

FILM 238 AUTEUR STUDY

CRN 9524

2nd Trimester 2007



Teaching Staff

Course Coordinator: Dr Tim Groves
Room: 83 Fairlie Terrace room 304
Telephone: 463 5410
Email: tim.groves@vuw.ac.nz
Office Hours: These will be posted

Tutors: Felix Preval 83FT room 101 (contact details will be posted)
Rachel Lenart 83FT room 101 (contact details will be posted)

Administrative Assistant: Kushla Beacon 77 Fairlie Terrace, level 3, ph: 463 5359

Lecture/Screening: **Tuesday and Friday** 10am-12.50pm
77 Fairlie Terrace, Room 306

Tutorials:
A: Tuesday 2-2.50 pm
B: Tuesday 3-3.50 pm
C: Wednesday 11-11.50 am
D: Wednesday 12-12.50 pm
E: Wednesday 1-1.50 pm
All tutorials will be held in 85 Fairlie Terrace, room 108

Course Aims and Objectives:

This aim of this course is to explore film authorship in a critical manner through a comparison of the work of Michael Mann with directors such as Howard Hawks and Jean-Pierre Melville. After completing this unit, you should have acquired an understanding of different approaches to film authorship. You should have gained specific knowledge of the films of Jean-Pierre Melville and Michael Mann. You should have developed the ability to recognize the stylistic traits and thematic preoccupations of a film author. You should be able to situate the work of a film author within other contexts such as genre or film history. The course will also enhance your analytical and critical skills. It will improve your proficiency at film analysis and independent research. It will develop your ability to write essays, make oral presentations, and work in pairs and small groups.

Course Content:

This course is organized into three main areas of study:

Weeks 1-3: We will examine some of the historically significant approaches to film authorship, including French and British auteur criticism, Andrew Sarris and the auteur “theory”, structuralism, and feminism. We will use the work of Howard Hawks as a case study.

Weeks 4-6: We will explore the work of Jean-Pierre Melville. We will situate Melville in an historical context, consider the importance of the gangster genre in his films, discuss codes of masculinity, and examine the nature and importance of his visual style.

Weeks 7-12: We will analyse the films of Michael Mann in detail. We will discuss different facets of masculinity, such as work and professionalism. We will explore race and otherness in Mann’s films. We will examine the key traits of his audio-visual style, such as colour, composition and music, and explore their narrative, thematic and affective functions.

Readings:

The required readings for each tutorial are listed at the end of this guide. They are contained in the Student Notes. You should purchase a copy of the Notes for your own use.

Workload:

The university expects that you should be able to devote about 15 hours per week to a 22 point unit across a 12 week trimester. If you attend 7 hours of classes per week, then you should expect to spend about 8 hours per week reading, watching films, preparing for classes, and working on assignments.

Group Work:

Assignment three involves group work. Students will undertake a group exercise with three other students that will culminate in a tutorial presentation in week 7. There will also be some informal group work during lectures and tutorials, although not for assessment purposes.

Assessment Requirements:

There will be four assessment items for this subject. All assessment will be internal. Full details of each assignment will be given in classes, and posted on Blackboard. Assignments 2, 3 and 4 will normally be returned within three weeks of the due date with written feedback. Additional verbal feedback is available upon request.

Assignment One: Tutorial Participation (10%)

Due Date: Tutorials in weeks 8-12

You will be assessed on the quality of your contributions to tutorials throughout the semester, starting in week 8. This assignment will enable you to demonstrate your knowledge of issues raised in the course, such as masculinity, genre, style, and approaches to authorship. It will also develop your critical skills, and enhance your verbal skills. Non-attendance at tutorials without a valid excuse (such as illness) will affect your grade.

Assignment Two: Critical Essay or Textual Analysis (35%) 2500 words

Due Date: Friday, August 17, 4.30 pm

This assignment will cover topics discussed in the first six weeks of the course, such as auteur and feminist approaches to authorship, crime and gangster films, the codes of masculinity, and the films of Hawks and Melville. This assignment will enable you to develop your textual analysis, critical and argumentation skills, as well as your written expression.

