

CTCS 464:
The Romantic Comedy
In Classical, Postwar, and Reactionary/Revolutionary
Hollywood
(1929 – 1976)

Summer 2009
(First Session)

Monday & Wednesdays
1 p.m to 5:30 p.m.
Norris Theater

Instructor: Dr. Drew Casper
The Alma and Alfred Hitchcock Professor of American Film

Course Description:

An in-depth analysis the myths, conventions and iconographies of the romantic comedy genre in its Classical, Postwar and Reactionary/Revolutionary periods, this course will explore its extra-cinematic determinants (major historical events, economic situations, societal issues and other popular leisure activities) and cinematic determinants (business, technology, censorship, generic patterns, major directors, the star and the star system). Finally, this course will also examine the major theoretical issues of the genre.

Teaching Assistants: Kate Fortmueller (kfortmueller@gmail.com) & David Lerner (lernerd2003@yahoo.com). Office Hours: IMS Building, 2nd Floor, Monday and Wednesday 11:30 – 12:30pm

Dr. Casper's Office Hours:

12:00 – 1:00pm, Monday and Wednesday
323 School of Cinematic Arts Building – (213) 740-3334

If you wish to see Dr. Casper during his office hours, you must make an appointment in advance by signing up on the appointment sheet at the front desk of the Critical Studies office (SCA 320).

Course Requirements:

- I. **Attendance:** Prompt and regular attendance for the full class period is of extreme importance. Missing the screening of any film will seriously limit your success in the course. NOT ALL OF THE FILMS SCREENED IN CLASS ARE AVAILABLE ON VIDEOTAPE OR DVD. It is your responsibility to make up any missed screenings and to obtain detailed notes from another student.

- II. **Required Readings:** Copies of each of these books will be on reserve on the ground level of Leavey Library. All books are available at the bookstore. **Note: Not all readings will be assigned per class session. If they are not assigned for a specific day they must be completed by the final lecture.**
 - A. Casper, Drew. Postwar Hollywood, 1946-1962. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
 - B. Coward, Noël. Private Lives. A&C Black, 2003.
 - C. Glitre, Kathrina. Hollywood Romantic Comedy: States of the Union, 1934 - 1965. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2006.
 - D. Shakespeare, William. Much Ado About Nothing. NY: Signet Classics, 1998.

- III. **Papers and Exams:** Papers are to be turned in by the end of the screenings on the date they are due. Students also need to submit electronic copies of their papers to Turnitin on Blackboard by 11:59 pm the day that the paper is due. Do not turn in papers to the TA office. Late papers will be excused only in those cases of documented illness or family emergency. **LATE PAPERS WILL DROP ONE LETTER GRADE FOR EACH CLASS SESSION THE PAPER IS LATE**. All papers must be turned in by the last lecture on June 29. FAILURE TO WRITE A PAPER OR EXAM WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC F FOR THE COURSE.

To turn in your paper electronically, go to the Assignments section of Blackboard. There, you will see three links (Paper #1, Paper #2, and Final), open the appropriate link and the submission form will open. Enter your name and a submission title and then, click the browse button to locate the file you want to submit. Click submit to upload the selected file to Blackboard.

- VI. **Academic Integrity:** Be sure to read the attached sheet outlining "Academic Integrity Violations." PLAGIARISM WILL BE REPORTED TO THE OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT (see your SCampus), WILL RESULT IN FAILURE OF THE COURSE, AND COULD LEAD TO DISMISSAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY. If you have any questions or doubts about how to properly cite a source, see your Teaching Assistant, consult the online tutorial (<http://breeze.usc.edu/academicintegrity>) or drop by the Writing Center (Taper Hall 310).

Grade Requirements:

Paper #1	25% of final grade	Due June 8
Paper #2	25% of final grade	Due June 17
Final Exam	50% of final grade	Due June 29

Note: Grade requirements apply to both undergraduate and graduate students

Two 6-page papers: Both papers should be 6 full pages in length, typed, double-spaced, using 12-point Times font and 1.25 inch margins.

Paper #1 (due June 8)

Drawing on Much Ado About Nothing OR Private Lives, discuss how the themes, narrative and conceit, setting, characters and tone from these literary texts are evident in *The King and the Chorus Girl*, *It Happened One Night*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *The Lady Eve* or *The More the Merrier* (select **one** film).

Paper #2 (due June 17):

Chose a romantic comedy from the last three years (see samples below), comparing and contrasting its myth, conventions and iconography with past romantic comedies.

