

Children and Education in World Cinema

Dudley Andrew, R. Seldon Rose, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature and Professor Emeritus of Film Studies

Proposed Seminar Description:

Children have long been a primary target of the institution of cinema. From early on children's film behavior was monitored by studies and regulated by censorship. Evidently cinema is a dangerous pastime. But this seminar will switch things around, because children have been dangerous for the cinema too. As subjects and actors in films, they have proven recalcitrant, unpredictable, combustible; in short, they have behaved as children often do. Insofar as cinema is an institution (of the state or of entertainment business) children must be disciplined to ensure its smooth operation. And yet much of what is valuable in cinema involves the very unpredictability that is natural in children. The seminar will monitor this give-and-take, which is not so different from what occurs in education. Styles of films, like styles of teaching, channel or provoke the energy within children. This may protect the institution and allow it to replicate itself one generation to the next, or this may instigate change evolution in teaching by unleashing the child's imagination. The primary question faced by both a teacher and a director may come down to the same thing: how does one instill freedom and independence in those who are as dependent as children are and who often seem more ready to imitate rather than to initiate?

Our seminar will examine children and schooling through films from distinct cultures. We begin in France where cinema and educational philosophy have been constantly debated. Our orientation session will focus on readings about art cinema and children, with Francois Truffaut's *400 Blows* the key example to teach us how to watch films passionately through its script of delinquency. Our main sessions in July open with Truffaut again, this time his historical inquest, *The Wild Child* (1969), which forms a bridge from 18th century Enlightenment philosophy to Maria Montessori. The French pedagogical ideal is tested by a pair of award winning proto-documentaries, one of an inner-city classroom, the other of a one-room rural schoolhouse. A second paired set, this time from Hollywood, will set our inner city schooling problems against those of privileged suburban students.

The seminar then looks far off for indications of similarity and difference among children and their educations. Often allegories of national disposition and development, the chosen films from Iran, China, Japan, West Africa and Mexico speak to us from points of view different enough to provoke our own ideas and perhaps challenge as much as intrigue our students.

Likely titles to be discussed: *Keita* (Burkina Faso); *Not One Less* (PRC); *Where is the Friend's House*, *Blackboards*, and *Children of Heaven* (Iran); *Nobody Knows* and *Family Game* (Japan); *Prayers for the Stolen* (Mexico). Most of the films will be made available to be watched before the seminar begins.

Alien Earths

Sarbani Basu, Professor of Astronomy

Proposed Seminar Description:

The discovery of planets around other stars was one of the most exciting discoveries in the last decade of the 20th century. Since then, thousands of extra-solar planets, or exoplanets, have been discovered. Many planetary systems have been discovered as well, most of them quite different from our own solar system.

This seminar will be devoted to these alien worlds. We shall discuss how they are discovered, how their properties are studied, and what do we know about them. We will set the stage by looking at the properties of solar system planets first, in order to compare and contrast what we have determined about these planets. Next, we will discuss the question of habitability and what type of conditions may be needed for life to emerge on other planets, and more importantly, what are the "bio-signatures" that can be used to detect whether there is life on other planets.

While this is a science seminar, we will make a foray into literature, particularly some science fiction, where there are myriads of portraits of fictional alien worlds and the aliens that live on them. Thus, this seminar may also be suitable for those wishing to teach a module on science fiction and see how rich imagination often paves the way to hard science.

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American Global Power from Empire to Superpower

David Engerman, Leitner International Interdisciplinary Professor of History

Proposed Seminar Description:

This seminar will explore the nature of American global power from the late 19th through the late 20th century. A core question will be the United States influence on the world and the world's influence on the United States. Our readings will devote significant attention to the neglected role of formal empire — territories and colonies under American control — after 1898, especially Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Hawai'i. It will examine not just how the United States affected those colonies, but how empire affected the United States. It will then ask a similar set of questions about vectors of American global influence during the Cold War — how the US changed the world and how those engagements in the world changed the United States.

The seminar is designed for social studies and ELA teachers at the middle school and high school levels, but could also work, depending on the specific ideas for the Curriculum Unit, for other teachers as well.

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The Social Struggles of Contemporary Black Art

Roderick Ferguson, William Robertson Coe Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Professor of American Studies

Proposed Seminar Description:

This seminar puts contemporary black art from visual artists in North America, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa in conversation with black writers from those regions. It does so to illustrate the conversations that were explicitly and implicitly taking place between visual artists, philosophers, writers, and cultural critics. The seminar covers such issues as homophobia, transphobia, patriarchy, colonialism, neocolonialism, police violence, racism, war, migration, poverty, and ecological devastation.

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Fires, Floods, and Droughts: Impacts of Climate Change in the U.S.

Jordan Peccia, Thomas E. Golden, Jr. Professor of Environmental Engineering

Proposed Seminar Description:

Driven by climate, a variety of environmentally-associated problems will arise over the next 50 years. While mitigating increasing temperatures will require a global effort, the societal impacts of climate change are not equally distributed by geography or population. In the western U.S., drought and wildfires are the major concern. In the eastern U.S., extreme precipitation events and flooding have become more common. Climate impacts can also be community specific, ranging from the consequences of thinning sea ice for indigenous Alaskans, to changing agriculture practice for rural communities in the arid west, to the exacerbation of heat islands and heat waves in urban populations.

This seminar will address the different ways in which climate change impacts the U.S. We will do so through the perspective of how your students' lives could be impacted. Scientific focus will be placed on understanding and identifying statistical trends in climate and environmental data, and we will investigate local engineering solutions or adaptations.

The seminar is science focused and is well-suited for high school and junior high school math and science teachers with the goal of producing units that contain scientific, mathematic, and design content. It is my hope that by learning from a perspective of local problems with direct and visible impact, your students will become more engaged in science, statistics, and engineering.

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