HISTORY ON FILM / FILM ON HISTORY –
MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE THEMES
An MA Course for History and Medieval Studies
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HIST 5013, CEU credits: 2; ECTS credits: 3.
Film screening on Tuesdays from 19:00 in N11, TIGY
Office hour: after class and upon agreement.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Film studies has been gaining an increasing share and popularity among the disciplines of the humanities. Films are in many ways connected with historical studies; historical films represent history, at the same time raise a number of theoretical issues about representation, interpretation, hermeneutics, cultural pragmatics. The course will 1/ touch upon these theoretical aspects; 2/ survey the technical basics of filmic representation; 3/ introduce the special disciplinary aspects of historical films; 4/ analyse several historical films with the special viewpoint of "representations of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance". The course will be organized as follows: Each afternoon there will be a discussion of theoretical and historiographical topics completed by the analysis of a film, always introduced by a student presentation. In the evening a film will be shown which will be discussed the following week in the afternoon class. Consequently, in the detailed schedule below, each film refers to the topic of the following week.

The goal of the course is to make students aware of the relationship between history and filmic representations. Additionally, it is aimed at explaining filmic techniques as well as basics of film analysis/appreciation. In sum: the didactic goals of the course can be condensed to the following questions: "How to Look at an 'Historical' Film?" and "Looking at the Past in a Postliterate Age."

The learning outcome should consist of 1/ an accumulation of historical knowledge about the connections of political and social history and aesthetical expression by means of the filmic medium; 2/ a clear insight into the cultural historical constructs of the Middle Ages throughout the twentieth century; 3/ a foundation of practicing "reading" films especially about characters and events of the remote, medieval past.

DETAILED SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

1. Definitions. Film Az a Cultural Representation. Film and History. The Historical Film. Film: Eisenstein, Aleksander Nevsky (Soviet, 1938).


3. History on Film – The Significance and the Attraction of the Middle Ages. Film: Branagh, Shakespeare's Henry V (British, 1989); Olivier, Henry 5 (British, 1944).
4. To See the Past. The Multiplicity of Agendas. 
Film: Ford, Crusaders (Polish, 1960).

5. Historical Film and Nationalism in the Socialist Era 1. 
Film: Várhonyi, Stars of Eger (Hungarian, 1968); Nicolaescu, Michael the Brave (1971).

6. Historical Film and Nationalism in the Socialist Era 2. 
Film: Gibson, Braveheart (US, 1995).

Film: Harvey, The Lion in Winter (British, 1968).

8. Family Drama in Medieval Grab. 
Film: Pasolini, Decameron (Italian, 1971).

Film: Merlet, Artemisia (French-Italian, 1997).

10. Explorations in Feminism. 

11. (Post)colonialist Reflections. 
Film: Wajda, The Gates of Paradise (British, Yugoslav, 1968)

12. Round up, Q&A.

ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING
The grade will be composed of three components: 1/ Participation in classes (20%); 2/ A formal in-class presentation, or a 6 pages' written film-review (40%); 3/ A written exam (40%).

REFERENCES
(items indicated as "Reader" will be available in PDF format)


Rosenstone, Robert A. *History on Film / Film on History*, London: Longman, 2006. (reader)

Rosenstone, Robert A. "The Historical Film: Looking at the Past in a Postliterate Age." In Landy 2001, 50-67. (reader)
