

HL 3002 FILM, POLITICS, ETHICS

Module lecturer: Professor C. J. W.-L. Wee

Semester I, 2021-2022 – August 2021

Tuesdays, 0930-1230 hours, On Campus: LT17

The 1960's *counterculture* refers to an anti-establishment cultural phenomenon that developed first in Great Britain and the USA, spreading throughout much of the Western world to the mid-1970s – with London, New York City and San Francisco being hotbeds of early activity – and to other locales such as Japan. There is a link between *more developed societies* and the desire to challenge its very successes. The aggregate movement gained momentum as the Civil Rights Movement grew in the US, and would later become revolutionary with the expansion of the military intervention in Vietnam, though the tendency was not political in conventional party politics. As the 1960s progressed, social tensions developed concerning other issues, and tended to flow along generational lines – among youth and young adults – regarding sexuality, women's rights, traditional modes of authority and the experimentation with psychoactive drugs.

This module introduces students to the impact of the socio-cultural changes of the 1960s on cinematic production in the USA, Britain and Japan.

- (1) The 'ethics' in this module relates to the moral, social and political principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity, and how older social norms become challenged in the process. The counterculture was instrumental in providing era-relevant content and for the film industry.
- (2) Some of the cinema that developed also had an *experimental* edge to it. (For this module, they are: *Performance*, *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* and *Funeral Parade of the Roses*.) Although never a formally organised movement, the so-called New Wave filmmakers were linked by their rejection of classical cinematic form and their spirit of youthful iconoclasm. Many also engaged in their work with the social and political upheavals of the era, making their radical experiments with editing, visual style and narrative – and in that respect this module deals with such developments, and particularly with the demanding Japanese avant-garde. Japan is included so that students will *not* take Anglo-American norms as universal.

Central skills for the module:

1. Developing close-reading skills for the films
2. Students are expected to engage with *both* the content *and* the forms that the films take.

Note: The secondary readings suggested are for students' discretionary use, but note that *historical context* is vital for understanding the films.

Core material:

Required films/texts to be acquired/purchased by students. **Please plan in advance for yourself, especially if you do not wish to watch them at the libraries.** The Japanese films are harder to find *illegally* though they are available for purchase. DVDs will be available in the Chinese Library AV reserves for 4-hour slots):

US films:

- Mike Nichols (dir.), *The Graduate* (1967) – PS3573.E195G733 1999
- Arthur Penn (dir.), *Alice's Restaurant* (1969) – PN1995.9 W61398
- John Schlesinger (dir.), *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) – PN1995.9 P76M629
- Stanley Kramer (dir.), *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967) – PN1995.9.M3G936

British films:

- John Schlesinger (dir.), *Darling* (1965) – PN1995.9 D221

- Lewis Gilbert (dir.), *Alfie* (1966) – PN1995.9.M27A387
- Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg (dirs.), *Performance* (1968, released 1970) – PN1995.9 G3P438 2007

Japanese films:

- ŌSHIMA Nagisa (dir.), *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief (Shijuku Dorobō Nikki)*, 1968) – HV6665.J3S556
- MATSUMOTO Toshio (dir.), *Funeral Parade of Roses (Bara no Sōretsu)*, 1969) – PN1995.9 T69F981

Readings:

Core Readings

- Russell Duncan, ‘The Summer of Love and Protest: Transatlantic Counterculture in the 1960s’, in *The Transatlantic Sixties: Europe and the United States in the Counterculture Decade*, ed. Grzegorz Kość, Clara Juncker, Sharon Monteith and Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013) – E846.T772
- Selection from John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts, ‘Subcultures, Cultures and Class’, in *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, 2nd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), pp.3-4, 45-59 (Intro. & sections on ‘Rise of the Counter-Cultures’ and ‘The Social Reaction to Youth’; but can focus on pp.45-56 in particular) – HQ799.G7R433

Introduction to British film:

- Online: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-16%2B-source-guides-1960s-british-cinema-2000.pdf>
- Online: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/lists/10-great-films-set-swinging-60s>
- Robert Murphy, *Sixties British Cinema* (London: BFI [British Film Institute], 1992) – PN1993.5.G7M978

Introduction to US film:

- Barry Keith Grant (ed.), *American Cinema of the 1960s: Themes and Variations* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008); relevant parts.

Introduction to the Japanese avant garde:

- OGIURA Eiji, ‘Japan’s 1968: A Collective Reaction to Rapid Economic Growth in an Age of Turmoil’, trans. Kyoko Selden, *The Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 13, issue 12, no. 1 (2015), <https://apjif.org/2015/13/11/Oguma-Eiji/4300.html> **
- Taro Nettleton, ‘Shinjuku as Site: *Funeral Parade of Roses* and *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief*’, *Screen* 55, no. 1 (March 2014): pp.5–28. Obtain from e-journals section of NTU library. **
- UCHINO Tadashi, ‘Misperforming and the Everyday: *Shijuku Dorobō Nikki (Shinjuku Thief’s Diary)*’, conference paper, 2009. **
- Yuriko FURUHATA, *Cinema of Actuality: Japanese Avant-Garde Filmmaking in the Season of Image Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013); relevant parts.
- Stephen Barber, ‘Tokyo 1969: Revolutionary Image Thieves in a Disintegrating City’, *Senses of Cinema* no. 69 (December 2013) (Essay on both Ōshima and Matsumoto): <http://sensesofcinema.com/2013/feature-articles/tokyo-1969-revolutionary-image-thieves-in-a-disintegrating-city/>

KEY: ** Required reading for the relevant class.

