

CINEMA AND THE CITY: CONTESTED URBAN SPACES IN MOVIES

UPP 205, Spring 2012
Tuesday and Thursday 3:30 - 4:45
Optional Film Screenings on Thursday at 4:45

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Course Description

The course looks at the city as a site of contested dynamics of social belonging over “race,” ethnicity, nationality, and religion. What French urban theorist Henri Lefebvre called the “right to the city” will guide our analysis of the dynamics that shape the partition of city dwellers into insiders and outsiders, people who belong and people who do not.

Combining scholarly and cinematic production, the class will provide students with critical tools for understanding urban conflicts, their visual representations, and how these processes are mutually constitutive. The course will focus on 10 movies spanning a variety of locations to allow students to develop an understanding of urban conflicts in different urban geographies (New York City; Peshawar, Pakistan; Istanbul; Mexico City; London; Rio de Janeiro; Paris; Beirut). This peripatetic competence about the global urban condition will be matched by an interdisciplinary approach, bringing together readings from urban planning, urban geography, urban anthropology and postcolonial-, film- and cultural-studies.

The course is divided in three thematic units:

1. Urban Others: The production of cosmopolitan dystopias
(weeks 1-5)
2. Divided City: Spatial segregation and borderlines
(weeks 6-11)
3. “Engaged Estrangement”: Learning to see the city
(week 12-15)

If you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Disability Resource Center:

Voice: (312) 413-2183
Video Phone: (312) 957-4822
Email: drc@uic.edu

ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments will be double spaced, 12 point font, printed out, and due in class. No
January 9, 2012

electronic submissions will be accepted.

1. **Weekly viewing responses**

A one-page viewing response on the film of the week is due PRINTED OUT IN CLASS on Tuesday following the screening.

2. **Class Presentations**

One group presentation is required during the semester. The presentation will engage with the week's readings and pose questions for discussion.

3. **Framing exercise: Urban landscapes of Chicago**

The student will document an aspect of urban life in Chicago through a visual and textual narrative: one title, 3-5 pictures, captions (no longer than a paragraph each) for each picture, a one page statement of the urban imaginary the project is crafting (the filmography watched and analyzed in class should serve as a reference). The deadline is April 26, PRINTED OUT IN CLASS.

4. **Final Research Paper**

A 10-page paper on a topic chosen by the student will be due PRINTED OUT DOUBLE-SIDED IN CLASS on April 26th. The paper should include at least one movie that was not part of the course and a targeted list of references (to be discussed with the instructor). Additional guidelines will be distributed during the semester.

CLASS STRUCTURE

Day	Time	Location	What
Tuesday	3:30-4:45pm	BH 305	Lecture
Thursday	3:30-4:45pm	BH 305 or LCA 5	Student presentations and discussion
Thursday	4:45pm	TBD	Film screening

The following Tuesday IN CLASS, students submit their viewing responses on the film.

Each week's lecture and discussion will be about the film seen on the previous Thursday, about which the students will have already developed their response.

GRADING

The semester's work is worth a total of 100 points:

Attendance & participation	10 points	Come to class prepared and participate actively in discussion
Weekly responses	30 points	Due the following Tuesday in class. (Unit responses count for more points)
Class presentations	10 points	One group presentation during the semester.
Framing Exercise	20 points	Due in class March 13th, printed out. (A one-paragraph proposal for the Framing Exercise is due in class on February 14th. This is a very important deadline to get early feedback and advice)
Research Paper	30 points	Due Thursday, April 26th printed out (double-sided!!) in class. (One paragraph on your research paper topic is due on February 14th, in class. A 2-page draft of your research paper is due April 3rd. These are very important deadlines to get early feedback and advice).

Please note the assignments' deadlines. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

SCREENING

Students will watch the film of the week in a screening session on Thursdays at 4:45 in [TBD]. Attending the screening is not mandatory, as long as you can access the film on your own.

LANGUAGES

The majority of the movies screened will be in the two main languages spoken in the United States, English and Spanish. All films in languages other than English will have subtitles.

Watching a movie while reading subtitles requires training but provides access to an incredibly rich market of movies. This course exposes students to this training and encourages them to further develop this skill for their future academic career and personal life.

HONORS STUDENTS

The Honors College acknowledges this course as part of its curriculum. Honors students will be required to complete an honor supplement. The student will be able to choose among the following supplement options: three additional 15 minute presentations of the movies of the week; a more complex and articulated list of references to address their paper's topic; a more elaborated visual exercise on the city of Chicago.

