

## **Syllabus: CSPT 500 - Topics in CSPT - CRN 20760**

January-April 2014

1:30-4:30 PM in CLE B346

Dr. Lincoln Z. Shlensky

Office: CLE D332

Office hours: 2:30-4:00 M/R

Email: [shlensky@uvic.ca](mailto:shlensky@uvic.ca)

Web site: [shlensky.com/teaching](http://shlensky.com/teaching)

### **Course description**

If Hollywood remains recognizable as the Western world's Western redoubt of putatively "Western" values, its iconic status today is sustained only tenuously in relation to Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and the global South. This course will consider the shift in cinema's aesthetic models and the medium's political fortunes as a result of the emergence of Hollywood's increasingly diverse rivals, hybridizing mimics, and cinematic innovators; we will also consider the extent to which Hollywood has discursively co-opted these alternatives, and to what extent the discursive co-optation can also be understood ideologically. The class will survey, and examine in research projects, the growing complexity of formal models in global cinema, from Hollywood's increasingly fragmented image of itself to the growing stylistic and commercial influence of transnational and international cinematic forms. We will refer to what urban studies scholar Ananya Roy calls "worlding" as a means of understanding how a range of globally important cinemas increasingly perform the function of provincializing the West, just as they reframe the particularisms attached to the regional and national identities of the global South and East. Students will view a roster of relatively recent films—postcolonial classics alongside new aesthetic and political exemplars—whose themes center on the shifting features of contemporary experience and identity in a postcolonial and increasingly globalized cultural era.

### **Course objectives**

This course will provide you with an introduction to the field of postcolonial cinema studies. In surveying a range of historical and contemporary films, you will be able to familiarize yourself with some of the key political moments in the anti-colonial struggle and the rise of neocolonialism, as represented in the cinema.

In addition to a survey of significant films, you will also have the opportunity to deepen your knowledge of the critical field of postcolonialism through readings of a range of analytical essays and chapters on the postcolonial city, Third Cinema, postmodern film, and the dilemmas of contemporary media representation in and of the Global South.

You will gain concrete knowledge during the term through viewing films, reading selected critical and theoretical literature, preparing your presentations and research, participating in class discussion, and taking and reviewing detailed notes as you read and discuss seminar materials. Your seminar work will include: writing brief responses to the readings and film(s) of the week before each seminar; preparing two oral

presentations during the term; and researching and writing a scholarly essay of about 20 pages.

### **Required texts**

A course reader containing selected book chapters will be available; you will find other texts in the library or online. I will expect you to watch (which may entail renting, purchase, or checking out, as available) all films assigned for the course in advance of our discussions of them.

### **Course grades**

Assignments for the term will include:

- 10 weekly film and reading responses, turned in prior to class, of at least 300 words (20% of the final grade)
- two oral presentations, 15 to 20 minutes each, one of which may be preliminary to your seminar paper (30% of the final grade)
- an outline, thesis statement, and annotated bibliography for your seminar paper (10% of final grade)
- a final research essay of 4500-5500 words (40% of the final grade)

For more specific information about how to do well on the essay you will write for this class, please see the document “Assessment Criteria for Graduate Student Research Essays” on my website.

I will give you ample notice of any changes to the syllabus.

If you have a disability, please let me know so I can help to accommodate you. Please also register at the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability if you wish to have them prepare alternate examination arrangements.

### **N grades**

Students who have completed the following elements will be considered to have completed the course and will be assigned a final grade:

- Six weekly responses, turned in prior to the relevant weekly class
- Two in-class presentations
- Seminar paper

Failure to complete these elements will result in a grade of “N” regardless of the cumulative percentage on other elements of the course. An N is a failing grade, and it factors into a student’s GPA as 0 (maximum percentage that can accompany an N on a transcript is 49).

### **Submission guidelines**

Please submit written assignments to me as .pdf files, with names that look like this: smith-cspt500-titlewordstogether.pdf. Upload your assignment to me using the “Submission” link <[shlensky.com/teaching](http://shlensky.com/teaching)> on my website with the password “camera.”

The file you send must be a .pdf file. I may also request a hard copy. Be sure to keep a copy of all the written work you submit.

### **Late Submission Policy**

I know that completing your work on time requires self-discipline, and I want to reward students who meet their responsibility to turn in assignments when they are due. To be fair to these students, I will deduct credit for assignments turned in late:  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a letter grade per day. I will grant submission extensions under some circumstances, if you let me know at least a week in advance. Please give me documentation if there is a medical or other emergency situation for which you are requesting an exception to this policy.

### **Course participation and attendance**

Your active participation in class discussions represents an important contribution to your own development of ideas. When you ask a question or answer one, you are contributing to the intellectual growth of all the students in the class. I greatly value the efforts of students who enrich discussion by offering their own views in class. Attendance is a vital part of participation, and so I ask that you attend all classes for this course. I understand, however, that there will be rare occasions when you cannot attend class for personal reasons. **More than two absences** during the semester compromises your ability to participate and will affect your final grade. If you must be absent for more than three classes due to medical reasons, please bring documentation of these issues. I will factor participation and attendance into your final grade.

### **Learning environment**

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe working and learning environment for all its members. We, students and faculty members, are all expected to adhere to the Uvic [human rights policy](#). Please let me know if something is going on in the classroom that makes you feel personally uncomfortable.

### **Academic integrity**

Academic integrity is a sign of your interest in helping to build and support an intellectual community. Please be aware of and adhere to the Uvic academic integrity policy <[web.uvic.ca/calendar/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html](http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html)>. Using someone else's ideas or writing without attribution (plagiarism), cheating, multiple submission, or other forms of academic dishonesty may result in a student's receiving a failing grade for the course and further sanctions by the University. *You can easily avoid plagiarism by putting any material taken from another person's writing in quotation marks, and by acknowledging the source of any ideas or information you are paraphrasing.* I may submit student writing assignments to TurnItIn.com for an originality review.

### **Computers in the classroom**

I have found that computer use during class is often a source of distraction. If you feel you must use a computer in class, please refrain from using it for any activity not directly related to class.

## Accessing films

You are responsible for renting and viewing the weekly films for the course. You are also responsible for viewing the clips from other films I may show in class (make sure to get notes from a classmate if you have to miss a class). When available, I have given links to the UVic library copy of the films. My recommendation is that you check availability of films on YouTube and/or consider a subscription to Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, Vudu, iTunes, Google Play, or a similar streaming service during the term to access these films. Each of these services has a different film catalog, so be sure to verify whether the films you need are offered by your preferred service before you subscribe. To access some of these services from Canada, you will need a VPN connection (and possibly also a US credit card). A VPN is a “virtual private network”; it allows you to access websites and digital content otherwise available only from within the USA (this may be a violation of the terms of service of some of these streaming services, but in practice I have had no trouble with this). You can use the free (paid version available) HotspotShield.com VPN service, or you can purchase a VPN subscription with companies such as Witopia.net (this is what I use) or the Toronto-based unblock-us.com. Video stores such as Pic-a-flic in Cook Street Village also carry most of the films on DVD.

## About me

It may be helpful for you to know a little about me. I completed my graduate work at the University of California, Berkeley, in Comparative Literature. My MA focused on the Enlightenment French philosophers, Rousseau and Diderot. My PhD dissertation was a comparison of the writing of two late-modernist/postmodernist writers, Aharon Appelfeld, an Israeli author who writes in Hebrew, and Edouard Glissant, a francophone writer from Martinique. I have since continued to work in both Caribbean and Jewish studies, writing about the francophone and, increasingly, the anglophone Caribbean, as well as about Hebrew literature and Middle Eastern topics. I am currently working on a new research project on Glissant. I teach and have research interests in film and semiotic theory, which was the focus of my undergraduate degree at Brown University. Just so you’ll know, I have a three-year-old son and a baby daughter, both of whom keep me very busy when I am not at work!

## Suggested background secondary reading

- *PMLA*, Vol. 122, No. 1, Special Topic: Cities (Jan., 2007)
- Julian Wolfreys. “The Urban Uncanny: The City, the Subject, and Ghostly Modernity.” *Uncanny modernity: cultural theories, modern anxieties* / edited by Jo Collins and John Jervis. 2008. [electronic resource]
- Tom Gunning. “Uncanny Reflections, Modern Illusions: Sighting the Modern Optical Uncanny.” *Uncanny modernity: cultural theories, modern anxieties* / edited by Jo Collins and John Jervis. 2008. [electronic resource]
- Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*. Trans. Senellart, Ewald, Fontana. Palgrave 2007. <<http://en.bookfi.org/book/1070069>>

## Assignment Schedule

Please read and view the assigned material before the due date and be prepared to discuss it.

