

Carleton University

Course Outline

Department of Law

COURSE:	LAWS 5903W
TERM:	Winter 2011
CLASS:	Day & Time: Thursdays, 14:35 to 17:25 LA D492 Room: Please check with Carleton Central for current room location
INSTRUCTOR:	Professor Diana Young
CONTACT:	Office: Loeb Building D498 Office Hrs: Wednesdays 15:00 to 16:00 Telephone: 613-520-2600 ex 1981 Email: Diana.Young@carleton.ca

"Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities to complete the necessary Letters of Accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me in order to make the necessary arrangements as early in the term as possible, but no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first test requiring accommodations. For further information, please see: http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/students/accom_policy.html . If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **November 15, 2010 for Fall exams and March 12, 2010 for Winter exams**. For Religious and Pregnancy accommodations, please contact Equity Services, x. 5622 or their website: www.carleton.ca/equity

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is not to look at courtroom dramas or critique popular conceptions of the criminal justice system per se. Instead I would like to look at a few popular film genres and consider them in light of some of the theoretical perspectives students might be familiar with. My hope is that the course will work for students on three levels:

- 1) The study of these films can provide students with an opportunity to think about how social and legal theoretical perspectives that they might have studied through text may also be conveyed through other means: through visual representations, sound, acting and editing techniques, and fictional narrative.
- 2) Thinking about film and its relationship to these theoretical perspectives may generate new deeper insights into these perspectives, as well as provide interesting new ways of appreciating popular art forms.
- 3) The act of unpacking the cultural reference points with which meaning is conveyed through popular culture may provide insights into the assumptions that underlie much of legal discourse, and suggest critical perspectives on law and the justice system.

Film is obviously varied and the selections I have made for this course are not intended to be a canon. All of the films I have selected are drawn from popular American cinema, but are also complex and multi-layered. Although I suggest various ways of thinking about the films we will study, of course any art form can be interpreted in a variety of ways and students are welcome to suggest alternatives to the approaches suggested in the syllabus.

We will watch some of the films together in class but time constraints require that along with their readings, students will also screen some films outside of class. We can schedule a time to meet for these screenings or students can watch the films on their own.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Students will be required to purchase a course pack. Some additional material may be posted on WebCT

EVALUATION

Participation – 25%

Presentation – 25%

Response paper – 10% (Due on March 10 at the latest)

Final paper – 40% (Due on April 7)

The presentation will be scheduled during the last four weeks of the course. Students may present an alternate theoretical approach to a film that we have discussed in class, or provide a presentation on a film that has not been included in these course materials. The presentation may be done individually or in groups of two, and presenters will be asked to discuss their topic with the instructor ahead of time. The final paper should be about 12 pages in length and be based on the presentation. It should include research apart from the material covered in class. Please remember that if you do your presentation with another class member, your final paper must be your own work. The response paper should be a 3 to 4 page discussion of any one of the films covered in class and/or the assigned readings that accompany it. It can be submitted at any time during the semester but must be received by March 10 at the latest.

SCHEDULE**January 6** Introduction to the Course

Gender and authenticity

To start us off, we consider gender issues in light of Billy Wilder's 1959 classic, *Some Like It Hot* and Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity. This film blurs the "naturalist" distinction between genders as men who cross-dress seem to adopt the characteristics and survival strategies of women. However, on a deeper level the casting of Marilyn Monroe as the female lead seems to unsettle assumptions about what constitutes the authentically feminine.

Readings: Judith Butler, "Introduction" in *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993)

Films: Some Like It Hot (1959) Billy Wilder
Tootsie (1982) Sydney Pollack

Recommended Viewing: Boys Don't Cry (1999) Kimberly Peirce

PART I: Alfred Hitchcock and Rebellious Women

January 13 How is the meaning of a representation transformed depending on the cultural and temporal context in which it is viewed, by the identity of the viewer, and the character with whom the viewer chooses to identify? Does Hitchcock participate in silencing women, provide an apolitical examination of women living in conditions of gender oppression, or use film narrative to transcend those conditions?

