

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department: Communications and The Arts

Programme Film Studies
Film & Photography
International History

FHEQ Level: 5

Course Title: Post-Apocalyptic Worlds

Course Code: FLM 5420

Total Hours: 120

Timetabled Hours: 45

Guided Learning Hours: 0

Independent Learning Hours: 75

Credits: 12 UK CATS credits
6 ECTS credits
3 US credits

Course Description:

This course investigates the cultural, political, historical and industrial development and contexts of post-apocalyptic film, television and media. Students will examine issues critical to the post-apocalyptic genre, covering histories, allegories, and storytelling strategies from the turn of the 20th Century to present day through early literature and contemporaneous media adaptations. Students will also engage with topics that explore Western and Non-Western (centric) perspectives, and a wide range of environmental and economic concerns. The course explores the idea that post-apocalyptic storyworlds offer a means of unpacking why popular culture of the last 20 years seems to resonate with so many notions of 'uncertainty': ascertaining why this genre is exemplary of the evolving hopes, desires and fears of the 21st Century.

Prerequisites:

GEP 4180 Research and Writing 2

Aims and Objectives:

This course aims to explore central questions in the study of post-apocalyptic worlds in cinema such as: How has this genre 'evolved' over the decades and now 'solidified' in its current state? What does post-apocalyptic cinema and media reveal about Western society's identities, ideologies and fears as well as global attitudes outside 'Occident' constructions. What are the significant approaches to examine the form and grammar of post-apocalyptic film and television? Students will in turn explore: a critical understanding of the theoretical approaches to the study of mainstream post-apocalyptic cinema; develop a range of skills to research and assess varying source materials as they relate to the post-apocalyptic genre; synthesize available information and develop academic arguments and reasoned judgments and appreciate post-apocalyptic films in their cultural contexts; gain the ability to critically analyse a range of post-apocalyptic media; develop a range of practical skills in relation to critical writing and clear communication, the ability to link theory, evidence and social issues, and effectively manage time and independent study.

Programme Outcomes:

Film Studies: A5iii, A5iv, B5ii, B5iii, C5i, D5ii

Film and Photography: A5iii, B5ii, B5iii, C5i-iii, D5i

International History: A5i, B5i, C5ii, C5iii, D5i, D5ii, D5iii

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by the Registry and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Develop a detailed understanding of major distinctive conventions of the post-apocalyptic genre as well as engage with the major thinkers, debates and paradigms involved in the study of such cinema, television, literature, comics and games.
- Develop a detailed understanding of how the post-apocalyptic genre is consumed and embedded in everyday life.
- Demonstrate the ability to formulate and synthesize arguments cogently regarding mainstream post-apocalyptic cinema and express them effectively in writing.
- Demonstrate the ability to deliver the work with limited direction and supervision, whilst considering and evaluating the work using justifiable criteria.

Indicative Content:

- Historical Contexts: Metaphor, Allegory and 'Folk Lore' of Nuclear, Viral, Alien, Mechanised, Ecological and Supernatural Forces.
- Cycles, Sub-genres and Hybridity: Movie Adaptions of literature and graphic novels.
- The Compromised American Frontier and Evolving Storytelling Strategies for literature, film, television and comics.
- Defining Post-apocalyptic Aesthetics in Art, Cinema, Games, Fashion and Architecture.
- Bio-political Activism, Environmental Disaster, Resource Identities, 'Slow Violence' and 'Hyper-Objects'.
- Globalisation, Marginalized Consumerism, and issues surrounding the 'Glocal'.
- 'Race', Gender and Sexuality: Intersectionality versus Post-feminism, Patriarchal Androcentrism, Social Inequality and Mobility.
- Visceral 'Haptic Visuality', Catharsis through Violence and Embodied Instinct in the Spectatorship of Survival Horror.
- Crisis of the Social Order and Uncertainty in an Age of 'Post-Truth' Politics.
- Apocalyptic Communities: Orientalism and Post-Colonial Ideologies of European Nationalism, Islam, Hinduism and East-Asian Modernism versus Traditionalism.
- Postmodernism: Existentialist Philosophies, Religion, Spirituality and the 'Sublime' versus 'Uncanny'.

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

The course includes screenings of extracts from feature films as well as short films. These will be followed by weekly lectures and class discussions. There will be additional assigned films to watch outside of class time. For some assignments in particular, students will be asked to seek out and analyse films of their own choosing as active researchers. Students should complete all the set readings for each week beforehand in order to participate fully in class discussion.

Student work is assessed through a variety of ways using both formative and summative approaches. Feedback is intended to help improve student approach to learning and achieve better results.

Indicative Texts:

- Gurr, Barbara. 2015. *Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Post-Apocalyptic TV and Film*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Lavigne, Carlen. 2018. *Post-Apocalyptic Patriarchy: American Television and Gendered Visions of Survival*. McFarland.
- Ratto, Casey. 2014. *From the Gunslinger to the Road Warrior: The Post-apocalyptic and the Western, in Literature, Film, and Video Games*.
- Walliss, John. 2011. *Doomsday America: The Pessimistic Turn of Post-9/11 Apocalyptic Cinema*. Liverpool Hope University
- Williams, Paul. 2011. *Race, Ethnicity and Nuclear War: Representations of Nuclear Weapons and Post-Apocalyptic Worlds*. Liverpool Science Fiction Texts and Studies
- Yar, M. 2015. *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster: Post-Apocalyptic Fictions and the Crisis of Social Order*. Palgrave MacMillan.

Journals:

Journal of Popular Film & Television

See syllabus for complete reading list

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
Various updates as part of the UG programme review	AB Jan 2022	
Revision – annual update	May 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	