Assignment Three: Film Pitch (15%)

Due Date: Tutorials in Week 7

In this assignment you and three other members of your tutorial will conceive and pitch a “new” film by either Howard Hawks or Jean-Pierre Melville. This pitch will take the form of a ten minute presentation in tutorials in week 7. This assignment will increase your knowledge of the stylistic

traits and characteristic themes of these directors, develop your ability to work in groups, and enhance your capacity to make verbal presentations.

Assignment Four: (40%) 3000 words, or equivalent

Due Date: Tuesday, October 23, 4.30 pm

This assignment will contain several options, such as an oral report or letter, as well as a conventional essay. The topics will cover the issues discussed in weeks 7-12 of the course, such as masculinity, genre, race, music and visual style in the work of Michael Mann. This assignment will enable you to develop your textual analysis, independent research, critical, argumentation and analytical skills. It will also enhance your written and/or oral expression.

Handing in Assignments

Assignments should be placed in the drop box outside the office doors at the Film and Theatre administrative office on level 3, 77 Fairlie Terrace. *Do not submit your essay to your tutor.* You are strongly advised to keep a copy of your assignment before submitting it.

Penalties:

Late work will be penalized at the rate of 2% per working day. Work submitted more than five working days after the date without a formal extension may not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with your tutor.

If you are having problems meeting a deadline for an assignment, then you should contact your tutor before the due date. Your tutor will consider any reasonable request for an extension, but please note that applications for extensions should be made at least two days before the due date.

Mandatory Course Requirements:

In order to pass this course, you must complete all assignments by the due dates. You must receive at least a 'C' grade overall. You must also attend at least eight (8) tutorials.

Communication of Additional Information:

Any additional information concerning the course, including changes, will be posted on Blackboard.

School Facilities:

Students are encouraged to make full use of the Robert Lord Library at 77 Fairlie Terrace. However, please note that library materials **never leave the building**. There is a coin-operated photocopier on Level 3. The Green Room in 77FT is also available to students working in the building. You are expected to clean up after yourself, including returning to the Green Room any mugs removed from there.

Award:

The Prize for Film Studies, arising from a fund established by the Wai-te-Ata Press, will be awarded to the best student of film history, criticism or production.

General University policies and statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at www.vuw.ac.nz.

Student and staff conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct

Academic grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning,
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course,
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

Students with Impairments (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

telephone: 463-6070

email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contacts are **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407** and **Dr Stuart Brock, Murphy Building, room 312**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Māori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

This programme offers:

- Academic mentoring for all Māori & Pacific students at all levels of undergraduate study for the faculties of Commerce & Administration and Humanities & Social Sciences. Contact Manaaki-Pihipihinga-Programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 6015 to register for Humanities & Social Science mentoring and 463 8977 to register for mentoring for Commerce and Administration courses
- Postgraduate support network for the above faculties, which links students into all of the post grad activities and workshops on campus and networking opportunities
- Pacific Support Coordinator who can assist Pacific students with transitional issues, disseminate useful information and provide any assistance needed to help students achieve. Contact; Pacific-Support-Coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 5842.

Manaaki Pihipihinga is located at: 14 Kelburn Parade, back court yard, Room 109 D (for Humanities mentoring & some first year Commerce mentoring) or Room 210 level 2 west wing railway station Pipitea (commerce mentoring space). Māori Studies mentoring is done at the marae.

Student Services

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: student-services@vuw.ac.nz) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at education@vuwsa.org.nz) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.

