

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Voyage: Summer 2013

Discipline: Media Studies

MDST 2502: Introduction to Mediterranean Cinema after 1945

Division: Lower division

Faculty Name: Ernesto R. Acevedo-Muñoz

Pre-requisites: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course presents students with a history and overview of the major European film movements, the most influential films and directors, and the relationship between European cinemas, history, and culture from 1945 to the 2000s. Focusing largely –though not exclusively- on the principal film industries of France, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Northern Africa, the course draws direct comparisons and relationships between the practices of cinema, and developments in history and society.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students will explore the styles and significance of such influential movements as Italian Neorealism (1944-1952), the French the New Wave (1958-1964), the “Golden Age” of Greek cinema (1950s-1960s) and Spanish cinema before and after democratization. The course will consider specific relationships of national cinemas in general, and exemplary films in particular, to representations of landscape, the city, and key historical junctures.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Ezra, Elizabeth (ed.)

TITLE: *European Cinema*

PUBLISHER: Oxford U. Press

ISBN #: 9780199255719

DATE/EDITION: 2004

Course Schedule

C1- June 18: Introductions and rules of the game. Opening lecture/discussion: “Understanding cultures through film.” Reading: Ezra, Introduction: “A brief history of cinema in Europe.”

C2- June 19: The Hollywood Standard. *Casablanca* and Classical Cinema. Film: *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, US 1942).

C3- June 20: War as a starting point. Film: *Rome, Open City* (Roberto Rossellini, Italy 1945).

C4- June 21: Discussion: New Europe, new aesthetics. Reading: Ezra, chapter 6.

June 22-June 25: *Casablanca*: **Field Lab (2nd proposal).** **June 22: Exploring cinema and culture in Casablanca (Field assignment practicum).**

C5- June 26: New realism; neorealism. Film: *Germany, Year Zero* (Roberto Rossellini, Italy 1948)

C6- June 27: The colonialist era. Reading: Matthews, “Bombs and Boomerangs” (PDF). Film: *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, Italy/Algiers 1966).

C7- June 28: Cinemas of the Middle East. Reading: Chaudhuri, chapter 3. Film: *Clay Dolls* (Nouri Bouzid, France/Morocco/Tunisia 2002).

June 29- July 2: Tunis

C8- July 3: Gender issues and politics in Middle Eastern cinemas. Film: *The Silences of the Palace* (Moufida Tlatli, France/Tunisia 1994).

C9- July 4: East/West politics and violence. Film: *West Beirut* (Ziad Doueri, France/Lebanon 1994).

C10- July 5: The development of Egyptian cinema. Reading: Armes, chapter 10. Film: *Alexandria... Why?* (Youssef Chahine, Egypt 1979).

July 6-10: Alexandria

C11- July 11: Nostalgia and history. Reading: Bradshaw, “Youssef Chahine” in *The Guardian*, 28 May 2008 (PDF). Film: *Destiny* (Youssef Chahine, Egypt 1997).

C12- July 12: Mid Term examination.

July 13-17: Istanbul

C13- July 18: Classic cinema of Turkey. Reading, Armes, chapter 12, “Youseff Chahine.” Film: *Yol* (Yilmaz Güney, Turkey 1982).

C14- July 19: Contemporary cinema in Turkey. Reading: Armes, chapter 14, “Yilmaz Güney.” Film: *Bliss* (Abdullah Oğuz, Turkey 2007).

July 20-23: Piraeus

C15- July 24: European cinemas in the post-national era. Reading: Ezra, chapter 12, and Forbes & Street, “Cinema and the National Question”. Film: *Mediterraneo* (Gabriele Salvatores, Italy/Greece/Turkey 1991).

July 25: Study Day and Sea Olympics

C16- July 26: National cinemas in context: Greece. Reading: Forbes & Street, “The Rise of National Cinema” and “Sound and Style.” Film: *Zorba the Greek* (Mihalis Kakogiannis, Greece 1964).

July 27-31: Marseilles

C17- August 1: The French New Wave. Reading: Ezra, chapter 8. Film: *The 400 Blows* (François Truffaut, France 1959).

C18- August 2: French cinema after the New Wave. Film: *Au hasard Balthazar* (Robert Bresson, 1966).

August 3-5: Livorno

August 6-9: Civitavecchia **Field Lab (1st proposal): August 9 Rome/Cinecittà**

C19- August 10: Cinema and the Italian urban-scape. Reading: Sorlin, Chapter 4: “The blurred image of

cities.” Film: *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio de Sica, Italy 1948).

C20- August 11: Pussyfooting around fascism. Reading: Meyer, “The relentless sublimity of *The Conformist*.” Film: *The Conformist* (Bernardo Bertolucci, Italy/France 1971)

August 12-15: Barcelona

C21- August 16: The contexts of Spanish cinema: Luis Buñuel. Reading: Stone, chapter 3: “Under Franco.” Film: *Viridiana* (Luis Buñuel, Spain 1960).

