
COURSE: LAWS 5903X Socio-legal Engagements in Film and Television

TERM: Winter 2021

PREREQUISITES:

CLASS: **Day & Time:** Tuesdays, 8:35-11:25
Room: All Courses in the Winter 2021 term are offered online. This course will be conducted synchronously through Zoom.

INSTRUCTOR: Diana Young

CONTACT: **Office Hrs:** Please email me to arrange a meeting via Zoom
Telephone:
Email: diana.young@carleton.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to our online class. I will be setting up a recurring meeting over zoom; a link to the meetings will be posted on the cuLearn course page.

The purpose of this course is not to look at courtroom dramas or critique popular conceptions of the criminal justice system per se. Instead we will look at examples of a few popular genres in screen art (i.e., film and television) and consider them in light of some of the theoretical perspectives students might be familiar with. My aim is for the course to work for students on three levels:

- 1) The study of screen art can provide students with an opportunity to think about how theoretical perspectives that they might have studied through text may also be conveyed through other means, such as visual representations, sound, acting and editing techniques.
- 2) Thinking about screen art and its relationship to these theoretical perspectives may generate 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 through which meaning is conveyed in popular culture may provide insights into the assumptions that underlie much of legal discourse, and suggest different critical perspectives on law and related concepts.

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

Time constraints require that along with their readings, students will screen the films outside of class. I have included in the syllabus some sources through which students can obtain the films online. Most of them are available for streaming through the MacOdrum Library catalogue.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The readings are all available online through the MacOdrum Library catalogue or through the Ares system.

EVALUATION

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Department and of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Department and the Dean.

Participation – 25%

Presentation – 25%

Response paper – 10% (Due on March 16 at the latest)

Final paper – 40% (Due on April 14)

The presentations will be scheduled during the last five 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 or television program that has not been included in these course materials. Although the films assigned for the course are drawn from American popular culture, students are welcome to use examples of screen art from other parts of the world. Presenters will be asked to discuss their topic with the instructor ahead of time. The final paper should be about 20 pages (double-spaced) in length and be based on the presentation. Students should provide me with a brief outline of their papers well ahead of the due date, so that I can provide feedback. 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. It can be submitted at any time during the semester but must be received by March 16 at the latest.

LATE PENALTIES AND REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS

The granting of extensions is determined by the instructor who will confirm whether an extension is granted and the length of the extension. For requests for extensions lasting less than 7 days, please complete the form at the following link and submit it to the instructor prior to the assignment due date: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/self-declaration.pdf>.

Extensions for longer than 7 days will normally not be granted. In those extraordinary

cases where extensions lasting longer than 7 days are granted, the student will be required to provide additional information to justify the longer extension (up to a maximum of 14 days).

SCHEDULE

January 12

Introduction to the Course

To start us off, we will talk a little bit about how film conveys meaning. We won't become experts on the filmmaker's art in this class; however, we should not just think of films as narratives with a "message" about law or legal studies. We should also think about how filmmakers use techniques that are particular to the medium – cinematography, sound, editing and acting techniques – to evoke responses in the viewer. In the first class we will consider some of these techniques.

The material in this course is also drawn from many different time periods. We will talk a bit about the effect of time on the meaning of popular film. When contemporary audiences watch a film made decades ago, how is the film's meaning transformed? When modern films are made about earlier generations, how does the identity of the contemporary audience change the tools available to the filmmaker for analysis and critique?

We will also talk in general terms about the relationship between popular culture and socio-legal studies. How can images from popular film and television be used to enhance understanding of complex ideas about how society is regulated? How can sociolegal theory enhance our understanding of popular culture?

Readings:

Deranty, J. and Olsen, M.J. (2019) The Work of Art in the Age of its Digital Distribution. *Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 24(5): 104-123.

Buckland, W. (2009) Introduction. In (Buckland, W. ed.), *Film Theory and Contemporary Hollywood Movies*: 1-16. New York: Routledge. (available on-line through the MacOdrum Library database)

Part I: Gender and Authenticity

January 19

In this class, we will begin thinking more specifically about theory and representation in popular culture in light of Billy Wilder's 1959 classic, *Some Like It Hot*, Sydney Pollack's 1982 comedy *Tootsie*, and Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity. The older film blurs the "naturalist" distinction between genders, as men who cross-dress seem to adopt the characteristics and survival strategies of women. On another level the casting of Marilyn Monroe – an icon of 1950s femininity whose public image was also carefully constructed – as the female lead seems to unsettle assumptions about what might constitute an "authentically" feminine figure.

