

Professor Neal M. Rosendorf
Mon-Wed, 12.30-1.50
KA 122
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HIS-190T: Film and History—The Cold War on Film in America

This course examines mainly Hollywood films and a few American-financed British films that received a wide circulation in the US during the US-Soviet Cold War. We will be viewing and discussing these films as primary documents of their time and place. We will seek to provide provisional answers to the question of what they tell us of the general mood, anxieties, and hopes in the US at the time these films were made and released. Most of these films are bona fide classics; several are curiosities (e.g. *Red Heat*, featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger as a Soviet police detective partnering with an American cop). All of these films did very well at the US box office.

Let us be clear about one thing: as we are examining these films as documents, we are only marginally interested in their aesthetic qualities, and our discussion and writing (of which you'll be doing a fair amount) should concentrate on what the films tell us about their time, not whether they are of high or low quality.

Because we only have two single class periods per week, you will be expected to view the films in their entirety on your own. You may rent or purchase films as you wish. Additionally, copies of the films will be placed on reserve in the Library, for a limited period, for viewing there (as they are my own copies, they are not to be removed from the library). These reserve films will be placed in the library not later than the Friday before the week they are to be viewed and discussed, and they will be removed as of the following Wednesday. Excerpts will be shown in class as a part of discussion.

There will be four short papers (4-4.5 pp or around 1100 words) as well as three in-class exams. Topics and dates for papers will be provided during the semester. Each paper and exam will be worth 10% of your total grade. Class participation counts for the remaining 30%, which should tell you how important it is to be prepared, both via reading and viewing, and to attend class religiously. More than two unexcused absences will result in a half-grade final grade reduction; more than five unexcused absences will result in a failing final grade.

A final note: **Don't plagiarize!** Those found to be plagiarizing will receive, at the instructor's discretion, a failing grade for the course.

Reading List:

LaFeber, Walter, *America, Russia and the Cold War*, 9th rev. ed.
Schrecker, Ellen, *The Age of McCarthyism*, 2nd ed.

Jerome Shapiro, *Atomic Bomb Cinema: The Apocalyptic Imagination on Film*
Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s*
Winkler, Allan M., *Life Under a Cloud: American Anxiety About the Atom*

SYLLABUS

WEEK ONE (9/6): **Course Introduction**

WEEK TWO (9/11, 9/13): **Dawn of the Cold War: Slowly Easing from the Old Enemy to the New**

Films: *Notorious* (1946)
The Third Man (1948)

Readings: LaFeber, chapters 1-3
Sherry, chapter 2: pp. 113-122

WEEK THREE (9/18, 9/20): **They Came From Outer Space: Early Cold War Science Fiction**

Films: *The Thing From Another World* (1951)
The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951)

Readings: Schrecker, Part 1, sections 1-9; Part 2, sections 1-3
LaFeber, chapters 4-5
Sherry, chapter 3: pp. 123-170

WEEK FOUR (9/25, 9/27): **Odd Genres: The Cold War in Film Noir and Musicals**

Films: *Pickup on South Street* (1953)
Li'l Abner (1959)

Readings: Winkler, chapters 1-2
Schrecker, Part 2, sections 4-6
Sherry, chapter 3: pp. 170- 187; chapter 4: pp. 188-214

WEEK FIVE (10/4—no class 10/2, Yom Kippur): **In-Class Exam I**

WEEK SIX (10/9, 10/11): **Germany and Japan: Yesterday's Enemies, Today's Allies**

Films: *The Enemy Below* (1957)
The Bridge on the River Kwai (1957)

Readings: LaFeber, chapters 6-8
Sherry, chapter 4: pp. 214-236

WEEK SEVEN (10/16, 10/18): The Day After in the Early Cold War

Films: *On the Beach* (1959)

Panic in Year Zero (1962)

Readings: Winkler, chapters 3-5

Shapiro, chapter 4

LaFeber, chapters 9-10 (through Cuban Missile Crisis)

Sherry, chapter 5: pp. 237-254

WEEK EIGHT (10/23, 10/25): Wrestling with Cold War Absurdities in the Early 1960s

Films: *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)

Doctor Strangelove (1964)

Readings: Schrecker, Part 2, sections 7-12, 16

Winkler, chapter 6

WEEK NINE (10/30, 11/1): Cinematic Cat and Mouse Game in the Aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis

Films: *From Russia With Love* (1963)

The Spy Who Came In from the Cold (1965)

Readings: LaFeber, rest of chapter 10

Sherry, pp. 254- 279

Winkler, chapter 7

WEEK TEN (11/6, 11/8—no office hour 11/7, Election Day): Those Were the Days: Remembering McCarthyism and the Blacklist During the late 1970s-early 1980s

Films: *The Way We Were* (1974)

The Front (1977)

Readings: Schrecker, Part 2, sections 13-15, 17-19

Dore Schary: “An Eyewitness Account of the Hollywood Blacklist Agreement” (excerpt from Schary’s Memoir, *Heyday: An Autobiography* [1979]), at

http://www.cobbles.com/simpp_archive/huac_schary.htm

(**Also read the “Waldorf Conference Statement,” 1947—link is located within Schary essay)

WEEK ELEVEN (11/13, 11/15): I Have Seen the Enemy, and He Is Us: Hollywood’s Post-Watergate, Post-Vietnam Angst

Films: *Three Days of the Condor* (1975)

Apocalypse Now (1978)

Readings: LaFeber, chapter 11

Shapiro, chapter 5
Sherry, chapter 6, all

WEEK TWELVE (11/20—no class 11/22, Thanksgiving): **In-Class Exam II**

WEEK THIRTEEN (11/27, 11/29): **With Enough Shovels: Screening the Early Reagan Era
Deep-Freeze**

Films: *The Day After* (1983)
Red Dawn (1984)

Readings: LaFeber, chapter 12
Shapiro, chapter 6
Winkler, chapter 8
Sherry, chapter 7: pp. 374-390; chapter 8: pp. 391-422

WEEK FOURTEEN (12/4, 12/6): **The Reagan-Gorbachev Effect: Twilight of the Hollywood
Cold War Genre**

Films: *The Fourth Protocol* (1987)
Red Heat (1988)

Readings: LaFeber, chapter 13
Shapiro, chapter 7
Sherry, chapter 9: pp. 431-444
Winkler, Epilogue

WEEK FIFTEEN (12/11): **In-Class Exam III: Comprehensive**

****Please Note: This syllabus is subject to modification during the semester at the instructor's discretion.****

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Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\ftcr\Desktop\New Folder
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\ftcr\Application
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title: Template Syllabus—Fall 2006
Subject:
Author: Neal Rosendorf
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 10/3/2006 10:59:00 AM
Change Number: 5
Last Saved On: 10/3/2006 11:09:00 AM
Last Saved By: Neal Rosendorf
Total Editing Time: 20 Minutes
Last Printed On: 10/4/2006 10:59:00 AM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 4
Number of Words: 1,068 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 5,535 (approx.)