

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
- www.unine.ch/lettres

Séminaire "Textes en contexte" « Modern and Contemporary Literature » American

Filières concernées	Nombre d'heures	Validation	Crédits ECTS
Pilier principal M A - littératures	Séminaire: 2 ph	cont. continu	5
Pilier secondaire M A - littératures	Séminaire: 2 ph	cont. continu	5

ph=période hebdomadaire, pg=période globale, j=jour, dj=demi-jour, h=heure, min=minute

Période d'enseignement:

- Semestre Printemps

Objectifs:

The course proposes an introduction to the American Western as a genre. More than a thematic reading of the films, the course will propose that the American cinema effectively contributed to the "framing" of the American West. Students will be expected to become familiar with the narrative history of the American West and to read its semiotic and narrative "in-formation." In addition to the reading of some of these narratives, students will be asked to engage in a reflection on the mediatization of culture.

Contenu:

The Western movie has been considered for a long time as an idiosyncratically American art, an art drawing essentially on the myths of "regeneration through violence" and the singing of praise of the individualist solitary hero. The U.S. Western movies are also resounding with America's complicated ethnic, political and geographical past. As of the 1950s, however, European (mostly Italian) directors challenged many of the premises of the genre by introducing new narrative forms, new aesthetic dimensions (one may think of the music of Ennio Morricone, for instance) as well as a new political consciousness.

Situated at the intersection of narrative and cinematographic technique and cultural critique of American mythography, this M.A. class proposes to explore the crossing views of American and European writers and film directors on the American West. By crossing the perspectives of Western movie directors such as John Ford, Sergio Leone, Clint Eastwood, Jim Jarmush and others, this class proposes to explore the aesthetization of the American West and the "guardian myths" that have emerged from it. We shall also see how those myths have been used and re-channeled by European directors who have participated in their own way in a contemporary redefinition of the American West. Such intersections should enable us to shed light on notions such as the frontier, the Wilderness, or the progress of civilization, as well as on the moral values attached to them. The class will also pose the question of the "reality" and the fiction of the American West in texts and films. Thus, it is the representation and the recreation of the West and its impending mythography that we shall look at from a multidisciplinary and international point of view to assess its significance in contemporary U.S. culture and its importance for current American studies.

Forme de l'évaluation:

Students are expected to contribute a short (c. 20-minute) presentation. They will also write a 6000-word research paper due by 31st July 2013. Students are requested to discuss a detailed prospectus and a selected bibliography with Boris Vejdovsky before starting on the essay. That discussion must take place before the end of the term. The class presentation, the prospectus and the bibliography and their discussion will count for 1/3 of the final grade, while the essay will count for 2/3.

Documentation:

Students need to enroll on the MOODLE site of the course to have access to the class material and course updates: <<http://moodle2.unil.ch/>>.

Key (case sensitive): UNINE_MA_2013 .

The movies discussed in class will be shown in class on Tuesday, from 12 to 2. Presence at these showings is not obligatory for strongly recommended. Whenever possible, movies will be made available in the UNINE English Department.

Students need to come to class prepared, that is, having read the class material and viewed the movies. At the end of the class, they will be expected to be familiar with all the syllabus of the course.

Boris Vejdovsky's reception hours are on Tuesday, by appointment.

For any question contact boris.vejdovsky@unil.ch or François SPANGENBERG <Francois.Spangenberg@unine.ch>.