Choose One:

- *27 Dresses* (Anne Fletcher, 2008)
- *The Break-up* (Payton Reed, 2006)
- *Bride Wars* (Gary Winick, 2009)
- *Enchanted* (Kevin Lima, 2007)
- *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* (Nick Stoller, 2008)
- *Knocked Up* (Judd Apatow, 2007)
- *Lars and the Real Girl* (Craig Gillespie, 2007)
- *Made of Honor* (Paul Weiland, 2008)
- *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day* (Bharat Nalluri, 2008)
- *Music and Lyrics* (Marc Lawrence, 2007)
- *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist* (Peter Sollett, 2008)
- *Waitress* (Adrienne Shelly, 2007)
- *What Happens in Vegas* (Tom Vaughan, 2008)

Take Home Final Exam (due June 29):

Students will be given the questions for the take-home final in the early weeks for the semester, and it will be your responsibility to appropriately answer each question over the course of the semester. Final exams should be typed, double-spaced, using 12-point Times font and 1.25 inch margins. Each exam question should be answered in 2 pages (approx. 500 words).

Disability Services:

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the lead T.A. as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am - 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, phone number (213) 740-0776.

Norris Cinema Theater:

Norris Cinema Theater is a unique classroom. It is used to showcase speakers and films for the guests of the School of Cinematic Arts and other departments at USC. Designed as an ideal viewing environment, the carpeting and upholstery are considered part of the acoustical design. Also, please do not leave a mess in the theater. Please throw out any trash you bring into the theater. If a TA sees you trying to bring food or drink into the theater, you will be asked to eat or drink outside the theater. We ask your cooperation in keeping Norris Cinema Theater presentable by adhering to the following rules:

NO SMOKING, EATING, OR DRINKING IN THE THEATER OR THE LOBBY. ALSO, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM PLACING YOUR FEET ON THE SEATS. IF YOU MUST LEAVE THE THEATER DURING A LECTURE OR A FILM, DO NOT USE THE SIDE DOORS; EXIT INSTEAD THROUGH THE REAR DOORS.

CTCS 464 SYLLABUS FOR SUMMER 2009

Session 1: Wednesday, May 20

I. The Classical Period, 1929-1945

Private Lives (MGM, 1931)

- Director/Producer: Sidney Franklin
- Writer: Hanns Kraly, Richard Schayer, and Claudine West, from the play by Noël Coward
- Cinematographer: R.O. Binger
- Editor: Conrad Nervig
- Art Director: Cedric Gibbons
- Costumes: Adrian

With: Norma Shearer, Robert Montgomery, Reginald Denny and Una Merkel

The King and the Chorus Girl (Warner Brothers, 1937)

- Director/Producer: Mervin LeRoy
- Writer: Norman Krasna and Groucho Marx
- Cinematographer: Tony Gaudio
- Editor: Tom Richards
- Art Director: Robert M. Haas
- Costumes: Orry-Kelly
- Music: Leo Forbstein

With: Fernand Gravey and Joan Blondell

Session 2: Wednesday, May 27

- The Classical Period (cont.)

It Happened One Night (Columbia Pictures, 1934)

- Director: Frank Capra
- Producer: Harry Cohn
- Writer: Robert Riskin, from the book by Samuel Hopkins Adams
- Cinematographer: Joseph Walker
- Editor: Gene Havlick
- Art Director: Stephen Goosson
- Costumes: Robert Kalloch
- Music: Louis Silvers

With: Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert

Read: Glitre, Hollywood Romantic Comedy: States of the Union, 1934-65

Session 3: Monday, June 1

- The Classical Period (cont.)

***The Philadelphia Story* (MGM, 1940)**

- Director: George Cukor
- Producer: Joseph L. Mankiewicz
- Writer: Waldo Salt and Donald Ogden Stewart, from the play by Philip Barry
- Cinematographer: Joseph Ruttenberg
- Editor: Frank Sullivan
- Art Director: Cedric Gibbons
- Costumes: Adrian
- Music: Franz Waxman

With: Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn and James Stewart

Read: Coward, Private Lives
Shakespeare, Much Ado About Nothing

Session 4: Wednesday, June 3

- The Classical Period (cont.)

***The Lady Eve* (Paramount, 1941)**

- Director: Preston Sturges
- Producer: Paul Jones
- Writer: Preston Sturges
- Cinematographer: Victor Milner
- Editor: Stuart Gilmore
- Art Director: Hans Dreier, Ernst Fegté
- Costumes: Edith Head
- Music: Sigmund Krumgold

With: Barbara Stanwyck and Henry Fonda

***The More the Merrier* (Columbia Pictures, 1943)**

- