

HIST 387/INTS 375: History at the Movies

Alison Landsberg and Matt Karush, Professors

Fall 2017

Class: TR 10:30 am - 1:10 pm, Robinson Hall B102

Office Hours: Karush, T 1:30-2:30, and by appointment, Robinson B 339

Landsberg, R 1:30-2:30, and by appointment, Robinson B 355A

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Course Description:

Many of our ideas about the past, and our images of what it looked like, come from the movies. This course explores how film might represent a serious and complex engagement with the past. We will watch movies from the US, Europe and Latin America – about the Holocaust, slavery, and dictatorship – to uncover how they represent the past in ways not possible in written form. We will explore not only what these films tell us about the past but also what they reveal about the political and historical moments in which they were produced. Why do certain historical episodes become “popular” at certain moments? What work do historical films do in the present?

Texts:

Laird Bergad, *Comparative Histories of Slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States* (Cambridge University Press)

ISBN:9780521694100

Tom Lawson, *Debates on the Holocaust* Edition: 10 (Oxford University Press)

ISBN:9780719074493

Jerry Davila, *Dictatorship in South America* | Edition: 1 (Wiley) ISBN:9781405190558

Robert A. Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History* | Edition: 2 (Taylor & Francis)

ISBN:9781408282557

*Other required readings (articles and book chapters) will be available on the class wiki or distributed as pdfs.

*You will also be required to view some films on your own outside of class. They are on reserve in the JC library and some are also available on Netflix, Amazon Prime and YouTube.

Course Requirements:

Participation, In-class writing, and quizzes: 15%

Weekly writing exercises (10 required): 20%

Paper #1: 20%

Paper #2: 20%

Final take-home exam: 25%

Additional Requirements, Explanations and Class Policies:

1. As key ideas will be discussed in class, you MUST ATTEND CLASS regularly to do well; attendance will be crucial to your understanding of the material. Active class participation means contributing to class discussion. Please arrive promptly because screenings will begin at the start of class
2. You will also be required to view films on your own outside of class. They are on reserve in the JC library and some are also available on Netflix, Amazon Prime and YouTube.
3. You must join the class wiki. You will receive an email invitation from us. On the wiki, you will find the syllabus, requirements, required readings, and paper assignments.
4. You must complete the assigned readings *before* class, bring the readings with you, and to be prepared to discuss them in class.
5. Absolutely no unexcused late papers; extensions must be requested one week in advance of the due date.
6. Technology:
 - E-Mail: Everyone must have an activated masonlive.gmu.edu e-mail account. I will only use these addresses, so if you want to use another email provider, activate your GMU account and have mail forwarded.
 - Cell Phones: No cell phones out (or ringing) during class. Absolutely no texting during class.
 - Laptops: No laptops allowed. If you have a specific reason for needing a laptop, please contact us to discuss an accommodation.
7. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

8. You are all bound by the GMU Honor code. For a statement of the Honor Code, see <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>. Plagiarism or cheating in any form will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism: Make sure to read the George Mason Plagiarism Statement, excerpted here:

“Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions for this include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may not be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful, to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly." In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism. (statement of English Department at George Mason University)

Plagiarism and copyright: Copyright rules also apply to users of the Internet who cite from Internet sources. Information and graphics accessed electronically must also be cited, giving credit to the sources. This material includes but is not limited to e-mail (don't cite or forward someone else's e-mail without permission), newsgroup material, information from Web sites, including graphics. Even if you give credit, you must get permission from the original source to put any graphic that you did not create on your web page. Shareware graphics are not free. Freeware clipart is available for you to freely use. If the material does not say "free," assume it is not. Putting someone else's Internet material on your web page is stealing intellectual property. Making links to a site is, at this time, okay, but getting permission is strongly advised, since many Web sites have their own requirements for linking to their material.”

Course Goals:

1. To enable students to come to an understanding of the complexity of filmic representations of the past: to understand the way in which all history is, in fact, an argument about, rather than a reflection of, the past.
2. To help students gain an understanding of what, precisely, film offers historians and viewers, that history monographs do not.
3. To sharpen students' critical reading skills, to enhance students' ability to write a paper with a clear argument, and to foster engaged classroom participation.

Important Dates:

September 5: Last day to add classes and last day to drop with no tuition penalty

September 19: Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty

September 29: Final drop deadline with 67% tuition penalty

October 2-27: Selective withdrawal period for undergraduates (see conditions at <http://registrar.gmu.edu/forms/SWR.pdf>)

Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings due/Screenings/Assignments
8/29	Reading a Film	
8/31	History as Narrative	Robert Rosenstone, <i>History on Film/Film on History</i> , Intro and Chapters 1-4, 7 and 9 Richard Slotkin, "Fiction for the Purposes of History," <i>Rethinking History</i> 9:2 (2005), 221-236. (pdf) Weekly Writing due
9/5	Film Screening	<i>The Pianist</i> (Roman Polanski, 2002)
9/7	Discussion	Tom Lawson, <i>Debates on the Holocaust</i> , Chapters 1 and 7 Michael Rothberg, "Introduction" to <i>Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation</i> (Madison: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) pp.1-15. (pdf) (see the image "Saying Goodbye to Maus"--it is described in the Rothberg reading)

