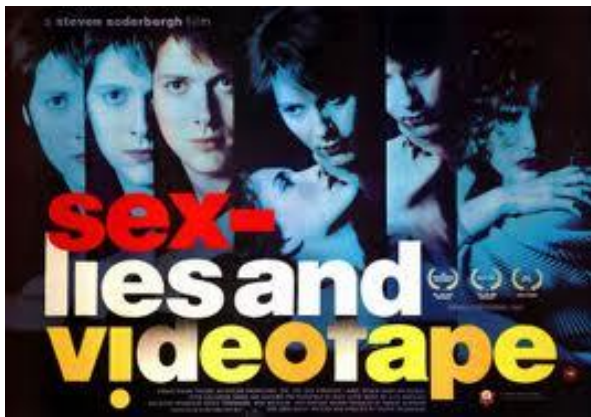


FILM 406 Studies in Film Authorship

Trimester 1 2011

28 February to 2 July 2011

30 Points



TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	28 February to 3 June 2011
Mid-trimester break:	18 April to 1 May 2011
Study week:	6 June to 10 June 2011
Last piece of assessment due:	17 June 2011

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Staff: Dr Tim Groves **Email:** tim.groves@vuw.ac.nz
Phone: 463 5410 **Room:** 83FT 303 **Office Hours:** TBA

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Screenings and seminars will be held on Monday 10-12.50 and Thursday 2.10-5.00 in 83FT 201.

COURSE DELIVERY

The course will be delivered through combination of seminars and screenings. There will be some informal lectures. Seminars will involve considerable student participation.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further information will be posted on Blackboard and/or communicated to students via email.

COURSE CONTENT

Steven Soderbergh and Michael Mann are significant film directors in contemporary Hollywood cinema. They are innovative cinematic stylists. They share an interest in masculinity and the crime genre. They have both filmed true stories. Their respective representations of race are problematic. This course will analyse the work of Mann and Soderbergh in detail. The Soderbergh section of the course will examine the topics of

genre, gender, race, and audiovisual style. It will also situate this director within the context of commercial and independent cinema, and discuss the intertextual dimensions of his films. The Mann section will investigate the relationship between masculinity and work in his films, his use of generic frameworks as a platform to explore other concerns, the representation of race in his films, and the stylistic trends in his work. We will also make comparisons between Mann and Soderbergh as we investigate some of the aesthetic features of post-classical cinema.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who complete this course successfully should have acquired detailed knowledge of the characteristics of the work of Steven Soderbergh and Michael Mann as well as specific films. They should have enhanced analytical and critical skills. They should be able to identify the auteurist traits of each director. They should be able to engage in with key critical debates surrounding Mann and Soderbergh's work in an effective manner. They should possess some understanding of the debates around post-classical Hollywood cinema and be able to apply their knowledge and skills from this course to other films and filmmakers in contemporary Hollywood. The course will also improve students' proficiency at film analysis and independent research. It will further develop their written and oral skills.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

This is a 30 point course, so the University expects you to devote about 300 hours to it. In addition to scheduled classes, you should spend about sixteen hours per week during the teaching period on research, reading, film viewing, preparation for class and assessment.

GROUP WORK

There will be some informal group work during seminars, but this will not be assessed.

READINGS

There is no prescribed text for this course. A list of assigned and recommended readings will be posted before the teaching period begins. You should use this material to prepare for seminar discussions. The material will be available through electronic closed reserve in the central library.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

All assessment for this course will be internal. There will be four assignments. Further information about assessment will be distributed during the course and on Blackboard.

Assignment One: Seminar Participation (10%)

Due Date: Seminars in weeks 2-12

Description:

You will be assessed on the quality of your contributions to seminars throughout the course, commencing in week 2. Non-attendance without a valid excuse (such as illness) will affect your grade.

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant and complete manner
- Quality and quantity of seminar participation
- Evidence of preparation for seminars
- Evidence of engagement with course issues and materials, including screenings and readings
- Originality of contributions to learning activities
- Quality, fluency and coherency of expression
- Respect for other students and their ideas

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will enable you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of issues and topics raised in screenings and readings. It will also develop your critical skills, and enhance your verbal skills.

Assignment Two: Seminar Presentation (20%)

Due Date: Any seminar in weeks 3-11

Description:

In this assignment, you will deliver a seminar presentation on some aspect of the weekly topic. You will also be expected to lead the class discussion. The seminar presentation will be 20-25 minutes long, and you will provide a written summary of your presentation (800-1000 words).

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant, complete, and timely manner
- Clear evidence of your engagement with the ideas and materials discussed in FILM 406
- The originality and quality of your presentation. This will include your ability to conduct independent research from reputable academic sources, synthesise research materials, engage in textual analysis where relevant, and develop and express your ideas
- Coherency, structure and argumentation of your seminar
- Quality and fluency of your verbal and written expression
- Ability to lead the ensuing class discussion
- Understanding and correct application of terms and concepts used in film analysis
- Quality of any audiovisual aids, such as powerpoint slides and film clips
- Technical ability in this use of any audiovisual elements
- Accurate and complete referencing of all sources, including a bibliography and filmography

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment is designed to improve your research, argumentation, analytical, and oral presentation skills.

Assignment Three: Essay (35%)

Length: 2800-3000 words

Due Date: Monday, May 2

Description:

This assignment will cover topics discussed in the Soderbergh section of the course, such as independent and commercial cinema, crime films, cinephilia and intertextuality, representations of race and masculinity, narrative, and visual style.

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant and complete manner
- Clear evidence of your engagement with the ideas and materials discussed in FILM 406
- The originality and quality of your findings. This will include your ability to conduct independent research from reputable academic sources, synthesise research materials, engage in textual analysis, and develop and express your ideas
- Coherency, structure and argumentation of your essay
- Quality and fluency of written expression
- Understanding and correct application of terms and concepts used in film analysis
- Accurate and complete referencing of all sources, including a bibliography and filmography

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will improve your knowledge of one of the topics studied in the first seven weeks of the course. It will enable you to develop your textual analysis, independent research, critical and argumentation skills. It will also improve your written expression.

Assignment Four: Essay (35%)

Length: 2800-3000 words

Due Date: Friday, June 17

Description:

This assignment will cover the topics dealt with in the Mann section of the course, such as crime films, masculinity and work, representations of race, visual style, digital aesthetics, and post-classical cinema.

Assessment Criteria:

- Fulfilling the set task in a clear, direct, relevant and complete manner
- Clear evidence of your engagement with the ideas and materials discussed in FILM 406
- The originality and quality of your findings. This will include your ability to conduct independent research from reputable academic sources, synthesise research materials, engage in textual analysis, and develop and express your ideas
- Coherency, structure and argumentation of your essay
- Quality and fluency of written expression
- Understanding and correct application of terms and concepts used in film analysis
- Accurate and complete referencing of all sources, including a bibliography and filmography

Relationship to Learning Objectives:

This assignment will improve your knowledge of one of the topics studied in the second phase of the course. It will enable you to develop your textual analysis, independent research, critical and argumentation skills. It will also improve your written expression.

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office. Remember to fill in your lecturer's name.

PENALTIES AND EXTENSIONS

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate.

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to gain a pass in this course you must:

- Submit the written work specified for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work).
- Attend at least sixteen seminars.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1: Introduction to Soderbergh and Film Authorship; Independent and/or Commercial Cinema?

Screenings: *sex, lies and videotape* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 1989) *Ocean's Eleven* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 2001)

Readings:

Goss, Brian Michael. "Steven Soderbergh's *The Limey*: Implications for the Auteur Theory and Industry Structure." *Popular Communication* 2.4 (2004): 231-240.

Perren, Alisa. "Sex, Lies and Marketing: Miramax and the Development of the Quality Indie Blockbuster." *Film Quarterly* (Winter 2001-2002): 30-39.

Levy, Shawn. "Nice'n'easy." *Sight and Sound* 12.2 (2002): 14-16.

Kehr, Dave. "The Hours and Times." *Film Comment* 35.5 (1999): 40-44.

Other Film: *Ocean's Eleven* (Lewis Milestone, USA, 1960)

Week 2: Screenings; Cinephilia

Screenings: *Kafka* (Steven Soderbergh, France/USA 1991); *The Good German* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 2006)

Readings:

Carroll, Noel. "The Future of Allusion: Hollywood in the Seventies (and Beyond)." *October* 20 (Spring 1982): 51-81.

Taubin, Amy. "Degraded Dupes: Steven Soderbergh." *Sight and Sound* 17.3 (March 2007): 26-29.

Magid, Ron. "The Paranoid World of *Kafka*." *American Cinematographer* 73.5 (1992): 52-54; 56.

Werckmeister, O.K. "Kafka 007." *Critical Inquiry* 21.2 (Winter 1995): 468-495.

Other Films: *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (Robert Wiener, Germany, 1919); *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, USA, 1942); *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, UK, 1949)

Week 3: Conventional Biography; Doing it Differently?

Screenings: *Erin Brockovich* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 2000); *Che: A Revolutionary Life 1* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 2008)

Readings:

Anderson, Carolyn and John Lupo. "Hollywood Lives: The State of the Biopic at the Turn of the Century." *Genre and Contemporary Hollywood*. Ed. Stephen Neale. London: British Film Institute, 2002. 91-104.

Taubin, Amy. "Guerrilla Filmmaking on an Epic Scale." *Film Comment* (2008): 24-26, 28.

Lane, Anthony. "Che's Way: Scenes from a Revolution." *The New Yorker* January 19, 2009. 72.

Taylor, Charles. "Erin Brockovich." Salon.com (2000):

www.salon.com/ent/movies/review/2000/03/17/erin_brockovich

Other Films: *Che: A Revolutionary Life 2* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 2008); *The Informant* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 2009)

Week 4: (Remaking) Film Noir; Crime Stories

Screenings: *The Underneath* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 1995); *Out of Sight* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 1998)

Readings:

Schrader, Paul. "Notes on Film Noir." *Film Noir Reader*. Eds. Alain Silver and James Ursini. New York: Limelight, 1996. 53-63.

Shadoian, Jack. "Criss Cross: 'One to Watch Over and Over.'" *Dreams and Dead Ends: The American Gangster Film*. Second Edition. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. 307-322.

Matthews, Peter. "Blind Date." *Sight and Sound* 8.10 (October 1998): 8-12.

James, Nick. "The Underneath." *Sight and Sound* 6.3 (March 1996): 54-55.

Other Film: *Criss Cross* (Robert Siodmak, USA, 1949)

Week 5: Representing Masculinity; Representing Race

Screenings: *Traffic* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 2000); **To Be Advised**

Readings:

Shaw, Deborah. "'You're Alright, But ...': Individual and Collective Representations of Mexicans, Latinos, Anglo-Americans, and Africans in Steven Soderbergh's *Traffic*." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 22.3 (2005): 211-223.

Gallagher, Mark. "Traffic/Traffik: Race, Globalization, and Family in Soderbergh's Remake." 229-252.

Roth, Elaine. "Black and White Masculinity in Three Steven Soderbergh Films." *Genders* 43 (June 2006)

Week 6: Film Screenings; Narrative and Temporality

Screenings: *The Limey* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 1997); **To Be Advised**

Readings:

Carruthers, Lee. "Biding our Time: Rethinking the Familiar in Steven Soderbergh's *The Limey*." *Film Studies* 9 (Winter 2006): 9-21.

Goss, Brian Michael. "Steven Soderbergh's *The Limey*: Implications for the Auteur Theory and Industry Structure." *Popular Communication* 2.4 (2004): 240-255.

Williams, David E. "Mad-Dog Englishman." *American Cinematographer* 80.11 (1999): 54-65.

