

British Cinema

English 295.401
CINE 260.401
Fall 2012
Tues and Thurs 10:30

Jim English
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Hours: Tues 2:30-3:30 /Thurs 1:30-2:30
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Historically, the British film industry has gotten little respect. Possessing neither the economic might of Hollywood, the symbolic prestige of the European art cinema, nor the exotic appeal of the new national cinemas of Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East, it has suffered from persistent neglect in the curriculum of Film Studies. The great French director Francois Truffaut remarked that “British cinema” was “a contradiction in terms”; even Britain’s own great director Stephen Frears once said that “there is no British cinema, it doesn’t exist.” In this class, we will discover that the British cinema not only exists but has proved in many respects to be a more durable and resilient alternative to Hollywood than any of the other cinemas of Europe. We will consider some of the distinctive modes and genres of British film, the special relationship between film and television in the British context, and the innovative strategies British filmmakers have used to cope with increasingly transnational forms of cinematic production, distribution, and reception. This class offers an opportunity not only to acquaint yourself with British cinema but to learn something about contemporary British culture and society and about the discipline of Film Studies.

You are responsible for watching each film by the date indicated on the syllabus. Films are available on reserve in Rosengarten Reading Room at Van Pelt Library. Most titles are also available at the Cinema Studies office on the second floor of Fisher Bennett Hall. Those of you who subscribe to Netflix will find that many of the films are rentable from that source, as well. If you have difficulty obtaining a film, let me know and I will try to assist you.

Attendance is mandatory. If another obligation makes absence from a particular class meeting unavoidable, be sure to discuss this with me in advance.

The class will include a workshop with a library A/V technologist to learn how to extract and edit movie clips. Written assignments will include a Formal Analysis essay and a Critical essay based on independent research. There will be four exams.

We will be piloting a new course management software called Canvas. All assignments and exams will be managed online through our Canvas site. Final grades will be based on the Formal Analysis essay (20%), Critical essay (30%), four exams (10% each), and performance on short exercises and in class discussions (10%). Any cheating or plagiarism will result in an F for the class.

SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

9/6 INTRODUCTION: four approaches to British screen culture

Elton and Anstey, *Housing Problems* (1935) < in class >
[Glossary of Film Terms](#)

I. Doc, Mock, and Effects of the Real

Week 1: Blurring the Genre Line

9/11 Ken Loach, *Cathy Come Home* (1966)
["Documentary"](#) from BFI ScreenOnline

9/13 Peter Watkins, *The War Game* (1966)
["The War Game"](#) from BFI ScreenOnline

Week 2: Doc Cinema, Rock Music

9/18 Richard Lester, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964)
Colin MacCabe, "Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses"

9/20 Michael Winterbottom, *24 Hour Party People* (2002)

Week 3: Representing the Troubles

9/25 Alan Clarke, *Elephant* (1989)

9/27 Paul Greengrass, *Bloody Sunday* (2002)
Michael Walsh, "Thinking the Unthinkable: Coming to Terms with Northern Ireland"

< EXAM 1 >

II. Mobility and Inertia: Narratives of the Working Class

Week 4: The British New Wave

10/2 Tony Richardson, *A Taste of Honey* (1961)

10/4 Lindsay Anderson, *This Sporting Life* (1963)
["Social Realism"](#) from BFI Screen Online

Week 5: The Cinema of Constraint

10/9 Ken Loach, *Kes* (1969)

10/11 Shane Meadows, *This is England* (2006)

< FORMAL ANALYSIS ESSAY DUE >
< UPLOAD YOUR CLIP >

Week 6: Unworking Class

10/16 Mike Leigh, *High Hopes* (1988)

Leonard Quart, "The Religion of the Market"

Paul Giles, "History with Holes: Channel Four Television Films"

10/18 Peter Cattaneo, *The Full Monty* (1997)

Peter Todd, "British Film Industry in the 1990s"

Geoff Brown, "British Film Culture in the Nineties"

Claire Monk, "Underbelly UK . . . and the Social Realist Tradition"

< EXAM 2 >

Week 7: From Social Realism to Social Surrealism

10/23 FALL BREAK

10/25 Danny Boyle, *Trainspotting* (1996)

Lynne Ramsay, *Ratcatcher* (1999)

Karen Lury, "Here and Then"

III. Representing Heritage: History, Race, National Identity

Week 8: The Heritage Aesthetic

10/30 Hugh Hudson, *Chariots of Fire* (1981)

Andrew Higson, "English Heritage, English Cinema"

Amy Sargeant, "Making and Selling Heritage Culture"

11/1 James Ivory, *Room With a View* (1985)

Claire Monk, "The Heritage Film and Gendered Spectatorship"

Week 9: Alternative Heritage, Post-Heritage

11/6 Peter Greenaway, *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982)

11/8 Sally Potter, *Orlando* (1992)

< EXAM 3 >

Week 10: Imperial Heritage and Black British Cinema

11/13 John Akomfrah, *Handsworth Songs* (1986)

11/15 Stephen Frears, *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985)

Manthia Diawara, "The Emergence of Black British Film Collectives"
Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities"

TOPIC PARAGRAPH AND BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

Week 11: Heritage and Hybridity

11/20 Gurinder Chadha, *I'm British But* (1989)

Gurinder Chadha, *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993)

Sarita Malik, "Beyond the Cinema of Duty? The Pleasures of Hybridity"

IV. British Screen Culture, World Cinema

Week 12: Working Title and the International Market

11/27 Mike Newell, *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994)

11/29 Joe Wright, *Pride and Prejudice* (2005)

Jessica Durgan, "Framing Heritage: The Role of Cinematography in *Pride & Prejudice*"

< EXAM 4 >

Week 13: The Transnational Production of Reality

12/4 Gurinder Chadha, *Bride and Prejudice* (2004)

12/6 Danny Boyle, *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008)

< FINAL ESSAY DUE 12/10 >

[\[Purdue Guide to MLA Style Annotation\]](#)