Masculinity in Literature and Cinematic Adaptations



Teaching: 2 hours/week seminar

Professor Susanne Kord

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Assessment: 1 assessed essay, 5,000 words (100% of final mark)

Course Description: The course investigates, on the basis of some film and gender theory, the portrayal of masculinity in literature and Hollywood movie adaptations.

Consideration of male 'types' with a long literary and cinematic history, such as male monsters, creators, truthseekers (detectives), rebels, victims, self-mythologizing men (e.g. cowboys) and 'man's men', will enable a comparative investigation of traditions of representation and established clichés surrounding masculinity (the ruggedness of individualism, the justifiability of violence, the



naturalness of compulsory heterosexuality; narcissistic and masochistic identification; mythologization and self-mythologization).

The course seeks to investigate the following related questions: 1. Which kind(s) of relationships are envisioned between Man and his World (society)? 2. is there a 'crisis' of masculinity, and if so, how is it addressed? 3. which historical developments can be noted in the portrayal of masculinities? 4. how does the move from text to screen affect the representation of masculinities? 5. Which roles have been assigned to masculinity in literary and particularly film theory?

Course Materials: All texts will be provided on UCL Moodle. All films for film screenings will be available for streaming via UCL Moodle / BOB. Please note that while it is perfectly legitimate to rely on online versions of texts for the purpose of classroom discussions, you **must** use a proper book version of all texts for essay writing (i.e. the text you write about must be verifiable, meaning citeable by page and complete bibliographic reference).

Attendance: Attendance at seminars is mandatory and will be taken at each seminar.

Sequencing: Since the literary texts are the 'originals' and the films the adaptations of these texts, you should make every effort to read each text **before** viewing the film based on it (films viewed before the text is read have a way of 'overlaying' the text and leading to misunderstandings, confusion and misreadings).

Weekly Syllabus:

Week 1 Introduction

Weeks 2-3

The Creation of Man: Man as Monster and Creator Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818) film: Kenneth Branagh, *Frankenstein* (1994)

Week 4

Man and Myth I: Superstition and Enlightenment Washington Irving, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow (1820) film: Tim Burton, Sleepy Hollow (1999)

Weeks 5-6

Man and Myth II: Men at War Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (1902) film: Francis Ford Coppola, Apocalypse Now (1979)

Reading Week between Weeks 5 and 6

Weeks 7-8

Man as Victim I: Men and Their Society George Orwell, 1984 (1948) film: Michael Radford, 1984 (1984)

Week 9

Man as Victim II: Men and Their Society Annie Proulx, 'Brokeback Mountain' (1997)* film: Ang Lee, Brokeback Mountain (2005)

Week 10

discussion of student projects

Research Bibliography

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