best British fantasy tended to find its outlet through television rather than film? How does it differ from US originated material? In this session we shall attempt to define fantasy, account for the focus of British fantasy on the cerebral, and investigate why audiences find this genre so pleasurable.

#### **Reading:**

Cull, N. (2006), 'The man who made Thunderbirds: an interview with Gerry Anderson' in Cook, J. R. and Wright, P. *British Science Fiction Television* London: I.B. Tauris  
Johnson, C. (2005), *Telefantasy*, London: BFI, Chapter 2: 'Serious Entertainment'

**Clips:** *Quatermass; Quatermass and the Pit; The Prisoner; Thunderbirds; Dr Who; Harry Potter*

### **Session 6: Thursday 11 June (Dr Nick Haeffner)**

#### **NEW DOCUMENTARY, CITIZEN JOURNALISM AND REALITY TV**

Along with its stress on realism, Britain places much emphasis on news and current affairs programming. The BBC World Service is the most trusted news service in the world. However, some of the most entertaining and thoughtful British TV of the past decade has involved a comic or ironic deconstruction of the conventions which structure journalistic reporting. This 'postmodern' turn in the media is also bound up with the rise of 'populism' (more of an ideology shared by media executives than a reflection of what people actually want to see on TV), ironic humour about the media and the 'decline of deference'. These factors, along with the rise of so-called 'citizen journalism' have had a profound effect on so-called serious news reporting.

**Clips:** *Newsnight, The Day Today (1994), Da Ali G Show (2000), The Power of Nightmares (2004), Charlie Brooker's Screen Wipe*

**Reading:** Ben Walters (2005) 'Origins' in *The Office: A Critical Reading of the Series* London: BFI, pp 6-52

**\*\* Make-up Class Date: Friday 12 June.** Should any class dates need to be rescheduled, students are obligated to keep this date free to attend classes.

### **Session 7: Wednesday 17 June (Dr Christine Fanthome)**

#### **HERITAGE DRAMA**

What is heritage drama? How does it attempt to re-present the national past? In this session we shall look at the heritage debate and the wider questions of commodification of heritage and nostalgia. We shall study the characteristics of the heritage films of the 1980s and 1990s and assess the importance of heritage to the UK economy.

#### **Reading:**

Hill, J. (1999), *British Cinema in the 1980s*, ch. 4 'The Heritage Film: Issues and Debates', Oxford U.P.

Higson, A (1996), 'The Heritage Film and British Cinema' in Higson, A. (Ed) *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema*, London and New York: Cassell, pp 232 – 248

**Clips:** *Brideshead Revisited; Chariots of Fire; Howard's End; Elizabeth; Gosford Park; Bleak House*

### **Session 8: Thursday 18 June (Dr Andy Charlton)**

FIELD TRIP: Southwark and Bankside Film and TV walk.

2.30 start, meeting at the Millennium Bridge (further details to follow from Andy Charlton nearer the time)

### **Session 9: Wednesday 24 June (Dr Nick Haeffner)**

#### **MUSIC AND YOUTH CULTURE ON FILM**

British film and TV has long been fascinated by youth culture counters the dominant stereotypes of British people as reserved, undemonstrative and dispassionate. Britain's contribution to pop, rock and dance music has been rich and varied. The UK has produced many of the best known music acts in the world. Yet to understand why this is it's necessary to look closely at the relationship between the mainstream values held by middle aged British people and the history of those that have developed through youth subculture, which have gone on to transform the mainstream. We will also examine the North-South divide in England and its importance to the music scene.

**Clips:** *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), *We Are the Lambeth Boys* (1958), *Performance* (1970), *Trainspotting* (1996), *The Filth and the Fury* (2000)

**Reading:** Smith, Murray (1999): 'Transnational Trainspotting' from *The Media in Britain*, eds. Stokes and Reading, London: Palgrave

**\*\* Please note: students will have their first Internship Tutorial meeting either after their Elective exam on Tuesday 23 June or after their final Core lecture on Wednesday 24 June.**

#### **Exam:**

Thursday 25 June (Dr Nick Haeffner)

*Exam times and locations will be posted on the BU London website and in the Student Newsletter two weeks before exam dates.*

### **IX. Further Reading**

#### **Realism:**

Lay, Samantha: (2002), *British Social Realism: from Documentary to Brit Grit* London: Wallflower Press

Higson, Andrew: (1996), 'Space, Place, Spectacle: Landscape and townscape in the "Kitchen Sink" film' in Higson (ed), *Dissolving Views* London: Cassell

Lovell, Terry: (1996), 'Landscape and Stories in 1960s British Realism' in Higson (ibid)

Hill, John: (2000), 'From the New Wave to 'Brit Grit': continuity and difference in working class realism' in Ashby and Higson (eds), *British Cinema: Past and Present* London: Routledge

Caughie, John: (2000) *Television Drama: Realism, Modernism and British Culture* Oxford: Oxford University Press

**Television:**

Cooke, Lez (2003) *British Television Drama: a History* London: BFI

Creeber, Glenn (2004) *Fifty Key Television Programmes* London: Arnold

The Guardian (2004) *The Hutton Inquiry and its Impacts* London: Methuen

Miller, Toby (2002) *Television Studies* London: BFI

Born, Georgina (2004) *Birt, Dyke and the Reinvention of the BBC* London: Secker and Warburg

Stemmers, Jeanette: (2004) *Selling Television: British Television in the Global Marketplace* London: BFI

Creeber, Glen (ed): (2001) *The Television Genre Book* London: BFI, pp 8-13, 31-35, 124-139

Smith, Anthony: (1998) *Television: An International History* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Holland, Patricia: (1997) *The Television Handbook* London: Routledge

Crissell, Andrew: (2002) *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting* London: Routledge

Crisell, Andrew: (2006) *A Study of Modern Television: Thinking Inside the Box* London: Palgrave

**Comedy:**

Thompson, Ben: (2004) *Sunshine on Putty: The Golden Age of British Comedy from The Big Night Out to The Office* London: Fourth Estate

Carpenter, Humphrey: (2003) *A Great Silly Grin: The British Satire Boom of the 1960s* London: Da Capo

Koseluk, G: (2000) *Great Brit-Coms: British Television Situation Comedy* MacFarland and Company

Landy, M: (2005) *Monty Python's Flying Circus* Wayne State University Press

Walters, B: (2005) *The Office* London: BFI

**Heritage:**

Higson, Andrew: (1996) 'The Heritage Film and British Cinema' in Higson (ed), *Dissolving Views* London: Cassell

Higson, Andrew: (1998) 'Nationality' in Briggs and Cobley

Hill, John: (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* ch. 4 'The Heritage Film: Issues and Debates', Oxford U.P.

Church Gibson, Pamela: (2000) 'Fewer Weddings and More Funerals: changes in the Heritage Film' in Murphy (ed), *British Cinema in the 90s* London: BFI

Powrie, Phil: (2000) 'On the threshold between past and present: alternative heritage' in Higson and Ashby (eds), *British Cinema: Past and Present* London: Routledge

Sargeant, Amy: (2000) 'Making and selling heritage culture: style and authenticity in historical fictions on film and TV' in Higson and Ashby (eds), *British Cinema: Past and Present* London: Routledge

### **Music and Youth Culture:**

Donnelly, K.J. (2001) *Pop Music in British Culture* London: BFI

Brooks, Xan (1998) *Choose Life: Ewan McGregor and the British Film Revival* London: Chameleon Books

Smith, Murray (2002) *Trainspotting* London: BFI

Osgerby, Bill (2004) *Youth Media* London: Routledge

Osgerby, William (1997) *Youth in Britain Since 1945* Oxford: Blackwell

MacDonald, Ian (2005) *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles Records and the 1960s* London: Pimlico

Smith, Murray (1999) 'Transnational Trainspotting' from *The Media in Britain* eds. Stokes and Reading, London: Palgrave

Savage, Jon (2002) *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk and Beyond* London: Faber

Sabin, Roger (1999) *Punk Rock: So What? The Cultural Legacy of Punk* London: Routledge

### **Fantasy:**

Johnson, Catherine (2005) *Telefantasy* London: BFI

Cook, John (2005) *British Science Fiction Television: a Hitchiker's Guide* London: I B Tauris

Chapman, James (2006) *Inside the Tardis* London: I B Tauris

Newman, Kim (2005) *Dr Who* London: BFI

Chapman, James (2002) *Saints and Avengers* London: I B Tauris

### **Crime:**

Cooke, L. (2003) *British Television Drama: A History*, London: BFI

Cooke, L. (2001) 'The Police Series' in Creeber, G. (Ed), *The Television Genre Book*, London: BFI

Hardy, P. (1997) *The BFI Companion to Crime*, London: BFI

Brunsdon, C. (2000) 'The Structure of Anxiety: Recent British Television Crime Fiction', in Buscombe, E. (Ed), *British Television: A Reader*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Laing, S. (1991), 'Banging in Some Reality: The Original 'Z Cars'', in Corner, J. (Ed), *Popular Television in Britain*, London: BFI

Chibnall, S. & Murphy, R. (1999) *British Crime Cinema*, Oxford: Routledge

Alvarado, M. & Stewart, J. (1985) *Made For Television: Euston Films Limited*, London: BFI

Hahn Rafter, N. (2000) *Shots in the Mirror: Crime Films and Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

McLaughlin, E. (2005) 'From reel to ideal: The Blue Lamp and the popular cultural construction of the English 'bobby'', in *Crime Media Culture*, 1: 11

### **British Cinema:**

Adler, Tim (2004) *The Producers: Money, Movies and Who Really Calls the Shots* London: Methuen, chs, 3.4 and 5

Bruce Babbington (2001) *British Stars and Stardom* Manchester: Manchester University Press

Peter Hutchings (2003) *Dracula* London: I.B. Tauris

Jonathan Rigby (2004) *English Horror* London: Reynolds and Hearn

Napper, Lawrence: (2000) 'British Cinema and the Middlebrow' in Ashby and Higson (eds), *British Cinema: Past and Present* London: Routledge

Dyer, Richard: (1993) *Brief Encounter* London: BFI

Landy, Marcia: (2000) 'The other side of paradise: British cinema from an American perspective' in Ashby and Higson (eds), *British Cinema: Past and Present* London: Routledge

Curran, James et al: (1983) *British Cinema History* London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson

Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey and Steven Ricci: (1998) *Hollywood and Europe* London: BFI

Todd, Peter: (2000) 'The British Film Industry in the 1990s' in Murphy (ed), *British Cinema in the 90s*, London: BFI

Puttnam, David: (1997) *The Undeclared War: the Struggle for Control of the World's Film Industry* London: Harper Collins

Dale, Martin: (1997) *The Movie Game: The Film Business in Britain, Europe and America* London: Cassell

Hallam, Julia: (2000) 'Film, class and national identity: Re-imagining communities in the age of devolution' in Ashby and Higson (eds), *British Cinema: Past and Present* London: Routledge

**Film and Television:**

Hill, John: (1996) 'British Television and Film: the making of a relationship' in Hill and McLoone (eds), *Big Picture, Small Screen* Luton: University of Luton

Aukin, David: (1996) 'Channel Four's policy towards film' in Hill and McLoone (eds) *ibid*

**General Media:**

Briggs, Adam and Paul Copley: (2002) *The Media: An Introduction* Harlow: Longmans

Dyer, Richard: (1993) 'The role of stereotypes' in *The Matter of Images* London: BFI

Osgerby, Bill: (1998) *Youth in Britain Since 1945* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Malik, Sarita: (1998) 'Race and Ethnicity' in Briggs and Copley *ibid*.

**Books on Class:**

Canadine, David: (1998) *Class in Britain* New Haven and London: Yale University Press

Roberts, Ken: (2001) *Class in Modern Britain* Basingstoke: Palgrave

McKibbin, Ross: (1998) *Classes and Cultures England 1918-1951* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Rose, Jonathan: (2001) *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* New Haven and London: Yale University Press