Readings: Orit Kamir, "Blackmail: Hitchcock's Sound and the New Woman's Guilty Silence" in *Framed: Women in Law and Film* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2006)
 Susan White, "Vertigo and Problems of Knowledge in Feminist Film Theory" in Richard Allen and S. Ishii-Gonzales, *Alfred Hitchcock, Centenary Essays* (London: BFI Publishing, 1999)
 Lara Karaian, "Troubling the Definition of Pornography: Little Sisters, and New Defining Moment in Feminists' Engagement with the Law?" (2005) 17 *Canadian J. of Women and the Law* 117.

Films: Blackmail (1929) Alfred Hitchcock

Recommended Viewing: Vertigo (1958) Alfred Hitchcock
 Notorious (1946) Alfred Hitchcock

January 20 Our discussion of the films studied in this class may build on the material already covered on perspective and interpretation in Hitchcock's portrayal of women. We will also consider how the films "Marnie" and "The Birds" represent the use of legal and psy discourses not as means of seeking truth, but as the means of asserting power.

Readings: Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power" in Colin Gordon, ed., *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972)
 Carol Smart, "Law, Power, and Women's Bodies" in *Feminism and the Power of Law* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989) c. 6

Films: The Birds (1963) Alfred Hitchcock
 Marnie (1964) Alfred Hitchcock

PART II: Conceptions of Subjectivity in Science Fiction: Identity and the Manufactured Being

January 27 In this section we will consider the treatment of manufactured humans in science fiction films, why they provoke anxiety in the popular imagination and the paradoxes of subjectivity. We will also look at notions of citizenship and power through the manipulation of identity.

Readings: Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991)
 Varun Begley, *Bladerunner and the Post Modern: A Reconsideration* (2004) 32 *Film Quarterly* 3 186.

Films: Bladerunner (1982/1990)
 Moon (2009)

February 3 Identity and the Manufactured Being cont'd

The Normalized Body

Readings: Seyla Benhabib, "Feminism and Post-Modernism" in Seyla Benhabib et. al., *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange* (New York: Routledge, 1995)

Films: Gattica
Battlestar Galactica (Television program)

PART III: The Western – Grand Theories and Competing Discourses

February 10 Classical Westerns often present the civilization of the West as a Hegelian evolution of the subject through legalization. The stark esthetic of these films presents the west as a legal void, awaiting colonization by the universal norms of ethics and political organization emanating from the East. Some more recent Westerns have revised this vision, envisaging the history of the west as a more chaotic and unpredictable coalescence of social forces.

Readings: Charles Taylor, "Kant's Theory of Freedom" in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)
Scott Simmon *The Invention of the Western Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) c. 17
Barry Langford, *Revisiting the "Revisionist" Western* (2003) 33
Film & History 26

Films: My Darling Clementine (1946) John Ford
High Noon (1952) Fred Zinnemann

Recommended Viewing: The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962) John Ford
True Grit (2009) Ethan Cohen, Joel Cohen
3:10 to Yuma (1957) Delmer Daves
(2007) James Mangold

February 17 Readings: Diana Young, *Law and the Foucauldian Wild West in Michael Cimino's "Heaven's Gate"*
Jim Kitses, "An Exemplary Post-Modern Western: The Ballad of Little Joe" in Gregg Rickman, Jim Kitses, eds., *The Western Reader* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1999)

Films: The Ballad of Little Joe (1993) Maggie Greenwald
Heaven's Gate (1997)

February 24 Reading week – no class

PART IV Trauma, surveillance, and the Constitution of the Self

March 3 Readings: Susan J. Brison, "Outliving Oneself: Trauma, Memory, and Personal Identity" in Diana Tietjens Meyers, ed., *Feminists Rethink the Self* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997)
Gail Weiss, "Bodily Imperatives: Toward and Embodied Ethics" in *Bodily Images: Embodiment as Intercorporeality* (New York: Routledge, 1999)

Films: Lust, Caution (2007) Ang Lee

Recommended Viewing: The Conversation (1974) Francis Ford Coppola

PART V: Student Presentations

March 10

March 17

March 24

March 31