

**FILM 480 Special Topic**  
**EASY RIDERS, RAGING BULLS: POST-CLASSICAL AMERICAN CINEMA**  
CRN 8856



**Course Coordinator:** Dr Tim Groves  
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**Office Hours:** Monday, 2-4pm

**Seminar/Screenings:** **Tuesday and Friday 10.00-12.50**  
**85 Fairlie Terrace, room 108**

**Course Aims and Objectives:**

This course will explore some of the features of Hollywood cinema in the years 1967-1980. After completing this course, you should have:

- Acquired specific knowledge about the transformations of genres such as the Western, road movie and crime film that occurred during this period.
- Gained knowledge about significant filmmakers such as Sam Peckinpah, Robert Altman, John Cassavetes, and Terrence Malick.
- Acquired knowledge of members of the Film School generation of directors such as Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese, and the importance of exploitation cinema in facilitating the careers of emerging directors at this time.
- Develop an understanding of the important changes to film narrative and storytelling that took place in this period.

As a result of this course, you will:

- Augment your analytical and critical skills.
- Enhance your proficiency at textual analysis and independent research.
- Improve your ability to write essays and make oral presentations.
- Assist you in other honours units, and help prepare you for postgraduate work.

**Readings:**

The required readings for each class are listed at the end of this guide. Most of these are available in the Student Notes. Some additional material has been placed on closed reserve in the library, and you will need to make your own copies of it.

**Workload:**

The university expects that you should be able to devote about 20 hours per week to a 30 point unit across one trimester. If you attend 6 hours of classes per week, then you should expect to spend about 14 hours per week reading, watching films, preparing for classes, and working on assignments.

**Group Work:**

You will make a seminar presentation for assessment with another student. See Assignment One for more details. There will also be some informal group work during classes. This will be assessed as part of Assignment Two.

**Assessment Requirements:**

There will be four assessment items for this subject. All assessment will be internal. Full details of each assignment will be given in classes. Students are reminded that the assessment of film honours students is provisional pending consideration of each student's work as a whole and external moderation.

**Assignment One: Seminar Presentation (15%)****Due Date: in class weeks 4-12**

In this assignment, you will work with another student to give a seminar presentation on one of the topics covered in weeks 4-12 of the course. You will also be expected to lead the class discussion. The topics for this assignment can be found in the readings and screenings schedule of the end of this guide. The seminar presentation will be 20-25 minutes long, and you will each provide a written summary of your presentation (500-1000 words). This assignment is designed to improve your research, argumentation, teamwork and oral presentation skills.

**Assignment Two: Seminar Participation (10%)****Due Date: in Class in Weeks 3-12**

Your participation in, and contribution to, seminars will be assessed in weeks 3-12. This assignment will enable you to demonstrate your knowledge of the topics discussed across most of the course. It will also develop your critical skills, and enhance your verbal skills. Non-attendance at seminars without a valid excuse (such as illness) will affect your grade.

**Assignment Three: Critical Essay (35%) 3500 words****Due Date: Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2 pm**

This assignment will cover topics discussed in the first six weeks of trimester, such as the aesthetics of postclassical cinema, the revisionist Western, the road movie, the youth audience film, the films of Sam Peckinpah, the ambiguous hero, the crime film, and right wing film cycles. This exercise will enhance your independent research, critical, argumentation and textual analysis skills, as well as your written expression. Although a list of topics will be provided, you are encouraged to develop your own research topic. Details will be available in class early in semester.

**Assignment Four: Critical Essay (40%) 4000 words****Due Date: Tuesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2 pm**

This assignment will cover topics discussed in weeks 7-12, including the cinema of Robert Altman, horror films, conspiracy and paranoia films, Vietnam War films, high concept of cinema, and the work of Coppola, Scorsese, Bogdanovich, Malick and Cassavetes. This assignment will improve your independent research, critical, argumentation and textual analysis skills, as well as your written expression. Details will be available after Easter.

**Handing in Assignments**

Assignments should normally be placed in the drop box in 85 Fairlie Terrace. *Do not submit your essays to me in person.* You are strongly advised to keep a copy of your assignments before submitting them.

**Penalties:**

Late work will be penalized at the rate of 2% per working day. Work submitted more than five working days after the date without a formal extension may not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with me.

If you are having problems meeting a deadline for an assignment, then you should contact me before the due date. I will consider any reasonable request for an extension, but please note that applications for extensions should be made at least two days before the due date.

**Mandatory Course Requirements:**

In order to pass this course, you must complete two critical essays by the due dates, and make a seminar presentation as scheduled. You must receive at least a 'C' grade overall. You must also attend at least sixteen (16) seminars. (If you are unable to attend your seminar in the week you are scheduled to give your presentation, then you must make arrangements with me about a substitute presentation.)

