

HOLLYWOOD/EUROPE: A TRANSNATIONAL FILM CULTURE

ASSESSMENT DETAILS SPRING 2015

Assignments

This course is graded on the submission of three short essays. Each paper is equally weighted, and the overall grade for this course is the average thereof.

Students must use a **different** film for each paper, and may **NOT** use any of the films screened on this course.

It is strongly advised that students reach out to me to confirm that their choice of film is viable.

Paper I

Each student is to submit a 1,300 word essay in response to a prompt derived from sessions 1 and 2.

Prompt: The work of both Andrew Higson and Mette Hjort can be used to show how in a general sense transatlantic flows of people, capital, ideas, and products complicate one of the founding myths of Western audiovisual culture: that Hollywood is an American institution, and is thus distinct from Europe. With this point in mind, show how specific transatlantic flows related to production, content, and circulation complicate the American status of **ONE** Hollywood film not screened on this course.

General Advice: This prompt invites students to use a well-chosen example film to map out the various ways transatlantic flows complicate the rhetorical separation of Hollywood and Europe. Accordingly, strong papers will detail a wide range of these flows, rather than just focus on any one flow in great detail. Scoring well on this paper will therefore necessitate both an engagement with the theoretical literature and a consideration of the production, the content, and the circulation of your example film.

Deadline: 12 Noon Wednesday 4 March 2015

Paper II

Each student is to submit a 1,300 word essay in response to a prompt derived from sessions 3 and 4.

Prompt: The presence of European-based companies within the structures of Hollywood, along with Hollywood's long-standing involvement in "arty" output, are two key ways in which the realities of global cinema undermine the deeply entrenched distinction between Hollywood as a producer of American Entertainment and Europe as a source of "Art Cinema". With this point in mind, show how ONE Hollywood film not screened on this course complicates the oppositions that frame Hollywood as a purveyor of entertainment and European cinema as a benefactor of enlightening art.

General Advice: Where scoring well on paper one involved considering a large number of phenomena in relatively little depth, performing strongly on paper two involves placing greater emphasis on film content and its implications vis-à-vis the rhetorical distinctions often drawn between Hollywood's output and that of Europe. Accordingly, strong papers will engage directly with the different reputations of Hollywood and European cinema, before explaining how the content and execution of a well chosen example film complicates this commercial entertainment vs. art distinction.

Deadline: 12 Noon Wednesday 18 March 2015

Paper III

Each student is to submit a 1,300 word essay in response to a prompt derived from sessions 5 and 6.

Prompt: Discussion of Americanization has continually suggested that Hollywood imposes "quintessentially American" culture on Europe, and does so in a manner that uncritically promotes "American values". However, oftentimes commercial necessities dictate that Hollywood films tread a fine line between appealing to their principal US market and making concessions to major European markets. With this point in mind, explain how and why the makers of ONE Hollywood film not screened on this course uses images of Europe and Europeans and/or America and Americans to be specifically marketable and appealing to these two key profit centers.

General Advice: Paper three involves considering the implications of audience-targeting and content-tailoring with respect to the cornerstone discourses of Americanization. Accordingly, strong papers are likely to consider how commercial objectives, topical discourse, and the perceived needs of the targeted audience(s) coalesce in a Hollywood film that uses images of Europe/Europeans to invite self-reflection among Americans and/or that is intended to appeal specifically to European markets.

Deadline: 12 Noon Friday 3 April 2015

All Essays are to be submitted in PDF or word format to richard_nowell@hotmail.com - students should include their name and the course title in the name of the files they send

Penalties for Late Submission of Work

On the day following the due date - 5 marks out of 100 deducted

On the 2nd day following the due to date - 10 marks out of 100 deducted

On the 3rd day following the due date - 15 marks out of 100 deducted

On the 4th day following the due date - 20 marks out of 100 deducted

After the 4th day following the due date - all marks deducted

Feedback

Students will be emailed individually with detailed personal feedback on their papers. Feedback is designed to be constructive. It will therefore spotlight the paper's strengths and shortcomings, and offer transferable advice on how the paper might have been improved.