Readings:

Butler, J. (1993) Introduction. *Bodies That Matter*: 1-23. New York: Routledge. (Available through Ares).

Butler, J. (1999) Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*: 3-44. New York: Routledge. (Available in ebook form through the MacOdrum Library catalogue).

Lieberfeld, D. and Sanders, J. (1998) Comedy and Identity in Some like it Hot. *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 26(3): 128-136.

Films:

Some Like It Hot (1959) Billy Wilder (available online through the MacOdrum Library).

Tootsie (1982) Sydney Pollack (available online through the MacOdrum Library).

Recommended Viewing:

Boys Don't Cry (1999) Kimberly Peirce

January 26

Masculinities

Masculinity, like femininity, is sometimes seen as performative, and also variable depending on the intersections of gender, class, and race. It may also have a connection to larger questions of economic power and globalization.

Readings:

Fraser, N. (2015) Legitimation Crisis? On the Political Contradictions of Financialized Capitalism. *Critical Historical Studies* 2(2): 157-189.

Connell, R.W. and Messerschmit, J.W. (2005) Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept. *Gender and Society* 19(6): 829-859.

Dunn, S. (2008) Introduction: Race, Gender, and Black Action Fantasy. *Baad Bitches and Sassy Supermamas: Black Power Action Films*: 1-11. Chicago: University of Illinois Press. (Available in ebook form through the MacOdrum Library catalogue).

Films:

Shaft (1971) Gordon Parks (available online through the MacOdrum Library)

Glengarry Glen Ross (1992) James Foley (available online through the MacOdrum Library)

Moonlight (2016) Barry Jenkins (available online through the MacOdrum Library)

Suggested viewings:

Boogie Nights (1997) Paul Thomas Anderson
The Big Sleep (1946) Howard Hawks
The Usual Suspects (1995) Bryan Singer
Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song (1971) Melvin Van Peebles

Part II: Resistance and the Reproduction of Meaning**February 2**

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? What is the transformative potential of popular art, given that it must reproduce norms in order to be intelligible?

Readings:

Foucault, M. (1972) Truth and Power. In (Gordon, C. ed.) *Power/Knowledge*: 109-133. New York: Pantheon Books. (Available through Ares)

Samuels, R. (1988) *Marnie*: Abjection, Marking, and Feminine Subjectivity. *Hitchcock's Bi-Textuality: Lacan, Feminists, and Queer Theory*: 93-108. Albany: State University of New York Press. (Available through Ares)

Butler, J. (2004) The Question of Social Transformation. *Undoing Gender*. 204-231. New York: Routledge. (available in ebook form through the MacOdrum Library catalogue)

Films:

The Birds (1963) Alfred Hitchcock (available online through the MacOdrum Library catalogue)

Marnie (1964) Alfred Hitchcock (available online through the MacOdrum Library catalogue)

Recommended Viewing:

Bamboozled (2000) Spike Lee
Vertigo (1958) Alfred Hitchcoc
Notorious (1946) Alfred Hitchcock
Outrage (1950) Ida Lupino

Part III: Subjectivity, Science Fiction, and Sport: Identity and the Manufactured Being**February 9**

In this section we will consider the relationship between subjectivity and the body through science fiction and sports films. Many science fiction films deal with manufactured beings, which taps into popular anxieties about identity and the paradoxes of subjectivity. We will also look at notions of citizenship and power through the manipulation of identity.

Readings:

Haraway, D.J. (1991) A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*: 149-181. New York: Routledge. (Available through Ares).

Begley, V. (2004) Bladerunner and the Post Modern: A Reconsideration. *Literature Film Quarterly* 32(3): 186 – 192.

Du Bois, W.E.B. (2007/1905) Of Our Spiritual Strivings. *The Souls of Black Folk*: 2-7. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (available in ebook form through the MacOdrum Library catalogue).

Meer, N. (2019) W.E.B. Du Bois, Double Consciousness and the “Spirit” of Recognition. *The Sociological Review* 67(1): 47-62.