### Week 1 (Wednesday, January 8): Introduction

Course introduction.

In class: Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, *Hora de los Hornos/Hour of the Furnaces* (Argentina 1968), Part I: Neocolonialism and Violence. 85 mins. <link>

### Week 2 (Wednesday, January 15): Revolutionary moments

#### Films

*Battle of Algiers* (Italy/Algeria 1966, 120 mins. [YT, Hulu, Amazon])

In class: Isaac Julien, *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask* (UK 1996, 70 mins. PN1997 B372 [YT])

#### Texts:

- Patricia Yaeger. "Introduction: Dreaming of Infrastructure" (PMLA 2007). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25501668>
- Kenneth Harrow. *Postcolonial African Cinema: From Political Engagement to Postmodernism* (2007). Introduction (1-21); Chaps. 1 and 2 (22-65). PN1993.5 A35M77 2007
- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, "The Fact of Blackness"
- Austin09 - "Seeing and listening from the site of trauma" <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25679758>

### Week 3 (Wednesday, January 22): Anti-revolutionary reaction

#### Films

Raoul Peck, *Lumumba* (France/Belgium/Germany/Haiti 2000, 120 mins [Hulu, Apple]) (UVic)

In class: Raoul Peck, *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet* (1992)

#### Texts:

- Eid and Ghazel08 - "Footprints of Fanon" <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40239113>
- Sajed12 - "The Post Always Rings Twice" [http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S0260210510001567](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0260210510001567)
- Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, Introduction and Chap. 1.

### Week 4 (Wednesday, January 29): Post-revolutionary corruption within and without

#### Films

Sembène Ousmane, *Xala* (Senegal 1975, 123 mins. [NF] PN1997 X275)

In class: Djibril Diop Mambéty, *Touki Bouki* (Senegal 1973, 95 mins.)

#### Texts:

- *Rethinking Third Cinema* (Guneratne, ed., 2003) [PN1993.5 D44R48](#). A. Guneratne and W. Dissanayake, "Introduction" (1-28).
- Robert Stam, "Beyond Third Cinema—the Aesthetics of Hybridity" (31-48). *Rethinking Third Cinema* (Guneratne, ed., 2003).

- K. Harrow, *Postcolonial African Cinema: From Political Engagement to Postmodernism* (2007). Chap 5 (115-139). PN1993.5 A35M77 2007
- Murphy and Williams. *Postcolonial African Cinema* (2007). Chap 4 (91-109). PN1993.5 A35M77 2007.

**Week 5 (Wednesday, February 5): The destructive desire for (and of) the other Films**

Kidlat Tahimik, *Perfumed Nightmare* (Philippines 1977, 93 mins.)

In class: (excerpt) Spike Lee, *When the Levees Broke* (USA 2006, 255 mins.)

Suggested: Elia Suleiman, *Chronicle of a Disappearance* (Israel/Palestine 1996, 88 mins.); Jean-Luc Godard, *Ici et Ailleurs* (France, 1974, 53 mins).

**Texts:**

- Neferti Tadiar. "Metropolitan Life and Uncivil Death" (316-20) (2007). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25501695>
- Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film* (2000), Introduction (1-23) and Chap. 1 (24-76)
- Shiel and Fitzmaurice. *Cinema and the City* (2001). PN1995.9 C513C45. Chap 1 (1-18).

**Week 6 (Wednesday, February 19): Challenging the anthropological gaze Films**

*Atanarjuat, the Fast Runner* (Canada 2002, 174 mins. <http://www.isuma.tv/en/isuma-productions/atanarjuat-the-fast-runner>).

In class (first part): Anurag Basu, *Life in a Metro* (India 2007, 131 mins).

**Texts**

- Krupat 2007 - "Atanarjuat and its audiences" <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/513529>
- Weinberger 1992 - "Camera People" <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2934848>
- Rabinowitz 1993 - "Wreckage upon Wreckage" <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2505348>
- Huhndorf 2000 - "Nanook and his contemporaries" <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1344230>

**Week 7 (Wednesday, February 26): Sex and gender in the time of race and nation Films**

Deepa Mehta, *Fire* (India/Canada 1996, 108 mins. [YT])

Suggested: Deepa Mehta, *Earth* (1998) and *Water* (2005); Mira Nair, *Mississippi Masala* (1991)

**Texts:**

- Subeshini Moodley. "Postcolonial Feminisms Speaking through an 'Accented' Cinema: The Construction of Indian Women in the Films of Mira Nair and Deepa Mehta." <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4548098>
- Ella Shohat, "Post-Third-Worldist-Culture: Gender, Nation and the Cinema" in *Rethinking Third Cinema* (Guneratne, ed., 2003). (51-78).

