

## **FMST 411D/4 Topics in Film Genres: The Western Winter 1999**

*VA 114 Mondays 18:00-22:00*

*Instructor: Katie Russell 848-4657, FB-315-7*

*Office Hours: Thurs. 2-4; Friday 2-4*

### **Readings**

#### **Required Text**

\*Jim Kitses and Gregg Rickman eds, The Western Reader, New York: Limelight Editions, 1998.

#### **Recommended Texts**

\*Edward Buscombe and Roberta Pearson eds, Back in the Saddle Again: New Essays on the Western, London: British Film Institute, 1998

\*Ian Cameron and Douglas Pye eds, The Book of Westerns, New York: Continuum Publishing, 1996

The three books listed above are all available at the Concordia Bookstore, and with luck, at Webster Library. In addition, articles from the Recommended Texts and from other sources (marked with an \*) are available in xerox form at the Webster circulation desk, listed by week. In the syllabus below, WR = Western Reader (articles from this book have NOT been xeroxed); BS = Back in the Saddle; BW = Book of Westerns.

Students are required to read the assigned articles each week, and integrate the readings into their written assignments, described at the end of the syllabus.

### **Syllabus**

1. Jan 4: The Far Country Anthony Mann 1955

-excerpts: Bend of the River Anthony Mann 1952

The Man from Laramie Anthony Mann 1955

1) Christopher Wicking and Barrie Pattison, "Interview with Anthony Mann," WR 201-208.

2) Paul Willeman, "Anthony Mann: Looking at the Male," WR 209-212.

2. Jan. 11: The Searchers John Ford 1956, 119 mins.

-excerpts: Red River Howard Hawks 1948

Fort Apache John Ford 1948

1) Edward Buscombe, "Inventing Monument Valley: Nineteenth-Century Landscape Photography and the Western Film," WR 115-130.

2) Peter Lehman, "Looking at Look's Missing Reverse Shot: Psychoanalysis and Style in John Ford's *The Searchers*," WR 259-268.

3) \*Jean-Louis Leutrat and Suzanne Liandrat-Guigues, "John Ford and Monument Valley,"

BS 160-169.

3. Jan. 18: Johnny Guitar Nicholas Ray 1954, 110 mins.  
-excerpts: Destry Rides Again George Marshall 1939  
Rancho Notorious Fritz Lang 1952
  - 1) Jennifer Peterson, "The Competing Tunes of *Johnny Guitar*: Liberalism, Sexuality, Masquerade," WR 321-340.
  - 2) Robert Warshow, "Movie Chronicle: The Westerner," WR 35-48.
  - 3) Pam Cook, "Women and the Western," WR 293-300.
  
4. Jan. 25: Rio Bravo Howard Hawks 1959, 141 mins.  
-excerpts: High Noon Fred Zinnemann, 1952
  - 1) Robin Wood, "*Rio Bravo* and Retrospect," WR 173-194
  - 2) \*Deborah Thomas, "John Wayne's Body," BW 75-87
  
5. Feb. 1: The Misfits John Huston 1960, 124 mins.  
-excerpts: The Left-Handed Gun Arthur Penn, 1958, 102 mins.  
Badlands, Terrence Malick 1973
  - 1) \*Edward Gallafent, "Not with a Bang: The End of the West in *Lonely are the Brave*, *The Misfits* and *Hud*," BW 241-254.
  - 2) \*Jonathan Bignell, "Method Westerns: The Left-handed Gun and One-Eyed Jacks," BW 99-110.
  
6. Feb. 8: The Man who Shot Liberty Valance John Ford 1962 119 mins.
  - 1) Jim Kitses, "Authorship and Genre: Notes on the Western," WR 57-68.
  - 2) J. Hoberman, "How the West was Lost," WR 85-92.
  - 3) \*Douglas Pye, "Genre and History BW 111-122.
  
7. Feb. 15: The Good the Bad and the Ugly Sergio Leone 1966, 160 mins.  
-excerpts: Fistful of Dollars Sergio Leone 1964
  - 1) \*Christopher Frayling, "The 'Dollars' Trilogy--Analysis," in Spaghetti Westerns, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977): 180-191.
  - 2) Marcia Landy, "He Went Thataway: The Form and Style of Leone's Italian Westerns," WR 213-222.