Grading/Evaluation: Grades from A-F will be awarded based on the following criteria:

Grades from 1-4 will be awarded based on the following criteria:

	Argumentation/Understanding	Sources/Evidence	Communication
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A (70<)	Insightful, vigorous, and demonstrating considerable depth of understanding, and a significant amount of original thought; addressing question directly through wholly coherent synthesis of ideas; demonstrating a degree of mastery over subject; demonstrating a deep and thorough understanding of key concepts.	A wide range of sources consulted; sources employed with significant discrimination and sound judgment; thorough assessment of evidence; use of a broad range of examples.	Near-Faultless typography and layout; near-flawless turns of phrase and expression; sophisticated and precise vocabulary; clear structure; exemplary citation and bibliography.
B (62-69.9)	Perceptive and insightful; some evidence of original thought; mainly addressing prompt directly; mainly coherent synthesis of ideas; thorough and somewhat critical understanding key concepts.	A fairly wide range of sources consulted; solid assessment of evidence; sophisticated use of a fairly broad range of examples.	Very Solid typography and layout; few errors in grammar; mainly sophisticated turns of phrase and expression; mostly clear structure; strong citation and bibliography.
C (54-61.9)	Strong understanding addressed, for the most part, to the prompt; a synthesis of ideas; solid understanding of key concepts; evidence of minor gaps in knowledge and minor misunderstandings of key concepts.	Relevant sources consulted; evidence of some assessment of evidence; use of mostly workable examples.	Good typography and layout; comprehensible and largely error-free grammar, turns of phrase, and expression; clearly structured; solid citation and bibliography.
D (46-53.9)	Addressed to prompt; limited synthesis of ideas; too much description compared to analysis; general understanding of key concepts; some misunderstanding of key concepts.	Restricted range of sources consulted; superficial understanding of evidence;	Solid typography and layout; comprehensible and largely error-free grammar, turns of phrase, and expression; reasonably clearly structured; some attempt to provide citation and bibliography.
E (40-45.9)	Loosely addressed to the prompt; little synthesis of ideas; mainly descriptive rather than analytical; patchy understanding of key concepts; some major gaps in knowledge and some misunderstandings of key concepts.	Few relevant sources consulted; limited range of examples, some of which are poorly chosen.	Patchy typography and layout; numerous errors of grammar; somewhat limited vocabulary; some ambiguous or inaccurate turns of phrase; weak or missing citations and bibliography.
F (Fail) (<40)	Barely if at all addressed to the prompt; no real synthesis of ideas; mainly or entirely descriptive; significant gaps in knowledge and major misunderstanding of key concepts.	Few if any relevant sources consulted; very limited range of examples, many of which are poorly chosen.	Poor typography and layout; countless errors of grammar; limited vocabulary; myriad ambiguous or inaccurate turns of phrase; weak or missing citations and bibliography.

General Advice

Superior quality essays deliver insightful analysis in the form of a clearly written, well crafted, and neatly structured piece of writing. Some scholars grasp intuitively from an early age the mechanics of strong essay writing; they are few and far between. Instead, it is often helpful to recognize that following certain protocol, and that following certain “tricks of the trade”, can help to elevate scholarly work. The following advice may therefore prove helpful.

Introduction

The opening paragraph of your essay should perhaps directly state the following points:

What is generally assumed and how/why such positions have emerged.

How your essay will develop, expand, or nuance such positions.

What you are going to argue.

What general areas/examples your essay will cover in support of that argument.

How, more broadly speaking, your essay might offer transferable ideas.

In following these steps, you are essentially sign-posting your essay. Consequently, the relevancy, importance, nature, and clarity of the information that follows will be maximized.

Main Body of the Essay

It might help to organize the main body of your essay thematically – i.e. into those general areas/examples your essay will be covering in support of its argument. Given the short length of this essay, 2–4 sections would seem a sensible number.

Within each section, try to ensure that each paragraph is argument driven by:

Working in a top-down manner; i.e. by first delivering statements and offering examples as support thereafter.

Beginning each paragraph with a declaration that encapsulates the content of the entire paragraph.

Then offer key examples in support of the statement (do not over-exemplify, chose the most powerful examples, perhaps highlighting why they are so important)

In doing so, you ensure that your argument is prominent and that your line of argumentation is easy to follow. It also ensures that the significance of your examples is apparent to the reader. This strategy therefore ensures that your essay showcases your high-impact analysis rather than becoming overwhelmed by the necessity to offer descriptive examples. In short it should provide a way of preventing your essay from becoming overly description – the product of an essay reading like a chain of examples without any real argument.

Conclusion

The concluding paragraph of the essay should perhaps be comprised of two parts:

The first should reflect upon what you set out to do and how you achieved it. Think back to points 1-4 of the introduction as a guide.

The second part should elucidate point 5 of the introduction by gesturing if possible to the implications of your argument; what new questions it opens for consideration; what it might tell us about parallel, earlier, or subsequent developments.

Writing Style

Aim for clarity and precision over entertainment-value and elegance. You are writing informative and persuasive scholarship; not entertaining commercial prose. Try to keep your writing style simple. Read the paper aloud to yourself to see if it makes sense – you wrote it, so if you cannot understand it, what chance has anybody else of doing so. Use a spell check!