

MFCO 319: Topic in Contemporary American Cinema: Authorship and the New Hollywood

Please note: the following is a shortened example of a course outline as it has been taught in past years. As such it is **indicative only**: the assessment and schedule may change. If you require any further information please contact the department: mfco@otago.ac.nz

Introduction

The notion of the film director as author has long been a central theoretical and historical issue within cinema studies. Analysis of film authorship has been crucially important to the development of the discipline, and, since the 1970s, the idea of directorial authorship has gained far greater currency in American filmmaking, affecting production, marketing, and reception. This paper will study the ways authorship has been theorized; its impact on the New Hollywood cinema(s) of the 1970s to the present; and the work of a selection of contemporary American directors as authors.

Thus, the paper aims to perform three tasks:

1. To provide an overview of theories of authorship in the study of cinema
2. To discuss the “New Hollywood(s)” in American film since the 1970s
3. To study authorship as an aspect of the New Hollywood by examining the work of five major directors: Terrence Malick, Robert Altman, Francis Ford Coppola, Michael Mann, Kathryn Bigelow, and Steven Soderbergh

Aims and Objectives:

By the end of this paper, you should be able to:

- Understand theories of film authorship
- Understand and analyze the films of Malick, Altman, Coppola, Mann, Bigelow, and Soderbergh in relation to conceptions of authorship
- Understand the idea of the New Hollywood, and the place of both authorship generally, and the above directors specifically, in relation to it

This paper is designed to enhance the following skills:

- Critical engagement with complex arguments
- Film analysis
- Independent research
- Written presentation of ideas

Assessment:

Participation	5%	
Reading Response 1	10%	Due 4pm, Friday, 10 August
Reading Response 2	10%	Due 4pm, Friday, 7 September
Essay	30%	Due 4pm, Friday, 5 October
Final Examination	45%	

CLASS SCHEDULE

Dates	Screening, Tutorial	Reading, Assessment
Week One 9-13 July	<i>Badlands</i> (Malick, 1973) NO TUTORIAL	Abrams, "Literature as a Revelation of Personality" Caughie, "Introduction to Part One" Sarris, "Notes on the <i>Auteur</i> Theory in 1962"
Week Two 16-20 July	<i>Days of Heaven</i> (Malick, 1978)	Bazin, "On the <i>Politique des Auteurs</i> " Perkins, "Direction and Authorship" Buscombe, "Ideas of Authorship"
Week Three 23-27 July	<i>The Long Goodbye</i> (Altman, 1973)	Tomasevskij, "Literature and Biography" Wimsatt and Beardsley, from "The Intentional Fallacy" Caughie, "Introduction to Part Two" Wollen, "The <i>Auteur</i> Theory" Cook, "Auteur Cinema and the 'Film Generation' in 1970s Hollywood"
Week Four 30 July- 3 August	<i>Nashville</i> (Altman, 1975) NO TUTORIAL	Kolker, "Radical Surfaces: Robert Altman" (excerpts) Henderson, "Critique of Cine-Structuralism, Part 1"
Week Five 6-10 August	<i>The Godfather</i> (Coppola, 1972)	Caughie, "Fiction of the Author/Author of the Fiction" Browne, "Fearful A-Symmetries" [Recommended: Man, "Ideology and Genre in the <i>Godfather</i> Films"] READING RESPONSE 1 DUE 4:00 10 AUGUST
Week Six 13-17 August	<i>Apocalypse Now</i> (Coppola, 1979)	Barthes, "The Death of the Author" Foucault, "What Is an Author?" Heath, "Comment on 'The Idea of Authorship'"
Week Seven 20-24 August	<i>One from the Heart</i> (Coppola, 1982)	Wood, "Papering the Cracks: Fantasy and Ideology in the Reagan Era" Lewis, "Hollywood General", "Auteur Maudit" Ramaeker, " <i>One from the Heart</i> "

27-31 AUGUST MID-SEMESTER BREAK

Week Eight 3-7 September	<i>Bram Stoker's Dracula</i> (Coppola, 1992) NO TUTORIAL	Carroll, "The Future of Allusion: Hollywood in the Seventies (and Beyond)" Elsaesser, "Specularity and Engulfment: Francis Ford Coppola and <i>Bram Stoker's Dracula</i> " READING RESPONSE 2 DUE 4:00 7 SEPTEMBER
Week Nine 10-14 September	<i>Manhunter</i> (Mann, 1986)	Collins, "Genericity in the Nineties: Eclectic Irony and the New Sincerity" Rayner, "Mann's Style" Rayner, "Masculinity, Morality, and Action"

	[Recommended: <i>Near Dark</i> , Bigelow, 1987]	
Week Ten 17-21 September	<i>Point Break</i> (Bigelow, 1991) [Recommended: <i>Heat</i> , Mann, 1995]	Lane, "From <i>Loveless</i> to <i>Point Break</i> " Redmond, "All That Is Male Melts Into Air"
Week Eleven 24-28 September	<i>The Hurt Locker</i> (Bigelow, 2008) [Recommended: Mann, <i>Collateral</i> , 2004]	King, "Narrative Vs. Spectacle in the Contemporary Blockbuster" Bordwell, "Intensified Continuity" Axmaker, "The Way You Don't Die"
Week Twelve 1-5 October	<i>The Limey</i> (Soderbergh, 1999) Strongly Recommended: <i>Out of Sight</i> (Soderbergh, 1998) NO TUTORIAL	Corrigan, "Auteurs and the New Hollywood" Staiger, "Independent of What?" Gallagher, "Discerning Independents" FINAL ESSAY DUE 4:00 5 OCTOBER
Week Thirteen 8-12 October	<i>Contagion</i> (Soderbergh, 2011)	deWaard and Tait, "The Dialectical Signature" Gallagher, "Authorial Practice, Collaboration, and Location Production" Recommended: Smith, "Theses on the Philosophy of Hollywood History"