

FIL 4672: RI: Hollywood, Censorship, & Regulation

(Fall 2017)

Dr. Chris Robé

W: 1:00-4:50

CU 107

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Office Hours:

W: 5:00-6:00 PM and by appointment

CU 214

Phone: 561.297.1306

Required Texts and Materials:

Matthew Bernstein, ed. Controlling Hollywood: Censorship and Regulation in the Studio Era (CH)

Charles Lyons, The New Censors: Movies and the Culture Wars (NC)

Supplemental Readings on Course Canvas <Canvas.fau.edu>

Notebook and pens

Course Prerequisite: Film Appreciation: FIL 2000

Course Description: All-too-often popular discussions of cinema are situated within a highly individualized framework of directors and stars (and, to a lesser extent, screenwriters). Although these creative personnel undoubtedly influence the final product, their centrality in understanding filmmaking effaces broader and more systemic socio-cultural processes that impact the contours of cinema as a whole. By focusing on issues of censorship and regulation in regards to cinema within the U.S., we address how various social groups, state and federal government agencies, and commercial practices impact the aesthetic and thematic possibilities of both domestic and foreign films that appear on commercial U.S. screens. This requires us to define censorship and regulation not only by their negative capacities (e.g. what they excise from films), but also through their productive influence in reconfiguring narrative trajectories and prioritizing specific stylistic choices over others. Ultimately, this course embeds practices of film production, distribution, and exhibition within a wider socio-cultural framework of censorship and regulation to reveal the domestic and international pressures that effect not only what U.S. audiences will see, but also how they will see it.

Research Intensive: This course contains an assignment or multiple assignments designed to help students conduct research and inquiry at an intensive level. If this class is selected to participate in the university-wide assessment program, students will be asked to complete a consent form and submit electronically some of their research assignments for review. Visit the Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (OURI) for additional opportunities and information at <http://www.fau.edu/ouri>.

One of your central assignments for this course will be writing an eight-to-ten page research paper based upon archival materials, which is discussed in more detail below.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To familiarize students with the historical contours of U.S. film and media censorship and regulation for the past one-hundred years.

- 2) To advance critical thinking, reading, writing, and viewing skills along with learning research methodology and application.
- 3) To understand film as a social process rather than an object that is deeply connected to material practices.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1: Knowledge. Students will differentiate and evaluate primary and secondary source materials.

SLO 2: Formulate Questions. Students will distinguish key problems and questions concerning a historical approach to film studies.

SLO 3: Plan of Action. Write a final research paper that is complete and consistent with the demands of the discipline of film and media studies.

SLO 4: Critical Thinking. Students will assemble and interpret data in a clear and engaged manner in the various written assignments.

SLO 5: Ethical Conduct. Students will identify ethical issues concerning the censorship of film and the ramifications of censorship upon popular culture production.

SLO 6: Communication. Students will produce a final research paper in the correct format and presented at an appropriate level.

Attendance: Prompt and regular attendance for the full class period is required. Arriving late to class and/or leaving early are not permissible. **Coming in late (and leaving early) will be counted as an absence. After two absences, your grade will be negatively impacted by each additional absence. Four absences automatically results in failure of the course.** Additionally, missing the screening of any film will limit your success in the course. NOT ALL OF THE FILMS SCREENED IN CLASS ARE AVAILABLE FOR RENTAL, but the tapes that are in our collection are available for screening at the Boca Raton Media Center. It is your responsibility to make up any missed screenings and to obtain lecture notes from another student. Students who violate these guidelines will be asked to leave. If you must leave the theater during a film, exit discretely.

Communication: Students are encouraged to submit their research projects to South Florida Undergraduate Communication Honors Conference. If interested, speak with the professor.

Ethics: Students must abide by FAU's Code of Academic Integrity. Students are also encouraged to attend FAU OURI workshops on topics related responsible conduct of research. Information on OURI workshops can be found here

http://www.fau.edu/ouri/student_workshops.php

Cell Phones: In this classroom, they don't exist. Turn them off and keep them packed. There is nothing more distracting during a screening than seeing their glow. Students who violate this policy will be asked to leave.

Computers: Unless you have a need for a computer as documented by Student Accessibility Services, they will not be permitted. Recent studies suggest that notetaking

by hand is much more productive than by computer. (See the following:
<http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away> and
<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/releases/take-notes-by-hand-for-better-long-term-comprehension.html>)

Grading Scale:	100-97= A+	79-77= C+	59-0= F
	96-94= A	76-74= C	
	93-90= A-	73-70= C-	
	89-87= B+	69-67= D+	
	86-84= B	66-64= D	
	83-80= B-	63-60= D-	

Assignments:	Midterm: 20%	In-classes and Attendance: 20%
	Final: 25%	Annotated Bibliography: 5%
	Rough draft of research paper: 5%	
	Final draft of research paper: 25%	

Quizzes & In-Class Essays: Short unannounced in-class essays assist us in focusing on specific readings and their related questions that will guide classroom discussion. In-Class Essays require students to write a short essay in response to a question related to one or more of the assigned readings; these are open-book. I will drop the lowest quiz/essay grade.

Midterm & Final: Both exams will be comprised of a series of essay questions that ask students to synthesize and elaborate upon class discussions, readings, and screenings. The exams will be open notebook, requiring students to take careful and precise notes on classroom discussions, films, and the readings. When referring to the readings within your notes, make sure to cite your sources and page numbers so that you can properly document them when answering exam questions.

Research Paper: Ultimately, by semester's end you will produce a research paper of eight-to-ten pages based upon archival research from the online databased: *Hollywood, Censorship, and the Motion Picture Production Code, 1927-1968*. It is assumed you have had little-to-no experience conducting archival research. As a result, you will periodically meet with me regarding assignments leading up to the final research paper. They include:

An Annotated Bibliography:

This will address your primary and secondary sources you will be using for the project. Each source will have a short paragraph detailing its relevance to your project. You will present it to me during our conference.

Rough draft:

You will present a rough draft of your essay to me during a conference and direct my attention to sections of the paper that you want me to provide feedback on.

Plagiarism: Any form of plagiarism will result in immediate failure for the course.

Plagiarism is defined as “the unacknowledged use of another person’s work, in the form of original ideas, strategies and research, or another person’s writing, in the form of sentences, phrases, and innovative terminology” (Brenda Spatt, *Writing from Sources*, 383). If in doubt about your citation, consult the University Catalog 2007-2008 or meet with me to clarify the issue.

Disability Policy Statement

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU’s campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at www.fau.edu/sas/.

FAU Honor Code: Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see

<http://www.fau.edu/ctl/AcademicIntegrity.php>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more info go to www.fau.edu/counseling/.

TENTATIVE WEEKLY SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

(Warning: Because this is a censorship course, it addresses controversial material regarding sexuality, race, violence, politics, and religion. Students unable to view, read, and discuss such material need to immediately withdrawal.)

W 8/23 **Introduction: Defining Censorship and Regulation**

W 8/30 **Early Cinema, Reform, and the Mutual Decision**
Screenings: *The May Irwin-John C. Rice Kiss* (1896)

Trapeze Disrobing Act (1901)
What Happened on Twenty-Third Street (1902)
The Great Train Robbery (1903)
Gay Shoe Clerk (1903)
The Kleptomaniac (1905) (PN 1993.5.A1 E33 2005)
Robetta and Doretto (1894)
The Musketeers of Pig Alley (Griffith, 1912)

Readings: Garth S. Jowett, “‘A Capacity for Evil’: The 1915 Supreme Court *Mutual* Decision” (**CH**)

Jack Johnson, Fight Films, and the Racial Politics of Boxing

Screenings: *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson* (Burns, 2004)—excerpt (GV 1132.J64 U54 2005)

Readings: Lee Grieveson, “Film Fights, 1910-1912” (Canvas)

Assigned films

W 9/6 **White Slave Trade Pictures and Female Flaneurs/ Introduction to Archival Research and Databases**

Screenings: *Traffic in Souls* (Tucker, 1913, 88 min.)
Inside the White Slave Trade (Beal, 1913, 28 min.)

Readings: Shelley Stamp, “Moral Coercion, or the National Board of Censorship Ponders the Vice Films” (**CH**)

W 9/13 **CLASS CANCELLED:** Students will be conducting research into their specific archive identifying key names, events, issues, etc. as well as begin identifying secondary sources related to their film.

W 9/20 **The Production Code, Gender, and Sexuality**

Screenings: *Baby Face* (Alfred E. Green, 1933, 76 min)
Excerpts from: *Possessed* (Clarence Brown, 1931)
Red Headed Woman (Jack Conway, 1932)
Blonde Venus (Josef von Sternberg, 1932)

Readings: “The Production Code” (Canvas)
Lea Jacobs, “Industry Self-Regulation and the Problem of Textual Determination” (**CH**)
Lea Jacobs, “Baby Face” (Canvas)

W 9/27 **The OWI, Anti-Fascism, and Racial Relations**

Screenings: *Lifeboat* (Hitchcock, 1944, 96 min.)

Screenings: Excerpts from: Cabin in the Sky (Minnelli, 1943)
The Negro Soldier (1944)
Casablanca (Curtiz, 1942)

Readings: Clayton R. Koppes & Gregory D. Black, "Blacks, Loyalty, and Motion Picture Propaganda in World War II" (CH)
Koppes and Black, "Nazis, Good Germans, and G.I.'s" (Canvas)

W 10/4 Cases of Local Censorship

Screenings: *Scarlet Street* (Lang, 1945, 103 min.) (PN 1997.S23 2005)

Readings: Matthew Bernstein, "A Tale of Three Cities: The Banning of Scarlet Street" (**CH**)

W 10/11 MIDTERM

W 10/18 The Miracle Decision and the Redefinition of Cinema

Screenings: *The Miracle* excerpt of *L'Amore* (Rossellini, 1948)

Readings: Ellen Draper, “‘Controversy Has Probably Destroyed Forever the Context’: The Miracle and Movie Censorship in America in the 1950s” (CH)

Annotated Bibliography Due/ Student Meetings After Class

W 10/25 CLASS CANCELLED

W 11/1 The X Rating: The Promise of Porn

Screenings: *Pink Flamingos* (John Waters, 1972, 93 min)

Excerpts from: *I Am Curious Yellow* (Sjöman, 1967)

Deep Throat (Damiano, 1972)

Sweet, Sweetback's Badasssss Song (Van Peebles, 1971)

Readings: Justin Wyatt, "The Stigma of X: Adult Cinema and the Institution of the MPAA Ratings System" (**CH**)
Jon Lewis, "Hollywood vs. Softcore" (Canvas)

W 11/8 The New Censors: The Culture Wars

Screenings: *The Last Temptation of Christ* (Scorsese, 1988, 164 min.)
(PN 1997.L34432 2000)

Readings: Charles Lyons, "Introduction: Don't Watch That Movie!"

(p. 1-16, NC)
Charles Lyons, “This Film is Blasphemy” (NC)

W 11/15 **Rough Draft Due/Student Conferences**

W 11/22 **Feminism: The Politics of Gender and Sexuality**
Screenings: *Dressed to Kill* (De Palma, 1980, 105 min.)
Excerpts *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960)

Readings: Charles Lyons, “Murder of Women Is Not Erotic” (NC)
Linda Williams, “When the Woman Looks” (Canvas)

W 11/29 **The Digital, Hacking, and International Politics**
Screenings: *The Interview* (Evan Goldberg and Seth Rogen, 2014, 112 min)

Readings: Aynne Kokas, et. all, “Freedom Edition: Considering Sony Pictures and *The Interview*” (Canvas)
Steve Erickson, “Voyeurs in the Hermit Kingdom: *The Interview* and Other Films on North Korea” (Canvas)

W 12/6 **Research Paper Due at my office, CU 214 at 1:00 PM**

W 12/13 **FINAL EXAM: 1:15-3:15 (Same Room)**