Screenings and Weekly Topics

(Please note that film titles are subject to availability and may change)

Week 1:

Tuesday: Introduction to the Course

Friday: French and British Auteurs

Screenings:

Bringing up Baby (Howard Hawks, USA, 1938)

Only Angels Have Wings (Howard Hawks, USA, 1939)

Reading:

Kast, Pierre, Eric Rohmer (2), Francois Truffaut, Jacques Rivette, Feyerdoun Hoveyda, Luc Moullet and Andre Bazin. "Extracts from *Cahiers du Cinema*." *Theories of Authorship: A Reader*. Ed. John Caughie. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981. 38-44. [extract] **(4)**

Cameron, Ian. "Films, Directors, and Critics." *Theories of Authorship: A Reader*. Ed. John Caughie. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981. 50-58. [extract] **(18)**

Cameron, Ian et al. "The Return of *Movie*: A Discussion." *Theories of Authorship: A Reader*. Ed. John Caughie. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1981. 58-60, [extract] **(23)**

Week 2:

Tuesday: Andrew Sarris and the Auteur "Theory"

Friday: Howard Hawks Case Study (Russell Campbell)

Screenings:

Red River (Howard Hawks, USA, 1948)

Airforce (Howard Hawks, USA, 1943)

Readings:

Sarris, Andrew. "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962." *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Fourth Edition. Eds. Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen and Leo Braudy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. **(25)**

Sarris, Andrew. "Towards a Theory of Film History." *Movies and Methods: An Anthology*. Ed. Bill Nichols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. 237-251. [extract] **(28)**

Week 3:

Tuesday: Structuralist Approaches to Authorship

Friday: Feminist Approaches to Authorship

Screenings:

The Thing from Another World (Christian Nysby, USA, 1951)

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (Howard Hawks, USA, 1953)

Reading:

Wollen, Peter. "The Auteur Theory." *Movies and Methods: An Anthology*. Ed. Bill Nichols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. 530-542. [extract] **(36)**

Wollen, Peter. "Conclusion." *Signs and Meanings of the Cinema*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1972. 167-175. **(43)**

Wood, Robin. "Retrospect." *Howard Hawks: American Artist*. Ed. Peter Wollen. London: British Film Institute, 1996. 163-173. **(56)**

Arbuthnot, Lucie and Gail Seneca. "Pre-text and Text in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*." *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*. Ed. Patricia Erens. Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 1990. 112-125. **(62)**

- Week 4:** **Tuesday:** Introduction to Jean-Pierre Melville (Thierry Jutel)
Friday: Melville and the Gangster Genre
- Screenings:** *Bob le Flambeur* (Jean-Pierre Melville, France, 1955)
Le Doulos (Jean-Pierre Melville, France, 1962)
- Readings:** Danks, Adrian “Together Alone: The Outsider Cinema of Jean-Pierre Melville.” *Senses of Cinema* 22 (September 2002)
www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/02/meville.html
1 (93)
Vincendeau, Ginette. *Jean-Pierre Melville: An American in Paris*.
London: BFI Publishing, 2003. 111-116. **(69)**
- Week 5:** **Tuesday:** Codes of Masculinity
Friday: Film Screening
- Screenings:** *Le Samourai* (Jean-Pierre Melville, France, 1967)
Le Circle Rouge (Jean-Pierre Melville, France, 1970)
- Readings:** Vincendeau, Ginette. “‘Autistic Masculinity’ in Jean-Pierre Melville’s Crime Thrillers.” *Gender and French Cinema*.
Eds. Alex Hughes and James S. Williams. Oxford: Berg, 2001. 139-155. **(84)**
McCarthy, Colin. “*Mise-en-Scene* Degree Zero: Jean-Pierre Melville’s *Le Samourai* 1967.” *French Film: Texts and Contexts*. 2nd Edition. Eds. Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. 189-201. **(108)**
- Week 6:** **Tuesday:** Melville’s Visual Style
Friday: Film Screening
- Screenings:** *Un Flic* (Jean-Pierre Melville, France, 1972)
Army of Shadows (Jean-Pierre Melville, France, 1969)
- Readings:** Vincendeau, Ginette. *Jean-Pierre Melville: An American in Paris*.
London: BFI Publishing, 2003. 82-92; 202-211. **(69)**
- Week 7:** **Tuesday:** Introduction to Michael Mann
Friday: Subcultures; Realism; Ambiguous Heroes
- Screenings:** *The Films of Michael Mann*
The Jericho Mile (Michael Mann, USA, 1979)
- Readings:** Smith, Gavin. “Mann Hunters.” *Film Comment* 28.6 (November-December 1992) : 72-77. **(123)**
Combs, Richard. “Michael Mann: Becoming.” *Film Comment* 32.2 (March-April 1996) : 10-17. **(126)**