Other Films: *Petulia* (Richard Lester, USA, 1968); *Point Blank* (John Boorman, USA, 1967)

Week 7: Screenings; Audiovisual Style

Screenings: *Solaris* (Steven Soderbergh, USA, 2002); **To Be Advised**

Readings:

Dillon, Steven. *The Solaris Effect: Art and Artifice in Contemporary American Film*. Austin, Tx: University of Texas Press, 2006. 21-44.

Eisenstein, Sergei. "On Color." *Towards a Theory of Montage*. Eds. Richard Taylor and Michael Glenny. Trans. Michael Glenny. London: British Film Institute, 1992. 254-267.

Other Film: *Solaris* (Andrei Tarkovsky, USSR, 1972)

MID-SEMESTER BREAK

Week 8: Introduction to Michael Mann; Masculinity and Genre in Mann's Films

Screenings: *Thief* (Michael Mann, USA, 1981); *Collateral* (Michael Mann, USA, 2004)

Readings:

Sharrett, Christopher. "Michael Mann: Elegies on the Post-Industrial Landscape." *Fifty Contemporary Filmmakers*. Ed. Yvonne Tasker. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. 253-263.

Smith, Gavin. "Mann Hunters." *Film Comment* 28.6 (November-December 1992): 72-77.

Combs, Richard. "Michael Mann: Becoming." *Film Comment* 32.2 (March-April 1996): 10-17.

Other Films: *Le Samourai* (Jean-Pierre Melville, France, 1967); *The Jericho Mile* (Michael Mann, 1979)

Week 9: Film Screening; Heat Case Study

Screening: *Heat* (Michael Mann, USA, 1995)

Readings:

Thoret, Jean-Baptiste. "The Aquarium Syndrome: On the Films of Michael Mann." Trans. Anna Dzenis. *Senses of Cinema* 19 (2001) www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/19mann.html

Lindstrom, J.A. "Heat: Work and Genre." *Jump Cut* 43 (July 2000): 21-37.

Other Films: *The Asphalt Jungle* (John Huston, USA, 1951); *Le Circle Rouge* (Jean-Pierre Melville, France 1970)

Week 10: Film Screening; Race and Indigeneity in Mann's Cinema

Screenings: *Ali* (Michael Mann, USA, 2001); *The Last of the Mohicans* (Michael Mann, USA, 1992)

Readings:

Edgerton, Gary. "'A Breed Apart': Hollywood, Racial Stereotyping, and the Promise of Revisionism in *The Last of the Mohicans*." *Journal of American Culture* 17.2 (June 1994): 1-20.

Doyle, Kegan. "Muhammad Goes to Hollywood: Michael Mann's *Ali* as Biopic." *Journal of Popular Culture* 39.3 (2006): 383-405.

Rybin, Steven. "Ali." *The Cinema of Michael Mann*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007. 151-167.

Week 11: Mann's Expressive Visual Style; Mann's Digital Aesthetics

Screenings: *Manhunter* (Michael Mann, USA, 1986); *Miami Vice* (Michael Mann, USA, 2006)

Readings:

Dzenis, Anna. "Michael Mann's Cinema of Images." *Screening the Past* 12 (2002) www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/firstrelease/fr0902/adfr14b.html

McCann, Ben. "'Bliss in Blueness': Colour Strategies in the Films of Michael Mann." *Questions of Color in Cinema: From Paintbrush to Pixel*. Ed. Wendy Everett. Bern: Peter Lang, 141-160.

Thoret, Jean-Baptiste. "Gravity of the Flux: Michael Mann's *Miami Vice*." Trans. Sally Shafto. *Senses of Cinema* 42 (January-March 2007) www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/07/42/miami-vice.html

Other Film: *Un Flic* (Jean-Pierre Melville, France, 1972)

Week 12: Film Screening; Towards a Postclassical Cinema

Screenings: *The Insider* (Michael Mann, USA, 1999)

Readings: Bordwell, David. *The Cinema of Eisenstein*. London: Routledge, 2005. 184-195.