HIST 195  Gender, History, & American Film
       Historian's Craft:  Historical Research and Film for Majors
TH 4:30-7:20, BRNG B242

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Description
This course explores gender history in the United States through the medium of film. Motion pictures capture, reflect and model ideas about modern womanhood and manhood. Examined as a historical document, film can reveal much about family life, politics, sexuality, identities, and gender ideals. We will view a wide range of Hollywood films, and examine the relationship of gender to social, political, and economic transformations that took place during the 20th century.

Readings
All readings are available electronically on Blackboard. Go to: https://mycourses.purdue.edu

Films
All films will be viewed in class. Those with call #s are at HSSE library reserves.
Imitation of Life (1934) (personal collection)
South Pacific (1958) (personal collection)
The Children's Hour (1961) (personal collection)
Shaft (1971) (personal collection)
Alien (1979) (personal collection)
Thelma & Louise (1991) (personal collection)
Dick (1999) (personal collection)

Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to:
• understand and recognize how assumptions about gender may influence the ways that films are produced and consumed at different places and times.
• analyze the cultural consequences of film
• historicize, analyze, and interpret primary documents related to film
• develop skills for reading critical commentaries and evaluating them
• gain ability to question and learn from film as documentary evidence
Course Requirements

25% Short Response: weekly 250 word commentary
30% Long Response: 3, 850-1000 word commentaries (exempt from weekly short response when it is your turn to write)
10% Discussion Support: provide 3 historical documents for class discussion
25% Final Assessment
10% Participation

Assignments (120 points):

Shorts: 250 word shorts commentaries (3 points x 10 = 30 points) – 25%
- Graded by +, x, - (good, adequate, missing something; A, B, C)
- Include: statement, interpretation of additive value, reference from reading(s)
- Move beyond class discussion

Long Response (12 points x 3 = 36 points) – 30%
This follows a similar format to the short commentary, but offers a way to discuss a specific scene, music, etc. in more depth. It should reflect specifics from the film, as well as support from the readings. It should not repeat discussion from class, but move beyond it.

Discussion Support (post to blackboard “Discussions”) (12 points, one time) – 10%
- Find at least one film review: NYT reviews, Chicago Tribune, LA Times and/or a local paper
- Choose 2 from a variety of sources, and:
  - comment on genre
  - comment on film production (director, producer, writer)
  - comment on actors
  - mystery category (something of significance revealed with your research)
- Context: For example, what won the Oscar that year for Best Picture and why? How does it compare to the assigned film?

Final Assessment – (30 points) 25%
This is a cumulative 3-5 minute video you produce will address the fundamental question of the class: what do these documents and films say about gender in the United States during the twentieth century? Details to follow.

Participation – (12 points) 10%
Just showing up is not enough. Your participation grade will reflect your overall participation in class discussions. I will also take into account office visits in which we discuss course material.

Criteria for grading this assignment: frequency of your participation (this includes asking intelligent questions); quality of your comments; your ability to get other students talking by raising questions or debating other students directly; regular and alert attendance.

Policies
Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. THERE ARE NO LATE GRADES OR INCOMPLETES. You will need a note from the Dean to explain extenuating circumstances.

Missed classes: You will not earn an A with more than 2 absences. Attendance is required by university policy and is expected by me.

Academic Honesty
Student-teacher relationships are built on trust. For example, students must trust that teachers have made responsible decisions about the structure and content of the courses they teach, and teachers must trust that the assignments that students turn in are theirs. Acts that violate this trust undermine the educational process.

In this class, all assignments that are turned in for a grade must represent the student's own work. In cases where help was received, or teamwork was allowed, a notation on the assignment should indicate with whom you collaborated. If you have any questions concerning this policy before submitting an assignment, please ask for clarification.

