Code: FLMD16-212.15
BMI-FLMD-314E.09
BMI-FLMD-312E.09

Course title: Changing faces of the Western: myth and genre

Course convenors: Tibor Hirsch

Class time and place: Monday 12 30-14 00 -137

Course type: Seminar

Course content: The course will offer an overview on the Western both as a unique phenomenon within the American film history and as an independent genre with a rich typology and numerous ways of classification. On the other hand “Western phenomenon” is going to be analysed (in workshop frame) as the richest reservoir of cinematographic reflections on the American Myth. From this respect we will take the most benefit from the Western theory and Western typology of Will Wright (Six-Guns and Society, Berkeley: California Press, 1975.) as a guideline. Before dealing with the genre and the movies in this context we are going to touch some related topics, first of all the idea of the “Frontier” (using and discussing the different generic interpretations of the Turner Theory), and the “Myth”, referring to C.G. Jung, and Bronislaw Malinowski whose defining sentences are just good for a proper starting point: “Myth…safeguards and enforces morality, it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man… Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization; it is not an idle tale, but a hard-worked active force…”

Classes and Topics:

1. The elements of the “America Myth”
2. The Jungian collective unconsciousness (genetic memories) and the all-time pioneer/immigrant - represented in American literature and cinema
3. The Western and its interpretations as a genre
4. Wright’s Western typology and its connection to the Myth
5. The Classical Pattern, the values conveyed and its social-historical context.
6. Films to represent the Classical Pattern (analysis and workshop discussion)
7. The Vengeance Pattern, the values conveyed and its social-historical context.
8. Films to represent the Vengeance Pattern (analysis and workshop discussion)
9. The Transitional Pattern, the values conveyed and its social-historical context.
10. Films to represent the Transitional Pattern (analysis and workshop discussion)
11. The Professional Pattern, the values conveyed and its social-historical context.
12. Films to represent the Professional Pattern (analysis and workshop discussion)

Requirements: First classes are rather lectures, later ones are rather seminars – and students are expected to analyse films in independent presentations, using the common social-historical approach and terminology we have previously agreed. Presentations and a final thesis (6 pages) are the base of the evaluation.

Watching these 10 westerns in parallel with the course is a must.

For classes 4-7:
Curtiz: *Dodge City* (1939)
Ford: *Stagecoach* (1939)
Ford: *My Darling Clementine* (1946)
Hawks: *Rio Bravo* (1959)

**For classes 8-9:**
Ray: *Johnny Guitar* (1954)
Zinnemann: *High Noon* (1952)
Wellman: *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1943)

**For classes 10-12:**
Sturges: *The Magnificent Seven* (1960)
Leone: *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* - "Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo" (original title) (1966)
Leone: *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968)

**Indicative Reading:**