Spring 2-1-1999

LS 381.01: Tales of Forbidden Love - Gender, Race, and Class on Film

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Course Description: In this course we will explore cinematic depictions from around the world of the cultural prohibitions and taboos that bring couples together and keep them apart. We will examine aspects of identity involved in our sense of ourselves and our choice of love objects, and what happens when we transgress societal and familial expectations, particularly when our choices involve gay and lesbian, interracial, interethnic, interfaith, or interclass relationships; many of the conflicts we will see on film involve more than one such “transgression” in the same relationship. Via our readings this course will also serve as an introduction to feminist and other cultural theories of gender, race, and class. Course requirements will include a journal, a turn at facilitating class discussion, and a term paper, as well as class attendance and participation.

Required texts: Selected readings on reserve at Mansfield Library.

Course requirements: A journal, a turn at facilitating class discussion, and a term paper, as well as class attendance and participation.

Journal: The journal can take any format you choose and may be typed or handwritten. You should write approximately one page in response to the readings and viewings. I’d like to see that you are familiar with the material and that, even if you haven’t yet mastered it, that you are engaging with it; beyond the one page you may also write about the ways in which issues raised in class intersect with your own life, current events, or anything else you find helpful. The journal is a good place to formulate questions you’d like to raise in class, to begin developing ideas for your paper, and to work through difficult or intriguing concepts.

Discussion sessions: Working in pairs you will each take a turn facilitating class discussion. This can take any form you like: asking discussion questions, giving a presentation and asking class members to respond, showing film clips in class, or whatever you feel will get a lively conversation going.

Paper: There is no good way to study film without actually watching films, so attendance at all class sessions and film screenings is mandatory. I’ll allow 3 skips, no questions asked. After that, you will need a legitimate excuse, or your grade will be affected. Watching movies is more enjoyable when it’s a collective experience anyway. In addition to being here, you need to keep up with the reading (beats desperate cramming) and participate in class discussions.

Grading: The breakdown will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
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<td>Paper</td>
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<td>Discussion facilitation</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Attendance</td>
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</tbody>
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**Week 1:**
T  8/31  Introduction

Th  9/2  *Pinky* (1949, Elia Kazan, USA)

**Week 2:**
T  9/7  Read Peter Roffman and Jim Purdy excerpt on *Pinky* and Ella Showat, “Ethnicities in Relation: Toward a Multicultural Reading of American Cinema”; journals due.

Th  9/9  *Mississippi Masala* (1991, Mira Nair, USA)

**Week 3:**
T  9/14  Read Andrea Stuart, “Mira Nair: a new hybrid cinema”; journals due

Th  9/16  *Jungle Fever* (1991, Spike Lee, USA)

**Week 4:**

Th  9/23  *Broken Blossoms* (1919, D.W. Griffith, USA)

**Week 5:**

Th  9/30  *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959, Alain Resnais, France/Japan)

**Week 6:**
T  10/5  Read Debbie Glassman. "The Feminine Subject as History Writer in *Hiroshima mon amour"; journals due.


**Week 7:**
T  10/12  Journals due

Th  10/14  *Vukovar* (1994, Boro Draskovic, Yugoslavia)

**Week 8:**
T  10/19  Journals due


**Week 9:**
T  10/26  Read bell hooks article on *The Bodyguard* and *The Crying Game*; journals due.

Th  10/28  *Maurice* (1987, James Ivory, UK)
Week 10:
T  11/2  Journals due
Th 11/4  *The Celluloid Closet* (1995, Robert Epstein, Jeffrey Friedman, France/Germany/UK/USA)

Week 11:
T  11/9  Journals due; *The Wedding Banquet* (1993, Ang Lee, Taiwan/USA, 111 min.)
Th 11/11  Veteran's Day

Week 12:
T  11/16  Journals due
Th 11/18  *The Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love* (1995, Maria Maggenti, USA)

Week 13:
T  11/23  *Fire* (1996, Deepa Mehta, Canada) (set in India); journals due.
Th 11/25  Thanksgiving

Week 14:
T  11/30  Read Audre Lord, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House"; journals due.
Th 12/2  *Tea and Sympathy* (1956, Vincente Minnelli, USA)

Week 15:
T  12/7  Journals due.
Th 12/9  *Papers due. Harold and Maude* (1971, Hal Ashby, USA)

NO FINAL EXAM