AS.100.377
The Age of Reason on the Silver Screen: Cinematic Representations of the Enlightenment

Tuesdays, 1:30-4:00

Classroom:
Prof. Pawel Maciejko
Classroom: Hodson 110
Office Hours: by appointment
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Course Description:

This course shall focus on selected cinematic representations of the Age of the Enlightenment. As a matter of course, professional academic historians are not satisfied with most representations of historical events in the movies. Most historical dramas, they argue, including the ones avowing historical accuracy, present simplified accounts of the past, privileging one interpretation, eliminating contingencies, and reducing complex processes to a simple story line. We shall explore the question if the movies are indeed bound to be historically inaccurate or if the cinematic representation does in fact have some advantages over traditional academic monographs. In particular, we shall inquire whether films can accurately render an atmosphere of a historical period rather than narrate an event. In our exploration of the world of the Enlightenment, we shall have two guides: Giacomo Casanova and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Learning Goals:

This course has two main goals. First is to acquaint the student with the historical period of the Enlightenment. The other one is to discuss the problem of accurate representation of historical past in different media.

Required Texts:


Course Requirements:

This seminar puts heavy emphasis on close reading and careful analysis of the reading assignments. The reading assignments listed below a given session should be completed by the date under which they appear. **I will ask you to put away your laptops, phones, and other multi-use screens for the duration of each class session.**
The final decision on any grade derives from my global assessment of your work and cannot be quantified exactly. Roughly speaking, however, the breakdown is as follows:
- Participation: 40%
- First assignment (3-pages): 20%
- One 10-page final paper: 40%

No extensions will be granted without my prior permission, and late papers will be graded lower at the rate of one grade-step per day (A to A-, A- to B+, etc). Needless to say, complete honesty and probity in your work is a must. For information, see http://ethics.jhu.edu

If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact Dr. Richard Sanders, in Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

**01/28:**

Readings:


**02/11:**

Movie: Milos Forman, Valmont (1989)

Watch at home: Stephen Frears Dangerous Liaisons (1988)
Roger Kumble, Cruel Intentions (1999)

**02/18:**

Readings:


02/25:


Watch at home: Federico Fellini, *La Dolce Vita* (1960)

03/03:

Readings:


03/10:


03/24:
Readings:


03/31:


Watch at home: Ingmar Bergman, Sawdust and Tinsel (1953)

04/07:

Readings:


04/14:

Movie: Peter Brook, Marat/Sade (1967)

Watch at home: Andrzej Wajda, Danton (1983)

04/21:

Readings:


04/28:


Watch at home: Carlos Saura, Io, Don Giovanni (2009)