COURSE SCHEDULE

THEMATIC UNIT 1 (WEEKS 1-5)

URBAN OTHERS: THE PRODUCTION OF COSMOPOLITAN DYSTOPIAS

WEEK 1: Jan 10-12

Jan 10 Presentation of the course (content, structure, assignments)

Jan 12 Presentation of the discussion session
Planning of students' presentations
Discussion of readings

Assigned Readings

- N Brenner, P Marcuse and M Mayer (2009) "Cities for People, not for Profit" *City*, Vol. 13 no. 2-3, June-September.
- W Wenders "The urban landscape from the point of view of images" in *The Act of Seeing*, London, Boston: Faber and Faber, pp. 93-101.
- A Rowe & P Wells, "Introduction: Understanding 'cinema' and 'storytelling'"

Jan 12 at 4:45pm: Screening of *Do the Right Thing* by Spike Lee (1989)

Assignment: Viewing Response due on Tuesday, Jan 17 in class

WEEK 2: Jan 17-19

Jan 17 Lecture on racial conflict in the American metropolis and *Do the Right Thing*

Jan 19 Students' presentations and discussion

Assigned Readings

- N AlSayyad (2006) "Brooklyn of *Do the Right Thing*" in *Cinematic Urbanism: A History of Modern from Reel to Real*, pp. 189-196.
- J Abu-Lughod (2007) "The Harlem-Bedford-Stuvesant uprising of 1964" in *Race, Space and Riots in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles*
OR
- N K Denzin (1991) "Do the Right Thing: Race in the USA" in *Images of Postmodern Society: Social Theory and Contemporary Cinema*

January 19th at 4:45pm: Screening of *La Haine (Hate)* by Mathieu Kassovitz (1995)

Assignment: Viewing Response due on Tuesday, January 24th class.

WEEK 3: Jan 24-26

Jan 24 Lecture on segregation in French peripheries, housing projects, post-colonial legacy in the city and *The Hate*.
Overview of contemporary urban conflicts in Parisian suburbs

Jan 26 Discussion

Assigned Readings

- A Fielder (2001) "Poaching on Public Space: Urban Autonomous Zones in French *Banlieue* Films" in M Shiel and T Fitzmaurice *Cinema and the City. Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context* pp 270-281.
- L Wacquant (2006) "Interview" *Enough Room for Space* (www.enoughroomforspace.org/project_pages/view/197)

January 26th at 4:45pm: Screening of *My Beautiful Laundrette* by Stephen Frears (1985)
Assignment: Viewing Response due on Tuesday, January 31st in class.

WEEK 4: Jan 31-Feb 2

Jan 31 Lecture on ethnic urban conflicts, post-colonial legacy in European urban contexts, squatting in the UK and *My Beautiful Laundrette*

Feb 2 Students' presentations and discussion

Assigned Readings

- N AlSayyad, (2006) "The London of *My Beautiful Laundrette*" and "Race Urban Space and the Displacement Community" in *Cinematic Urbanism: A History of Modern from Reel to Real*, pp. 189-207.
- **BBC Article, "Pakistani London," May 5, 2006.**

February 2nd at 4:45pm: Screening of *City of God* by Fernando Meirelles (2002)

Assignment: Viewing response due on Tuesday, February 7th in class.

WEEK 5: Feb 7-9

Feb 7 Lecture on *City of God*, urban informality and the cinematic production of the urban south.

Feb 9 Instructions on submitting research paper and framing exercise topics
Students' presentations and discussion

Assigned Readings

- B Mennel "Ghettos and Barrios" in B Mennel *Cities and Cinema*. New York: Routledge, 2009, p 153-176.
- Teresa PR Caldeira (2008) "Worlds Set Apart" *Urban Age* December

February 9th at 4:45pm: Screening of *La Ciudad* by David Riker (1999)

Assignments:

1) Unit 1 Response, on "Urban Others: The production of urban cosmopolitan dystopias," due IN CLASS on February 14th (covering material from week 1-5)

2) One paragraph description of the Framing Exercise and

3) One paragraph description of research paper topic are due printed out in class on September February 14th

THEMATIC UNIT 2 (WEEKS 6-11)

DIVIDED CITY: SPATIAL SEGREGATION AND BORDERLINES

WEEK 6: Feb 14-16

Feb 14 Lecture on urban internal borders, immigration and the re-making of a city and *La Ciudad*

Turn in:

-- **Unit 1 viewing response**

-- **Paragraph proposing topic for framing exercise and research paper**

Feb 16 Students' presentations and discussion

Assigned Readings

- S Sassen (2006) Chapter 1, "Place and Production in the Global Economy" from *Cities in a World Economy*, 2nd ed., (151-175).
- R Sklar (1999) "Rediscovering Radical Film Style: An Interview with David Riker" *Cineaste*

February 16th at 4:45pm: Screening of *West Beyrouth* by Ziad Doueiri (1998)

Assignments: Viewing Response is due on Tuesday, February 21st in class.