		Weekly Writing due
9/12	Film Screening	<i>Schindler's List</i> (Steven Spielberg, 1993)
9/14	Discussion	Lawson, Chapters 2, 3 and 4 Zygmunt Bauman, "The Uniqueness and Normality of the Holocaust," in Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg, eds., <i>The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings</i> (Rutgers, 2003). (pdf) Joan Miriam Ringelheim, "The Unethical and the Unspeakable: Women and the Holocaust" in Levi and Rothberg. (pdf) Weekly Writing due
9/19		Lawson, Chap. 8 Rosenstone, Chap. 5 <i>Shoah</i> (Claude Lanzmann, 1985) clips in class
9/21	No Class	Weekly Writing due
9/26	Film Screening	<i>Europa, Europa</i> (Agnieszka Holland, 1990)
9/28	Discussion	Lawson, Chaps. 5 and 6 Christopher Browning, "Ordinary Men" in Levi and Rothberg. (pdf) Weekly Writing due
10/3	Film Screening	<i>Son of Saul</i> (László Nemes, 2015)
10/5	Discussion	Giorgio Agamben, "What is a Camp" in Levi and Rothberg. (pdf) Jean-Francois Lyotard, "The Differend" in Levi and Rothberg. (pdf) Alison Landsberg, "America, the Holocaust, and the Mass Culture of Memory: Toward a Radical Politics of Empathy," <i>New German Critique</i> , No. 71, (Spring - Summer, 1997), pp. 63- 86 Weekly Writing due
10/10	No Class- Cancelled by registrar	Paper #1 due (via email)

10/12		<p>Watch <i>Roots</i> (1976) <u>at home</u> --episodes 2 and 3 https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0Bwaa77MtaKI5UmhIXzRJSEVLRWc Paul Gilroy, "The Black Atlantic" excerpt, in Levi and Rothberg. Laird Bergad, <i>The Comparative Histories of Slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States</i>, Chaps. 1 and 2 Orlando Patterson, "Introduction: The Constituent Elements of Slavery," from <i>Slavery and Social Death</i> (pdf) Weekly Writing due</p>
10/17	Film Screening	<i>Twelve Years a Slave</i> (Steve McQueen, 2013)
10/19	Discussion	<p>Bergad, 64-71 and Chapter 4 Sharon Block, "The Lines of Color, Sex, and Service: Comparative Sexual Coercion in Early America," in Martha Hodes, ed. <i>Sex, Love, Race</i> p141-63 Robert Gudmestad, "Slave Resistance, Coffles, and the Debates over Slavery in the Nation's Capital," in Walter Johnson, ed., <i>The Chattel Principle</i> (Yale UP, 2004), 72-90 Weekly Writing due</p>
10/24	Film Screening	<i>Last Supper</i> (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1978)
10/26	Discussion	<p>Bergad, Chaps. 6 and 7 Miguel Barnet, <i>Biography of a Runaway Slave</i> (Northwestern, 2016). Weekly Writing due</p>
10/31	Film Screening	<i>Quilombo</i> (Carlos Diegues, 1984)
11/2	Discussion	<p>Jerry Dávila, <i>Dictatorship in South America</i>, Chap. 6 George Reid Andrews, "Brazilian Racial Democracy, 1900-90: An American Counterpoint," <i>Journal of Contemporary History</i> 31:3 (1996), 483-507. (pdf) Stuart Schwartz, "Rethinking Palmares" in <i>Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels: Reconsidering Brazilian Slavery</i> (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 122-28. Weekly Writing due</p>

11/7	Film Screening	<i>Official Story</i> (Luis Puenzo, 1985) Paper #2 due (via email)
11/9	Discussion	Dávila, Introduction and Chaps. 1, 3, and 5 Elizabeth Jelin, "The Politics of Memory: The Human Rights Movements and the Construction of Democracy in Argentina," <i>Latin American Perspectives</i> 21:2 (1994), 38-58. (pdf) Weekly Writing due
11/14	Film Screening	<i>Chronicle of an Escape</i> (Adrián Caetano, 2006)
11/16	Discussion	Vincent Druliolle, "H.I.J.O.S. and the Spectacular Denunciation of Impunity: The Struggle for Memory, Truth, and Justice and the (Re-)Construction of Democracy in Argentina," <i>Journal of Human Rights</i> 12 (2013), 259–276. (pdf) Weekly Writing due
11/21		Dávila, Chap. 4 Screening of <i>Bear Story</i> (Gabriel Osorio Vargas, 2014)
11/23	No Class-Thanksgiving	
11/28	Film Screening	<i>Machuca</i> (Andrés Wood, 2004)
11/30	Discussion	Camilla Townsend, "Refusing to Travel <i>La Via Chilena</i> : Working-Class Women in Allende's Chile," <i>Journal of Women's History</i> 4:3 (1993), 43-63. Weekly Writing due
12/5	Film Screening	<i>No</i> (Pablo Larraín, 2012) Patricio Silva, "Doing Politics in a Depoliticised Society: Social Change and Political Deactivation in Chile," <i>Bulletin of Latin American Research</i> 23:1 (2004), 63-78.
12/7	Discussion	Dávila, Chap. 7 Weekly Writing due
12/14		Take-Home Final Exam Due (via email)