

DECAL SYLLABUS: FILM STUDIES 98/198

How I Learned to Stop Worrying about Film Theory and Love My Old Man Stan: Kubrick, Genre, and Historical Obsession

Time: Tuesday 5-7 (Screening), Thursday 5-6:30 (Lecture & Discussion)

Location: 235 Dwinelle

Student Facilitators: Joie Tran & Ben Hadden

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Faculty Sponsor: Linda Williams

2.5 Units (P/NP)

Limit: 20 students

OVERVIEW

Wild orgies, murderous machines, phallic weapons (literally), and a touch of British flair, Stanley Kubrick's films retain an unmistakable directorial stamp while enjoying both popular and critical success. It's a widely known fact that before embarking on a new project, Kubrick would sit down and watch every film that has attempted to deal with the given subject matter of his prospective film. In this way, we can view Kubrick as the ultimate "cinematic engineer," one who synthesizes the works of past filmmakers into a masterwork of any given genre. Therefore, studying one of Kubrick's films is tantamount to studying, what Kubrick believes to be, the essential features of any given genre, be it science fiction, satire, historical fiction, or horror. In this class, we will exploit this intriguing feature of his oeuvre, using his films not only to discover what drives the auteur behind the camera, but also to explore a variety of film theories and their relationship to genre. In the end, those who take this class will learn to decide for themselves whether Kubrick was a provocative genius, a fortunate hack, or an overhyped product of his cult followers (not excluding ourselves).

For all majors, including film students, this course is intended as an open-minded, informal introduction to the cinema of Stanley Kubrick.

Much of the course will be made up of active participation—written assignment and class discussion. Students will come away from this class with better tools to not only approach Kubrick, but any film that speaks to and from our present moment. Why not join us and and move beyond the smug comfort of IMDBism?

ASSIGNMENTS

In-depth analysis: Pick a film and be the discussion leader for that week. Please be ready to post a written response on **bspace** before 7 am on Thursday. (Minimum 500 words)

Final Project: Creative-synthesis: choose an element from a Kubrick film and dissect, expand, and reinterpret its form and function in a new context. (2-3 people in groups)

GRADING (in order to pass, all requirements must be fulfilled):

Assignments: 50% (written response, final project)

Attendance: 50% (with no more than two unexcused absences)

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: DECAL does not meet

WEEK 2: MEET ONLY ON THURSDAY, Sept 7. Logistics.

I. INTRODUCTION: Instant Classic and Early Experiments

WEEK 3: Sept. 12-14

Film: Dr. Strangelove, 1964

Lesson: A Psychological Session with Dr. Strangelove: Exorcising Away Post-Noir Paranoia

Reading: Wolfe, Gary K. "Dr. Strangelove, Red Alert, and Patterns of Paranoia in the 1950's"

WEEK 4: Sept. 19-21

Film: The Killing, 1956

Lesson: Thief of Time: Late Film Noir and Post-post-war.

Reading: Falsetto, Mario. "Patterns of Filmic Narration in *The Killing*"

II. MASCULINITY AND ULTRAVIOLENCE: Is He A Misogynist?

WEEK 5: Sept. 26-28

Film: Full Metal Jacket, 1987

Lesson: An alternative memory: wrestling Kubrick from the "80s anti-war club"

Reading: Schweitzer, Rich. "Born to Kill: *Full Metal Jacket* as Historical Representation of American's Experience in Vietnam"

WEEK 6: Oct. 3-5

Film: Clockwork Orange, 1971

Lesson: The Dystopic Symphony

Reading: Vandenheede, Jan. "The Music in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*"

III. FROM NOVEL TO IMAGE: Quick Fixes and Endless Challenges

WEEK 7: Oct. 10-12

Film: Lolita, 1962

Lesson: Picturing Nabokov: The Challenge of Adaptation

Reading: Watts, Sarah Miles. "'Lolita': Fiction into Films Without Fantasy"

WEEK 8: Oct. 17-19

Film: Barry Lyndon, 1975

Lesson: Satire of a Satire: Kubrick on Thackeray

Reading: Coppedge, Walter. "*Barry Lyndon*: Kubrick's Elegy for an Age"

IV. LOVE IN A TIME OF MADNESS: (Post)Modern Families

WEEK 9: Oct. 24-26

Film: Eyes Wide Shut, 1999

Lesson: Kubrick's Lesson Before Dying: We're all "fucked."

Reading: Kreider, Tim. "Eyes Wide Shut"

WEEK 10: Oct. 31-Nov. 2

Film: The Shining, 1980

Lesson: Postmodern Horror and Past Immersion

Reading: Jameson, Frederic. "Historicism in *The Shining*"

V. WHAT LIES AHEAD: Future Forgotten and Remembered

WEEK 11: Nov. 7-9

Film: 2001, 1968

Lesson: Articulating the Ineffable and the Timeless Power of Cinematic Expression

Reading: Chion, Michel. *Kubrick's Cinema Odyssey*. Excerpts

WEEK 12: Nov. 14-16

Film: A.I., 2001

Lesson: Indirected by Stanley Kubrick, Legacy and Influence

Reading: Morrisey, Thomas. "Going Nowhere: Pinocchio Subverted in Spielberg's *A.I.*"

WEEK 13: THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 14: Nov. 28-30

Film: Creative Presentations

Lesson: Partay.....

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