C22- August 17: Spanish cinema “Over Franco.” Ezra: chapter 13. Film: *All About My Mother* (Pedro Almodóvar, Spain 1999). Special screening/discussion of “EUROPEAN CINEMAS IN FOCUS” Projects

C23- August 18: Spanish cinema in the era of global culture. Reading: Acevedo-Muñoz, “Horror of Allegory in *Contemporary Spanish Cinema and Genre*, Beck and Rodríguez, eds., 2008.” Film: *The Others* (Alejandro Amenábar, Spain/US 2001).

August 19: Study Day

C24-August 20: Final Exams

August 21: Packing and Reflection

August 22: Southampton

FIELD LAB: Cinecittà, and Rome, Italy: the class will visit the largest and longest-operating film studio in Europe: Rome’s “Cinecittà” (or “Cinema City.”) The focus of our class is, in part, to understand the historical importance of the cinema in many European societies as a cultural product and as a marker (or maker) of national identity. There is no representative of the historical, social, and political importance of cinema in Europe that is more iconic than Cinecittà. Not only was the studio the brainchild of fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, but it has been the production site of many of the greatest (and biggest) movies ever made from many major film industries in the world. Home to *Ben-Hur*, *La Dolce Vita*, *Gangs of New York*, HBO’s *Rome*, *The Godfather Part III*, and the most important epics of Italian cinema, Cinecittà is one of the most active movie studios in the world. The field lab has two main foci. The first is a visit to the outdoor sets of Broadway, Ancient Rome, and XV century Florence, for a comparative analysis of the “the world viewed” by the cinema and “the real world,” and a discussion of Cinecittà’s role in the articulation of Italian “culture” and the Italian nation (as socially “manufactured” concepts). The second focus is an architectural discussion of the Cinecittà buildings and sites, with emphasis on the “rationalist” and “fascist” styles of architecture that distinguish the studios. We will discuss how these styles permeate the films in our schedule.

Field Lab project: “European cinemas in focus.” After the morning visit to the studio, the class will spend the rest of the day creating a short video/movie (3-4 minutes in length), or “photo essay” (15 or 20 pictures) shot on location in Rome recreating and/exploring the style, themes, or philosophy of Neorealism or the New Wave. In consultation with the professor, teams of four or five students will draft a “concept,” select locations (preferably in the city center), and engage in the video/photo essay. It can incorporate video shot on your cellphone or HD cameras, edited on camera and/or with iMovie (or similar widely available software), or a photo slideshow presentation examining concepts such as “landscape and cityscape,” “space and architecture,” “people and culture,” “history and society,” etc. Students will work in close consultation with the professor, and will later present their video or photo-essay to the class (or

shipboard community) explaining the choice of images, style, and content in relation to the major film movements studied over the course of the term.

Field assignments:

National/Hollywood: In 3 (three) of the itinerary’s ports of call students will explore and/or research some of the general movie-going or movie exhibition practices that are common to the country/city. Students may chose to a) visit a local cinema and sit through a picture show, then analyze and/or interrogate the general practices seen; b) observe, consider, and examine the national origin of the movies in general release, argue the evidence about the “share” of the national cinema markets that may be dominated by international or Hollywood productions; c) scan and analyze the types of cinema advertising seen in the local media (billboards, public transport ads, newspapers, magazines, television, picture shows, etc., etc.). You can do any combination of these types of research/assignments, but always consider 2 or 3 of the following questions: how are cinema consumption/promotion practices different or similar to what we are used to? What types of films, genres, or countries of origin seem to be the most popular or most easily found by general audiences? If you go to a movie show: are there advertisings or commercials that are part of the show? If so, of what types of products? Are there censorship practices (a rating system, age limits, gender segregation) that are noticeable, and/or noticeably different from what we know? Are there any differences in these practices between countries in Europe and North Africa? What calls your attention the most about the ways in which the cinema is advertised/sold/consumed in other national and cultural contexts? Your **field report** is due upon completion (as soon as you’ve done the three assignments). The field report will be a 6-9 page paper in complete essay form, detailing your observations, analyzing your data, and considering the variety and/or similarities of cinema practices seen in different cultural contexts.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

Attendance and Participation:	20% ¹
Midterm mini-exam:	15%
Field Lab Project:	20%
Field assignments:	20%
<u>Final Examination:</u>	<u>25%</u>
	100%

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

AUTHOR: Armes, Roy
TITLE: *Third World Film Making and the West*
PUBLISHER: U. of California Press
ISBN #: 0520056906
DATE/EDITION: 1987

AUTHOR: Sorlin, Pierre
TITLE: *European Cinemas, European Societies*
PUBLISHER: Routledge
ISBN# 0415056713
DATE/EDITION: 1991

¹ Attendance will be monitored daily. I understand that seasickness is a reality around here. So is medication, when possible. Students are allowed one “unexcused” absence. Final grade will drop one +/- degree per each unexcused absence thereafter. Participation will be assessed by quality/relevance of in-class comments, preparedness to answer direct questions, and by general attitude and demeanor in class.

AUTHOR: Chaudhuri, Shohini
TITLE: *Contemporary World Cinema*
PUBLISHER: Edinburgh University Press
ISBN# 074861799X

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

Most readings outside the textbook and/or reserved books will be available in .PDF format.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: All course films should be available in DVD format.

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."