Films:

Blade Runner (1982/1993) Ridley Scott (available online through the MacOdrum Library catalogue)

Moon (2009) Duncan Jones (available online through the MacOdrum Library catalogue)

Get Out (2017) Jordan Peele (available online through the MacOdrum Library catalogue)

Recommended Viewing:

Us (2020) Jordan Peele
Blade Runner 2049 (2017) Denis Villeneuve

February 23

Films about sport often deal with the transcendence of one’s own history and social location through the discipline of the body. In today’s class, we will consider conceptions of agency through mastery of the body and care of the body, in particular how these conceptions may reinforce or challenge existing power structures.

Readings:

Shilling, C. (2005) Sporting Bodies. *The Body in Culture, Technology & Society*: 101-126. London: Sage Publications.

Foucault, M. (1980) Body/Power. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972-1977*: 55-62. New York: Pantheon Books. (Available through Ares)

Young, D. (2017) Fighting Oneself: The Embodied Subject and Films About Sports. *Sport In*

Society 20(7): 816-832. (available on CuLearn)

Films:

Million Dollar Baby (2004) Clint Eastwood (available online through the MacOdrum Library catalogue)

Sugar (2008) Anna Boden, Ryan Fleck (available online through the MacOdrum Library catalogue)

Gattaca (1997) Andrew Niccol (available online through the MacOdrum Library catalogue)

Recommended viewing:

Body and Soul (1947) Robert Rossen

Part IV: The Western – Grand Theories and Competing Discourses

March 2

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.

Readings:

Taylor, C. (1985) Kant's Theory of Freedom. *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*: 318-337. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Available through Ares)

Simmon, S. (2003) Time, Space, and the Western. *The Invention of the Western Film*: 178-191. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. (Available through Ares)

Turner, R.L. (2015) Why Do You Think I am Paying You if Not to Have My Way?: Genre Complications in the Free-Market Critiques of Fictional and Filmed Versions of *True Grit*. *The Journal of Popular Culture* 48(2): 355-370.

Films:

My Darling Clementine (1946) John Ford (available online through the MacOdrum Library website)

High Noon (1952) Fred Zinnemann (available online through the MacOdrum Library website)

True Grit (2010) Joel Cohen, Ethan Cohen (available online through the MacOdrum Library website)

Recommended Viewing:

3:10 to Yuma (1957) Delmer Daves
(2007) James Mangold
The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962) John Ford
True Grit (1969) Henry Hathaway
Heaven's Gate (1980) Michael Cimino (for an alternative conception of legalization)

Part VI: Violence, Surveillance, and the Construction of the Criminal**March 9**

This week's films explore themes of the disorienting effects of the experience of violence on identity, the perception of time, and the individual's relationship to culture and society.

Readings:

Eamonn Carabine, *Seeing Things: Violence, Voyeurism, and the Camera* (2014) 18
Theoretical Criminology, 134-158.

Susan J. Brison, "Outliving Oneself: Trauma, Memory, and Personal Identity" in Diana Tietjens Meyers, ed., *Feminists Rethink the Self* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997) pp. 12-39. (Available through Ares).

Alison Young, "No End to Violence?" in *The Scene of Violence: Cinema, Crime, Affect* (New York: Routledge, 2010) pp. 147-172. (available in ebook form through the MacOdrum Library catalogue)

Michael C. Dawson, "Hidden in Plain Sight: A Note on Legitimation Crises and the Racial Order" (2016) 3 *Critical Historical Studies* 1 pp. 143-161.

Films:

Da 5 Bloods (2020) Spike Lee (available on Netflix)
Taxi Driver (1976) Martin Scorsese (available online through the MacOdrum Library website)
Lust, Caution (2007) Ang Lee (available online through the MacOdrum Library website)

Recommended viewing:

Into the Forest (2015) Patricia Rozema
The Conversation (1974) Francis Ford Coppola

Part VII: Student Presentations**March 16**

March 23**March 30****April 6****April 13****January 11, 2021****February 15 – 19, 2021****April 14, 2021****April 16 – 27 2021****Classes Begin****Winter Break, No Classes****Winter Term Ends****Formally Scheduled Final Exams****ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows: <https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

Pregnancy obligation

Please contact me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC): <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation

Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC): <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact The Paul Menton Centre (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC Website for their deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable) <https://carleton.ca/pmc>

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own. Plagiarism includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from

which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, and material on the Internet. Plagiarism is a serious offence. More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at:

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/studentsupport/svpolicy/>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: <https://students.carleton.ca/services/accommodation/>

Department Policy

The Department of Law and Legal Studies operates in association with certain policies and procedures. Please review these documents to ensure that your practices meet our Department's expectations: <https://carleton.ca/law/current-students/>