

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department:	CASS
Programme:	BA in Film Studies with Combined Studies
FHEQ Level:	5
Course Title:	Science Fiction Film: Cowboys and Aliens
Course Code:	FLM 5400
Course Leader:	Dom Alessio
Student Engagement Hours:	120
Lectures:	22.5
Seminar / Tutorials:	22.5
Independent / Guided Learning:	75
Semester:	Fall/Spring/Summer
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

This course examines the important role that US science fiction (SF) film has played in the development of the genre as well as its wider significance politically, socially and culturally. It also recognises the influence that other cultures have had on the evolution of US SF film as well as the US's impact globally. The class begins by looking at SF's origins, defining features and some key theoretical concepts. It then examines SF's significance in the US and globally by focusing upon the genre's economic importance as well as a number of important themes, such as: (i) how SF film can be read as a means to analyse the social, cultural and political concerns of the day, including class/gender, Cold War/xenophobic anxieties and environmental threats; (ii) how SF film can be interpreted as a critique (and sometimes a champion) of American imperial hegemony; and (iii) finally the trans-national connections between American SF and other world SF literature and visual culture (including cinema and television). The course concludes by studying the role of the internet in marketing and re-shaping the genre. Where possible the class makes use of museum and archive collections in London as well as relevant film screenings.

Prerequisites: ARW 4195 or GEP 4180

Aims and Objectives:

- To engage critically with key concepts and thinkers in the SF film genre;

- To develop an historical understanding of the history of film, science fiction and science fiction film;
- To examine the SF film genre thematically and historically from a US and world perspective in order to better understand how different groups may make use of, and respond, to such filmic texts;
- To examine SF film from an interdisciplinary perspective, looking at film, literature, television, gaming and internet-based visual media, with the intention of demonstrating how the genre has become embedded in everyday life;
- To evaluate the role of SF as a vehicle of political expression, demonstrating the relationship between discourse, culture and identity;
- To formulate cogent research questions and to develop fully-referenced and informed/articulate analysis.

Programme Outcomes:

5A(i, ii, iii); 5B(ii, iii); 5C(i, ii, iii); 5D(i)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by 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:

- Demonstrate a critical engagement with key theories/debates in a historical/political contextual framework. (Theoretical knowledge Base)
- Demonstrate a detailed understanding of the ways in which the SF film genre has evolved and shaped/been shaped by western and non-western social-cultural identities/realities. (Practical knowledge Base)
- Develop thoughtful and well-supported arguments and pursue independent research using theorists/texts from class and own reading. (Cognitive Skills)
- Engage with cross-cultural and intercultural perspectives of film production and reception. (Personal Development)

Indicative Content:

- The economic, political and cultural significance of SF film
- The origins of SF
- A history of US and world SF film
- Key terms, debates and theorists in SF analysis
- Inter-textual and trans-national influences within the US and world SF film genre
- Significant themes in US and world SF: invasion/race, class, gender and the environment
- The future of SF

Assessment:

