

Advanced Film Studies

(Interpreting and Debating Cinematic Texts)

Time: Monday 16.00-17.40

Room: 119

Instructor: Győri Zsolt gyori.zsolt@arts.unideb.hu

Code: BTP2BR_T_37

Office Hours: Monday: 14.00-15.00

Tuesday: 15.00-16.00

Course Description:

The primary goal of this course is to give an overview of the history of British cinema from the earliest attempts to the mid-50's. Beginning with silent cinema we shall examine the most important production centres, directors and genres hand in hand with the institutional framework of production, distribution and exhibition. As the American dominance in film exhibition grew, British producers and legislatures began a long battle for audiences. One way to achieve this was turning to the past and set up a production program heavily reliant on historical and period films. After the outbreak of WWII cinema offered invaluable services for assisting the war effort, both in keeping up public morale and creating a sense of national unity. During our classes we shall analyse the extent to which and the means by which propaganda used cinema and especially the historical film. At the final sessions we concentrate on two genuine British genres, highly popular among audiences in postwar Britain: the period melodrama and the Ealing comedy. By the end of the course students are expected to relate critically to the films of the period examined and to analyse the relationship between cinema, entertainment, ideology and history.

Week	Date	T o p i c s
1	7 September	INTRODUCTION. THE ROLE OF CINEMA IN THE FORMATION OF BRITISH NATIONAL IDENTITY.
2	14 September	THE BIRTH OF CINEMA IN BRITAIN. THE BRIGHTON SCHOOL. THE BIRTH OF CENSORSHIP. THE 1920'S: AN EMERGING FILM ART. FILM ACTS
3	21 September	THE BRITISH KORDA: DISCUSSION OF ALEXANDER KORDA'S <i>THE PRIVATE LIFE OF HENRY VIII</i> (1933) Required reading: „Success,” in Charles Drazin, <i>Korda: Britain's Only Movie Mogul</i> (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 2002), 96-105. (xerox-copy available)
4	28 September	THE PAST, HISTORY AND CINEMA. HISTORICAL FEATURE FILM BETWEEN 1933-1939 Required reading: „Historical Feature Film 1933-39,” in Sue Harper, <i>Picturing the Past</i> (London: BFI, 1994.), 8-19. (xerox-copy available)
5	5 October	CINEMA AND THE WAR YEARS I. FANTASY AND PROPAGANDA. DISCUSSION OF <i>THE THIEF OF BAGDAD</i> (1940) Required reading: from „Free!” in Charles Drazin, <i>Korda: Britain's Only Movie Mogul</i> (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 2002), 206-11. (xerox-copy available)
6	12 October	PROPAGANDA AND THE VISUAL Required reading: “Wars Are Not Won by Evacuations (June 4, 1940),” Robert Rhodes James, ed.. <i>Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches Vol. VI: 1935-1942</i> (New York: Chelsea House, 1974). 6226-31.

		For this class you need to examine WWII propaganda posters available from the tutor.
7	19 October	CONSULTATION WEEK
8	26 October	THE BRITISH NATIONAL CHARACTER DURING THE WAR Required reading: George Orwell: "England, Your England," Available at http://orwell.ru/library/essays/lion/english/e_eye
9	2 November	CINEMA AND THE WAR YEARS II. REALISM AND NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE DISCUSSION OF <i>THE LIFE AND DEATH OF COLONEL BLIMP</i> (1943) Required reading: „What a Difference a War Makes?,” in Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, <i>Best of British, Cinema and Society from 1930 to the Present</i> (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 79-94. (xerox-copy available)
10	9 November	WOMEN’S CINEMA: GAINSBOROUGH HISTORICAL FILMS AND THE MELODRAMATIC Required reading: Sue Harper “Wartime and Postwar Responses To Historical Film,” in <i>Picturing the Past</i> (London: BFI, 1994), 136-46. (xerox-copy available)
11	16 November	DISCUSSION OF <i>THE MAN IN GREY</i> (1943)
12	23 November	POST-WAR DEVELOPMENTS, THE EALING COMEDIES Required reading: Richard Dacre, “Traditions of British Comedy,” in Robert Murphy, ed. <i>The British Cinema Book</i> (London: BFI, 1997), 198-206. (xerox-copy available)
13	30 November	DISCUSSION OF <i>THE LADYKILLERS</i> (1955).
14	7 December	END-TERM TEST

Requirements

Presence at classes: no more than three absences are allowed.

Assigned reading: the assigned texts are to be read for the classes.

Participation in classroom discussion: the student is expected to take an active part in classroom discussions. This activity contributes to the seminar grade by 20% of the overall achievement.

End-term test: an objective test on the works discussed during the term. The test must be written at the time scheduled in the syllabus. Failing to do so will count as course failure.

Research paper: a take-home essay of about 1,500 to 2000 words on a topic related to the thematic concerns of the course is to be handed in by **31 December, 2020** Please consult with the tutor before deciding on the topic.

The typed essay should meet the formal and academic requirements of a research paper. Secondary reading and scholarly documentation, conforming to the requirements of the MLA Style Sheet, are required. Plagiarism is not accepted and academic dishonesty will result in a failure as described in the Academic Handbook of the Institute.

The essays will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- the articulateness of the thesis of the paper;
- the sophistication of the arguments;
- proof of analytical skills;
- the use and integration of your secondary sources into the essay;
- the coherence of the structure;
- the level of language.

Film Screening: Students will be provided with the films discussed by the tutor.

Evaluation:

End-term test	35%
Take-home essay	35%
Participation in class discussions	20%
Attendance	10%
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Percentage	Grade
91–100	5
82–90	4
62–81	3
61–71	2
0–60	1

Required Reading:

Charles Drazin, “Success,” in *Korda: Britain’s Only Movie Mogul* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 2002), 96-105. (xerox-copy available)

Sue Harper, “Historical Feature Film 1933-39,” in *Picturing the Past* (London: BFI, 1994.), 8-19. (xerox-copy available)

Charles Drazin “Free!” in Charles Drazin, *Korda: Britain’s Only Movie Mogul* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 2002), 206-11. (xerox-copy available)

Winston, S. Churchill, “Wars Are Not Won by Evacuations (June 4, 1940),” Robert Rhodes James, ed., *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches Vol. VI: 1935-1942* (New York: Chelsea House, 1974). 6226-31. (xerox-copy available)

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Under the current regulations, the course is planned to be a face-to-face, classroom-based course, HOWEVER, if due to the pandemic we have to switch to remote teaching, PLEASE be prepared to use the University of Debrecen E-Learning system at elearning.unideb.hu.

In case of such a switch, the course evaluation methods (e.g., for class participation) and grading rules may be subject to change. You will be notified of these changes by the instructor if needed.

It is our shared responsibility to observe effective hygiene rules and follow the relevant government, university and faculty regulations regarding the pandemic. If you become ill or experience any symptoms, please stay home to protect others from infection.

Students are advised that the quality of their written and spoken performance will count significantly toward their final grade.