- Week 8:** **Tuesday:** Codes of Masculinity in Mann's Work
Friday: Film Screening
- Screenings:** *Thief* (Michael Mann, USA, 1981)
Heat (Michael Mann, USA, 1995)
- Readings:** Thoret, Jean-Baptiste. "The Aquarium Syndrome: On the Films of Michael Mann." Trans. Anna Dzenis. *Senses of Cinema* 19 (2001) www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/19mann.html (165)
Hill, Lee. "Thief." www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/cteq/07/43/thief.html (121)
- Week 9:** **Tuesday:** *Heat* Case Study
Friday: Film Screening
- Screenings:** No Screening on Tuesday
Ali (Michael Mann, USA, 2001)
- Readings:** Sharrett, Christopher. "Michael Mann: Elegies on the Post-Industrial Landscape." *Fifty Contemporary Filmmakers*. Ed. Yvonne Tasker. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. 253-263. (115)
Lindstrom, J.A. "Heat: Work and Genre." *Jump Cut* 43 (July 2000) www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlineessays/JC43folder/Heat.html#n (145)
Wrathall, John. "Heat." *Sight and Sound* 6.2 (1996) : 43-44. (143)
- Week 10:** **Tuesday:** Race and Otherness (Alice Te Punga Somerville)
Friday: Expressive Style
- Screenings:** *The Last of the Mohicans* (Michael Mann, USA, 1992)
Manhunter (Michael Mann, USA, 1986)
- Readings:** Rinne, Craig. "White Romance and American Indian Action in Hollywood's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992)." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 13.1 (Spring 2001) : 3-22. (180)
Arthur, Paul. "Lord of the Ring." *Film Comment* 38.1 (January-February 2002): 32-34. (196)
Wootton, Adrian. "The Big Hurt." *Sight and Sound* 12.3 (March 2002) : 16-18. (199)
- Week 11:** **Tuesday:** Mann's Use of Music (Geoff Stahl)
Friday: TBA
- Screenings:** *Collateral* (Michael Mann, USA, 2004)
Miami Vice (Michael Mann, USA, 2006)
- Readings:** Dzenis, Anna. "Michael Mann's Cinema of Images." *Screening the Past* 12 (2002) www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/firstrelease/fr0902/df_r14b.html (209)
Williams, Tony. "Manhunter." *Senses of Cinema* 43 (April-June 2007)

www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/cteq/07/43/manhunter.html (132)

Anderson, Michael J. "Before Sunrise, or Los Angeles Plays Itself in a Lonely Place." *Senses of Cinema* 33 (2004)

www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/04/33/collateral.html (202)

Olsen, Mark. "It Happened One Night." *Sight and Sound* 14.10 (October 2004) : 14-16. (206)

Week 12: **Tuesday:** Towards a Postclassical Cinema
Friday: Film Screening

Screenings: No Screening on Tuesday
The Insider (Michael Mann, USA, 1999)

Readings: Thoret, Jean-Baptiste. "Gravity of the Flux: Michael Mann's *Miami Vice*." Trans. Sally Shafto. *Senses of Cinema* 42 (January-March 2007)

www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/07/42/miami-vice.html (228)

James, Nick. "No Smoking Gun." *Sight and Sound* 10.3 (March 2000) : 14-17. (224)