**Communication of Additional Information:**

Any additional information concerning the course, including changes, will be posted on Blackboard.

**Award:**

The Prize for Film Studies, arising from a fund established by the Wai-te-Ata Press, will be awarded to the best student of film history, criticism or production.

**General University Policies and Statutes:**

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the Victoria homepage at:

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/calendar\\_intro.html](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html)

Information on the following topics is available electronically under "Course Outline General Information" at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Student and Staff Conduct
- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

### **Screenings and Weekly Topics**

**We will often start classes before 10 am in order to have time to watch the films and have a substantial discussion. In some weeks you may have to watch the film before class. Films will usually be available for viewing in the audio-visual section of the library.**

**Tues 26/2: Introduction to the Course**

Screening: *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1967)

Reading: Schatz, Thomas. "New Hollywood." *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*. Eds. Jim Collins, Hilary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins. London: Routledge, 1993. 8-36.

**Fri 29/2: Post-classical aesthetics; European influences**

Screening: *Bonnie and Clyde* (Arthur Penn, 1967)

Readings: Carr, Steven Alan. "From 'Fucking Cops!' to 'Fucking Media!'" *Bonnie and Clyde* for a Sixties America." *Arthur Penn's Bonnie and Clyde*. Ed. Lester Friedman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 70-100. **(4)**  
King, Geoff. *New Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. 36-48. **(20)**

**Tues 4/3: Searching for the Youth Audience**

Screening: *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969)

Readings: Bordorhkozy, Aniko. "Reel Revolutionaries: An Examination of Hollywood's Cycle of 1960s Youth Rebellion Films." *Cinema Journal* 41.3 (Spring 2002) : 38-57. **(27)**  
Mills, Katie. "Psychadelics and the Biker Film." *The Road Story and the Rebel: Moving through Film, Fiction, and Television*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006. 122-132. **(47)**

**Friday 7/3: The Road Movie**

Screenings: *Two-Lane Blacktop* (Monte Hellman, 1971)

Readings: Cohan, Steven and Ina Rae Hark. "Introduction." *The Road Movie Book*. Eds. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark. London: Routledge, 1997. 1-12. **(53)**  
Butler, Terrence. "American Films in the Seventies: *Two-Lane Blacktop*." *Movie* 21 (Autumn 1975) : 34-37. **(60)**  
Ford, Greg. "*Two-Lane Blacktop*." *Film Quarterly* 25.2 (Winter 1971-1972) : 53-55. **(64)**

**Tues 11/3: Revisionist Westerns**

Screening: *The Wild Bunch* (Sam Peckinpah, 1969)

Readings: Kitses, Jim. "Introduction: Post-modernism and the Western." *The Western Reader*. Eds. Gregg Rickman and Jim Kitses. New York: Limelight Editions, 1998. 15-31. **(67)**  
Dixon, Winston Wheeler. "Re-Visioning the Western: Code, Myth, and Genre in Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch*." *Sam Peckinpah's The Wild Bunch*. Ed. Stephen Prince. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 155-174. **(76)**

**Friday 14/3: Revisionist Westerns**

Screening: *McCabe and Mrs Miller* (Robert Altman, 1971)

Readings: Kolker, Robert. *A Cinema of Loneliness: Penn, Kubrick, Scorsese, Altman*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980. 279-300. **(87)**

