

HISTORY ON FILM

Note: Schedule of Films for Course Not Final, Subject to Minor Changes

Readings:

Bookstore:

Natalie Z. Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*

Robert A. Rosenstone, *Film on History / History on Film*

Website: https://courses.hss.caltech.edu/Fall2009/H-F_131

Many of the weekly readings -- essays, articles, and chapters from books -- are posted on the course website.

Course Requirements:

1. *Weekly paper:* After each screening students must write a short paper (250-500 words) that discusses the film as a work of history, dealing with either its historical or filmic strategies, or both. Papers are to be brought to the class meeting and you may be called upon to read them aloud. Student must complete 6 papers during the term, at least two by midterm. (handed in midterm week). **20 percent of grade.**
2. *Long Paper:* Your major assignment, to write a 3000 word paper (plus or minus 5 percent) can be done in one of two ways. **60 percent of grade.**
 - A. Write a general essay with more or less this title: "The History Film. What is it? Why Should We Care?" While the paper need not have that precise title, the idea is for you to reflect upon the subject matter of the course -- the reading, the theories, the discussion, and the films. Beyond the course material, you will be expected to analyze in your paper ONE FILM we have NOT seen during the term.
 - B. Write a treatment (description of) a historical movie that you would like to make from research in several books on a particular topic. Your description would outline the characters, plot, historical themes, and visual strategies, and also describe certain key visual moments.
3. *Attendance, participation, public presentation:* Participation in class is essential, so let me hear your voice. In addition, during the last three meetings of class each student will be expected to give a short presentation on either a. the extra film chose for the term paper, or b. the treatment you are writing. **20 percent of grade.**

Course Strategy / Office hours:

1. Class will meet twice a week. Screenings will take place on Tuesday nights in Baxter 225. Lecture / discussions will be the following Thursday at 1 p.m.
2. Office hours: Tu, Th 11 a.m. 2 and by appointment -- best made by email: rr@hss.

Weekly Schedule:

Sept. 29: Organizational Meeting

INTRODUCTION TO HISTORY ON FILM

Oct. 1: Organization meeting: Film, History, Film language, Historical language

FORMS OF DRAMATIC HISTORY

- 6: **Legend as History**
Screening: *The Return of Martin Guerre*
- 8: Read Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*; AHR Forum: essays by Natalie Davis and Robert Finlay (website)
- 13: **Fact as History**
Screening: *Glory*
- 15: Read: Rosenstone, *Film on History*, Chapters 1, 2, 3; Robert Burgoyne, "Race and Nation in *Glory*" (website)
- 20: **Innovative History**
Screening: *Walker*
- 22: Read: Rosenstone, *Film on History*, Chapter 4; "Walker as History" (website)

CASE STUDY: THE WAR IN VIETNAM

- 27: **From Above**
Screening: *Path to War*
- 29: Read: essays on Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam (website)
Guest in class: Producer Howard Dratch
MIDTERM: THREE (OR MORE) WEEKLY PAPERS DUE

- Nov. 3: **From Below**
Screening: *Born on the 4th of July*
- 5: Read: Rosenstone, *Film on History*, Chapters 7, 8.9; Jack E. David, "Oliver Stone's *Born on the 4th of July*" (website)

FORMS OF BIOGRAPHY

- 10: **Standard (more or less)**
Screening: *Frida*
- 12: Read: *Forum on History on Film / Film on History* and tba (website)
Student presentations
- 17: **Experimental**
Screening: *32 Short Films About Glenn Gould*
- 19: Read: essays tba (website)
Student presentations

Nov. 23-27, Thanksgiving Week: No screening, No class meeting

- Dec 1: **Mixed Genre**
Screening: *Reds*
- 3: Read: Rosenstone, *History on Film*, chapters 6, 9; "Reds as History" (website)
Romantic Revolutionary, chapters (website)
Student presentations

Dec 11 - Noon: FINAL PAPERS DUE