Note: Search online for reviews of the films; there will be many.

Weekly Schedule:

	Topic
Week 1 10 August	Introduction The 1960s, the counterculture, film
Week 2 17 August	<i>Material for discussion:</i> Duncan, ‘The Summer of Love’, and Clarke et al., ‘Subcultures, Culture and Class’. The social context of and the issues in the 1960s.
Week 3 24 August	Penn (dir.), <i>Alice’s Restaurant</i> (1969) Mainstream America and the counter-culture
Week 4 31 August	Nichols (dir.), <i>The Graduate</i> (1967) Love and bourgeois/establishment values
Week 5 7 Sept	Schlesinger (dir.), <i>Midnight Cowboy</i> (1969) Love, gender identity and alternative friendship among the underclass in the metropolitan centre
Week 6 14 Sept	Kramer (dir.), <i>Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner</i> (1967) Love and inter-racial relationships – and the blind spots of liberalism and tolerant people
Week 7 21 Sept	Schlesinger (dir.), <i>Darling</i> (1965) Swinging London and the opportunities for a young woman
Friday, 24 Sept	ESSAY I DUE – ON AMERICAN FILMS Both hard and soft copies – by 4pm
27 Sept	RECESS WEEK
Week 8 5 Oct	Gilbert (dir.), <i>Alfie</i> (1966) Swinging London and the dark side of male promiscuity
Week 9 12 Oct	Cammell and Roeg (dirs.), <i>Performance</i> (1968, released 1970) Pop culture and crime
Week 10 19 Oct	<i>Required reading:</i> 1) essential background to politics in the films, Ogura, ‘Japan’s 1968’; 2) Uchino, ‘Performing’ (for <i>Diary</i>); Nettleton, ‘Shinjuku as Site’ (for <i>Diary</i> and <i>Funeral Parade</i>)

	<p>Ōshima (dir.), <i>Diary of a Shinjuku Thief (Shinjuku Dorobō Nikki)</i>, 1968)</p> <p>Sexual freedom and revolution</p>
<p>Week 11 26 Oct</p>	<p>Ōshima, cont'd.</p> <p>Matsumoto (dir.), <i>Funeral Parade of Roses (Bara no Sōretsu)</i>, 1969)</p> <p>Gender, alternative identity and patriarchy</p>
<p>Friday, 29 October</p>	<p>ESSAY II DUE – ON BRITISH FILMS Both hard and soft copies – by 4pm</p>
<p>Week 12 2 Nov</p>	<p>Matsumoto, cont'd.</p>
<p>Week 13 9 Nov</p>	<p>Overview</p>
<p>Week 14 16 Nov</p>	<p>In-Class test</p>

Method of instruction:

3-hour seminar with one break

Mode of Assessment:

100% Continuous Assessment

Breakdown:

- Essay assignment I: US Films (1,500-1,800-word essay) 25%*
- Essay assignment II: British Films (1,500-1,800-word essay) 30%*
- In-class, group presentation at start of class 15%**
- End of semester test (2.5 hour in-class essay test) 30%

Key:

* Inclusive of notes and references. *Must adhere to word limit. Penalties will incur otherwise.*

** Presentation format: a *maximum* of *twenty-five* (25) mins. **Penalties will incur thereafter.** Offer a pared-down overview of the material: (1) *central* ideas/themes, to help focus the discussion; and (2) your critical responses to the film/readings. **Note: Groups must meet lecturer for a short meeting (20 mins.) to discuss their proposed outline of presentation material.**

Academic Integrity

All members of the NTU community are responsible for upholding the values of academic integrity in all academic undertakings. At the beginning of the semester, you are required to submit a signed declaration guaranteeing that all graded and non-graded work throughout the semester is original and is created without assistance from others except where explicitly allowed by the module lecturer.

- A guide to academic integrity can be found here:
<http://www.ntu.edu.sg/ai/ForEveryone/pages/aguidetoacademicintegrity.aspx>

- The full academic integrity policy can be found here:
<http://www.ntu.edu.sg/ai/ForEveryone/Pages/NTUAcademicIntegrityPolicy.aspx>

You are expected to understand current academic policies regarding academic honesty before signing the declaration. A declaration form will be in NTULearn in ‘Content’ and you should sign and submit a copy to me in class during the first meeting. If there are any issues/problems, then by the second class meeting. No marks will be awarded until the signed declaration has been received.

Suggested Secondary Reading:

(Do explore and supplement the readings offered here with your own selection. You are not confined to this short list, nor are you required to read everything on this list. There is a fair amount of serious material that can be found online – but Wiki is not acceptable.)

General introduction to the 1960s:

Lytle, Mark H., *America’s Uncivil Wars: The Sixties Era from Elvis to the Fall of Richard Nixon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) – E839.L996 (HSS Library)

Miles, Barry, *In the Sixties* (London: Rocket 88 Books, 2017) – DA589.4 M643 (HSS Library)

British and US film readings:

Cowie, Peter, *Revolution! The Explosion of World Cinema in the Sixties* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2004) – PN1993.5 A1C874r (WKWSCILibrary)

J. J. Murphy, *The Black Hole of the Camera: The Films of Andy Warhol* (Berkeley, Calif.: U of California Press, 2012) – N6537.W28M978 (WKWSCILibrary)

Douglas Crimp, *Our Kind of Movie: The Films of Andy Warhol* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2014) – N6537.W28C929 (ADM Library)

Japanese film readings:

David Desser, *Eros Plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema: Introduction to Japanese New Wave Cinema* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana UP, 1988) – PN1995.3 J3D475 (ADM Library)