WEEK 7: Feb 21-23

Feb 21 Lecture on divided cities and *West Beyrouth*

Feb 23 Students' presentations and discussion

Assigned Readings

- Interview with Ziad Doueiri
- Mennel, "Divided cities: Berlin, Belfast, and Beirut"

February 23rd at 4:45pm: Screening of *La Zona* by Rodrigo Pla' (2007)

Assignment: Viewing Response due on Tuesday, February 28th in class.

WEEK 8: Feb 28-Mar 1

Feb 28 Lecture on gated communities, security and the privatization of space and *La Zona*

Mar 1 Students' presentations and discussion

Assigned Readings

- Giglia A (2008) "Gated Communities in Mexico City" *Home Cultures*, 5 (1), pp. 65-84.
- T P R Caldeira (1999) "Fortified Enclaves" in *Theorizing the City* (ed) Seth M Lowe, pp. 83-110.

March 1st at 4:45pm: Screening of *The Visitor* by Tom McCarthy (2007)

Assignment: Viewing Response due on Tuesday, March 6th in class.

WEEK 9: Mar 6-8

Mar 6 Lecture on *The Visitor*, undocumented immigrants in the US urban infrastructure for deportation.
Workshop on Framing Exercise

Mar 8 Students' presentations and discussion
Students share topics for their framing exercises

Assigned Readings

- TBD on immigration policy changes and activism

March 8th at 4:45pm: Screening of *In This World* by Michael Winterbottom (2008)

Assignments: The FRAMING EXERCISE IS DUE PRINTED OUT IN CLASS on Tuesday, March 13th.

No Viewing response.

WEEK 10: Mar 13-15

Mar 13 Lecture on *In this World*, camps as contemporary urban form, and transnational urban experience of migrants and refugees.
TURN IN FRAMING EXERCISE

Marh 15 Students' presentations and discussion

Assigned Readings

- M Agier (2002) "Between War and City. Towards an Urban Anthropology of Refugee Camps" *Ethnography*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 317-341 (2002).
- OR
- C Hailey (2009) *Camps: A Guide to 21st Century Space*, pp. 242-262, 324-331, 410-415.

No screening March 15th

Assignment: Thematic Unit Response II on "Divided city: spatial segregation and borderlines" (Weeks 6-11) due in class on Tuesday March 27th.

WEEK 11: Mar 27-29

Mar 27 Research Paper Workshop (1)
Turn in Thematic Unit Response II

Mar 29 OPEN HOUSE: Students exhibit their framing exercise.

No screening March 29th

Assignment: A two-page draft of the Research Paper is due IN CLASS PRINTED OUT on Tuesday, April 3rd. No viewing response is due.

THEMATIC UNIT 3 (WEEKS 12-16)

ENGAGED ESTRANGEMENT: LEARNING TO SEE THE CITY

WEEK 12: Apr 3-5

Apr 3 Summary Lecture on the first two thematic units
Introduction to the unit on Engaged Estrangement
Turn in 2-PAGE DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER

Apr 5 Discussion

April 5th at 4:45pm: Screening of *The Gleaners and I* by Agnes Varda (2000)

Assignment: work on Research Paper. While no viewing response required this week, an optional response on *Gleaners* may be submitted for extra credit.

WEEK 13: Apr 10-12

Apr 10 Lecture on *The Gleaners* and contemporary urban flanerrie
Turn in 2-page draft of research paper.

Apr 12 Student presentations and Discussion

April 12th at 4:45pm: Screening of *Zazie dans le metro* by Louis Malle (1960)

Assignment: Viewing Response due on Tuesday, April 17th in class.

WEEK 14: Apr 17-19

Apr 17 Students' Papers Presentations (panel 1)

Apr 19 Students' Paper Presentations (panel 2)

No screening April 19th.

Assignment: Research Paper due PRINTED OUT LAST DAY OF CLASS Thursday, April 26th

WEEK 15: Apr 24-26

Apr 24 Wrap up on the course, building on *The Gleaners* and *Zazie*: freedom of movement in the city, a gaze of estrangement, and the urban experience.

Apr 26 Turn in papers, write course evaluations and say goodbyes.