**Week 8 (Wednesday, March 5): Historical memory, imperialism, and the neocolony Films**

Asghar Farhadi, *A Separation* (Iran 2011, 123 min [YT]).

In class (excerpt): *Persepolis* (France 2007, 95 mins. [Amazon, Apple, etc])

Suggested: Abbas Kiarostami, *Close-Up* (Iran 1990, 100 mins. [YT])

### **Texts**

- Hamid Naficy, "Theorizing Third World Film Spectatorship" (1996) [http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/journals/wide\\_angle/v018/18.4naficy.html](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/journals/wide_angle/v018/18.4naficy.html)
- Asef Bayat, "Un-civil society: the politics of the 'informal people'" (1997).
- S. Zeydabadi-Nejad, "Iranian Intellectuals and Contact with the West: The Case of Iranian Cinema" (2007) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20455536>.

## **Week 9 (Wednesday, March 12): Liberalization**

**Due today: Seminar paper outline, thesis statement, and annotated bibliography.**

### **Films**

Jia Zhangke, *Still Life* (China 2006) [Amazon, NF]

Suggested: Wong Kar-wai, *Chungking Express* (1994)

### **Texts**

- Pheng Cheah, *Spectral Nationality: Passages of Freedom from Kant to Postcolonial Literatures of Liberation* (2003). Introduction and chap. 1.
- Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions* (1995). Introduction and chap. 1.

## **Week 10 (Wednesday, March 19): Violence, neoliberalism and the city**

Alejandro González Iñárritu, *Amores Perros* (Mexico 2000, 153 mins. [Apple, Amazon, etc.]

Suggested: Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, *City of God* (Brazil 2004, 130 mins. [YT, Amazon, etc.]

### **Texts**

- Dennison and Lim. *Remapping World Cinema: Identity, Culture and Politics in Film* (2006). PN1993.5 D44R46. Chap. 1 (19-29); Chap. 3 (38-51).
- Juan Poblete. "New National Cinemas in a Transnational Age" (2004). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41389697>
- Marta Peixoto. "Rio's Favelas in Recent Fiction and Film: Commonplaces of Urban Segregation" (2007). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25501678>

## **Week 11 (Wednesday, March 26): Globalization, memory, neocolonialism**

### **Films**

Abderrahmane Sissako, *Bamako* (Mali/France/USA 2006, 115 mins. [NF])

Suggested: Michael Haneke, *Caché* (France 2005, 118 mins. [Apple, Amazon, GP, etc.]

### **Texts:**

- Kenneth W. Harrow. *Trash: African cinema from below* (2013). PN1993.5.A35 H375 2013. Chap 1 (7-29); Chap. 2 (32-56).
- Shiel and Fitzmaurice. *Cinema and the City* (2001). PN1995.9 C513C45. Chap. 11 "Global Cities and the International Film Festival Economy" (134-44).

## **Week 12 (Wednesday, April 2): Legal discourse, rights discourse, and insidious violence**

### **Films**

Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi, *Five Broken Cameras* (Palestine/Israel/France 2011, 90 mins. [YT, NF, Amazon, etc])

Suggested: Ra'anana Alexandrowicz, *The Law in These Parts* (Israel 2012, 101 mins. [Apple]); Yaron Shani, Scandar Copti, *Ajami* (Israel 2009, 120 mins. [YT, Netflix, Amazon, etc])

**Texts:**

- “Inverse Hasbara” <http://bit.ly/1ICYNbr>
- Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi. “To What Shall I Compare You?": Jerusalem as Ground Zero of the Hebrew Imagination” (2007). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25501682>
- Rebecca Weaver-Hightower and Peter Hulme, *Postcolonial Film: History, Empire, Resistance* (2014). Selections. <http://www.amazon.com/Postcolonial-Film-Resistance-Routledge-Advances/dp/0415716144>

**Seminar papers are due by April 12.**