The following will be considered instances of academic dishonesty: copying a paper from another student; recycling one's own or others' papers from other courses; obtaining part or all of a paper from another source other than your own research without providing quotations and citations; direct quotation from printed, electronic or online sources without providing a citation (including rewording or "patchwork plagiarism"); and the use of specific ideas and interpretations of printed or electronic sources without citation ("theft of ideas"). Any material that you quote should be placed under quotation marks and cited with a footnote or reference immediately following the quoted portion that provides the source. Do not hide plagiarism by quoting material and then adding a vague reference at the end of the text. You may discuss homework assignments with other students, and you may prepare for papers and class with other students, but the writing assignments should be your own work. If you quote any source or even take ideas from that source, the source should be referenced completely. The penalty for plagiarism can be an F in the course.
Copying of class notes: You may make a photocopy of written class notes for friends who have been absent from class for their personal use only. Any wider distribution outside the classroom, such as posting on the Internet or via a list to anyone not in this class, is prohibited and will result in an F in the course.

In case of emergency:
In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course. Blackboard Vista web page, my email address: svostral@gmail.com.

Schedule

August 28
Introduction
Names, and What’s your favorite movie?
Peruse: 10 Most Influential Films of the century (according to Roger Ebert)
In the news: Diversity in top films misrepresents U.S. population
Watch in class: Excerpts “Birth of a Nation”

September 4
Gender and the American Dilemma
Film: Imitation of Life (1934)
Read: At the Movies, the women are gone
Mini-lecture in class: Gender Terms & Bechdel Test

September 11
Gender & the Economic Crisis: The Great Depression
Film: My Man Godfrey (1936)
Read: Turner, “Film Languages,” Film as Social Practice, ch. 3

September 18
Rehabilitating Men
Film: The Best Years of our Lives (1946)
Politics and Poetics.
Read: Turner, “Film Narrative,” Film as Social Practice, ch. 4.

September 25
Crisis of Conformity
Film: Rebel Without a Cause (1955)
Read: Ross, Steven. Chapter 8, “Eisenhower’s America: Prosperity & Problems in the 1950s”

October 2
Race, Gender & the Musical
Film: South Pacific (1958)
Read: Six words: ‘You’ve got to be taught’ Intolerance
Read: Turner, “Film Audience,” Film as Social Practice, ch. 5.

October 9
Unspoken Sexuality
Film: The Children’s Hour (1961)

October 16
Black Masculinity in the 1970s
Film: Shaft (1971)
Read: Ross, Steven. Chapter 9, “Race, Violence and the Blaxploitation Era of the 1960s to the ‘Hood-Homeboy’ Movies of the 1990s”

October 23
Female Power Protagonist
Film: Alien (1979)

October 30
Cross dressing ‘80s style  
Film:  Tootsie (1982)  
Read:  Deborah Holdstein,  Tootsie: Mixed Messages  
Read:  Who’s The Man? Hollywood Heroes Defined Masculinity For Millions  
Read:  Ross, Steven. Chapter 11, “Reagan’s America: The Backlash Against Women & Men”

November 6  
**Violent Women**  
Film:  Thelma & Louise (1991)  
Read:  America Addicted to the other Porn

November 13 – No Class meeting. Instead, watch a film that meets the Bechdel test, and write a 250+ word review for the class, posting it on Blackboard. Address genre, historical context, and representations of gender. Provide the name and year of the film. Importantly, why did you choose this film?

November 20  
**The Frontier & Masculinity**  
Film:  Unforgiven (1992)  
Read:  Frederick Jackson Turner, “Frontier Thesis”  

December 4  
**Hapless Girls & National Politics**  
Film:  Dick (1999)  
Read:  Kathryn Brownell, “Nixon’s Showbiz Legacy”  
Read:  Jean Baudrillard and Simulacrum  
Peruse:  “Nixon and Popular Culture”

December 11  
**The People’s Choice** Options and other suggestions welcome:
Valley of the Dolls
The Graduate
Stepford Wives
Coolhand Luke
Annie Hall
Boys Don't Cry
The Color Purple