- Tues 18/3:** **Sam Peckinpah**  
**Screening:** *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* (Sam Peckinpah, 1974)
- Readings:** Prince, Stephen. "The Aesthetic of Slow-Motion Violence in the Films of Sam Peckinpah." *Screening Violence*. Ed. Stephen Prince. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000. 175-201. **(112)**  
 Kitses, Jim. *Horizons West: Directing the Western from John Ford to Clint Eastwood*. London: BFI, 2004. 240-247. **(126)**
- Friday 28/3:** **The Ambiguous Hero**  
**Screening:** *Five Easy Pieces* (Bob Rafelson, 1970)
- Readings:** Elsaesser, Thomas. "The Pathos of Failure: American Films in the 1970s. Notes on the Unmotivated Hero." *The Last Great American Picture Show: New Hollywood Cinema in the 1970s*. Eds. Thomas Elsaesser, Alexander Horwath and Noel King. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004. 279-292. [excerpt] **(130)**
- Tues 1/4:** **Right Wing Cycles**  
**Screening:** *Dirty Harry* (Don Siegel, 1971)
- Readings:** Ray, Robert. "The Left and Right Cycles." *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985. 296-325. **(139)**  
 Mask, Mia. "1971 – Movies and the Exploitation of Excess." *American Cinema of the 1970s: Themes and Variations*. Ed. Lester Friedman. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007. 63-70. **(154)**
- Friday 4/4:** **Revisionist Crime Films**  
**Screening:** *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974)
- Readings:** Cawelti, John G. "Chinatown and Generic Transformation in Recent American Films." *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Eds. Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979. 559-579. **(159)**  
 Lev, Peter. *American Films in the 1970s: Conflicting Visions*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000. 50-59. **(170)**
- Tues 8/4:** **Robert Altman and the Crime Genre**  
**Screening:** *The Long Goodbye* (Robert Altman, 1973)
- Readings:** Kolker, Robert. *A Cinema of Loneliness: Penn, Kubrick, Scorsese, Altman*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980. 300-317. **(98)**
- Friday 11/4:** **Robert Altman and Narrative**  
**Screening:** *Nashville* (Robert Altman, 1975)
- Readings:** Plecki, Gerard. *Robert Altman*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985. 73-89. **(175)**  
 Kolker, Robert. *A Cinema of Loneliness: Penn, Kubrick, Scorsese, Altman*. 319-322. **(107)**
- Tues 29/4:** **Conspiracy and Paranoia Films**  
**Screening:** *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974)
- Reading:** Ray, Robert. *A Certain Tendency in Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980*. *ibid.*

- Friday 2/5:**                   **Conspiracy and Paranoia Films**  
 Screening:                   *The Parallax View* (Alan J. Pakula, 1975)
- Reading:                    Keathley, Christian. "Trapped in the Affection Image: Hollywood's Post-traumatic Cycle (1970-1976)." *The Last Great American Picture Show: New Hollywood Cinema in the 1970s*. Eds. Thomas Elsaesser, Alexander Horwath and Noel King. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004. 293-308. [excerpt] **(184)**
- Tues 6/5:**                   **Starting out in Exploitation**  
 Screening:                   *The Last Picture Show* (Peter Bogdanovich, 1971)
- Reading:                    Hillier, Jim. *The New Hollywood*. London: Continuum, 1994, 38-49. **(193)**
- Friday 9/5:**               **The Film School Generation**  
 Screening:                   *Mean Streets* (Martin Scorsese, 1973)
- Readings:**               Cook, David A. "The Film School Generation." *The New American Cinema*. Ed. Jon Lewis. Durham, SC and London: Duke University Press, 1998. **(Closed Reserve)**  
 Grist, Leighton. "New Hollywood Cinema: Mean Streets." *The Films of Martin Scorsese, 1963-1977: Authorship and Context*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000. 61-97. **(199)**
- Tues 13/5:**               **American Mavericks: John Cassavetes**  
 Screening:                   *To Be Advised*
- Reading:**                Marguilies, Ivone. "John Cassavetes: Amateur Director." *The New American Cinema*. Ed. Jon Lewis. Durham, SC and London: Duke University Press, 1998. 275-306. **(218)**
- Friday 16/5:**           **American Mavericks: Terrence Malick**  
 Screening:                   *Days of Heaven* (Terrence Malick, 1978)
- Readings:**               Peteric, Vlada. "Days of Heaven." *Film Quarterly* 32.2 (Winter 1978-1979) : 37-45. **(235)**  
 Further readings will be advised.
- Tues 20/5:**               **Screening Vietnam**  
 Screening:                   *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979)  
 [We're using the release version, not "Redux". You will need to see this before class.]
- Readings:**               Tomasulo, Frank P. "The Politics of Ambivalence: *Apocalypse Now* as Prowar and Antiwar Film." *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film*. Eds. Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud. New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990. 145-158. **(240)**  
 Dempsey, Michael. "*Apocalypse Now*." *Sight and Sound* 49.1 (Winter 1979-1980) : 5-9. **(248)**  
 Pym, John. "*Apocalypse Now*: An Errand Boy's Journey." *Sight and Sound* 49.1 (Winter 1979-1980) : 9-10. **(252)**

- Friday 23/5:**           **The Ideology of 1970s Horror**  
**Screening:**           *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974)
- Reading:**             Wood, Robin. "The American Nightmare: Horror in the 70s." *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. 70-94. (254)
- Tues 27/5:**           **The Blockbuster and High Concept Cinema**  
**Screening:**           *The Empire Strikes Back* (Irving Kershner, 1980)
- Reading:**             Wyatt, Justin. *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. 8-22. (267)
- Friday 30/5:**       **Goodbye to All that**  
**Screening:**           *Raging Bull* (Martin Scorsese, 1980)
- Reading:**             Cook, Pam. "Masculinity in Crisis?" *Screen* 23.3-4 (September-October 1982) : 39-46. (275)