3) \*Martin Pumphrey, "Why do Cowboys wear Hats in the Bath? Style Politics for the Older Man," BW 50-62.

8. March 1: The Wild Bunch Sam Peckinpah 1969 134 mins  
-excerpts: Ballad of Cable Hogue Peckinpah 1970

1) \*Noël Carroll, "The Professional Western: South of the Border," BS 46-62.

2) \*Richard Slotkin, "Cross-Over Point," chapter 17 of *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1992): 578-623.

9. March 8: Tell Them Willie Boy is Here Abraham Polonsky 1969, 96 mins.

-excerpts: Dances with Wolves Kevin Costner 1990  
Missouri Breaks Arthur Penn 1976  
Heaven's Gate Michael Cimino 1980

1) \*Steve Neale, "Vanishing Americans: Racial and Ethnic Issues in the Interpretation and Context of Post-war 'Pro-Indian' Westerns," BS 8-28.

2) Sherman Alexie, "My Heroes have Never Been Cowboys", "Reservation Drive-In," WR 253-258.

10. March 15: Parodies and Revisions

excerpts only: Blazing Saddles Mel Brooks, 1974  
Lonesome Cowboys Andy Warhol, 1967  
The Quick and the Dead Sam Raimi, 1995  
Posse, Mario Von Peebles, 1993

(1) \*Jane Marie Gaines and Charlotte Cornelia Herzog, "The Fantasy of Authenticity in Western Costume," BS 172-181.

(2) \*Richard Slotkin, "Conclusion: The Crisis of Public Myth," *Gunfighter Nation*, 624-660.

11. March 22: Unforgiven Clint Eastwood, 1992 35mm. 127 mins.

(1) Kenneth Turan, "A Fistful of Memories: Interview with Clint Eastwood," WR 245-249.

(2) Janet Thumim, "'Maybe He's Tough but he Sure Ain't no Carpenter'" Masculinity and In/competence in *Unforgiven*," WR 341-54.

(3) \*Leighton Girst, "Unforgiven" BW 294-301.

12. March 29: Ballad of Little Jo Maggie Greenwald, 1993, 120 mins.

(1) Tania Modleski, "Our Heroes Have Sometimes Been Cowgirls: An Interview with Maggie Greenwald," WR 355-366.

(2) Jim Kitses, "An Exemplary Post-Modern Western," WR 367-380.

13. April 12: Deadman Jim Jarmusch 1996 120 mins.

(1) Gregg Rickman, "The Western Under Erasure," WR 381-404.

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### **Assignments**

Midterm Essay 40%

Second Essay 50%

Attendance and participation 10%

Both essays may be written in English or French. Consult the attached bibliography and filmography for resources available at Concordia.

#### Midterm Essay

*Due: Feb. 15*

*Length: 2000 words (8-10 pages)*

Choose a western made between 1950 and 1965 that is available for close viewing. Please do not write on a film that was shown in its entirety in class, but you may work on a film that we watched excerpts from in class. Write an essay on the film that answers at least TWO of the following questions:

1) How is American history represented in the film? What period is it set in and what historical issues are negotiated?

2) How are first nations people and/or Mexicans and/or African-Americans represented in the film? In other words, discuss the film's racial dynamics.

3) Discuss the ways that masculinity and femininity are coded in the film. In other words, discuss the construction of gender.

4) Discuss the representation of nature in the film: landscape, animals, boundaries.

For this paper you should refer to assigned readings and make comparisons with films screened

and discussed in class, but you are not expected to do additional research. Please type your paper and use footnotes.

### Second Essay

*Due: April 16*

*Length: 3000 words (approx.12 Pages)*

This paper may be on a topic of your choice, and should include some original research and bibliography. You may focus on a particular director, a star, a period, or an issue such as violence, women, film industry, American history, etc. You may also choose to do a close textual or stylistic analysis of a film. You may want to consult with me before or during your work on this paper.

### Attendance and participation

A sign-up sheet will be passed around every week. Make sure you sign in, keeping in mind that your signature means that you attended the entire class. The grades of those who make good contributions to class discussion will be appropriately enhanced.

### Late penalties and incompletes

Late papers will be penalized at the rate of one + or - per day. Incompletes will be granted only in exceptional circumstances, and not if mid-term work has not been completed. All assignments must be done to receive a passing grade for the class.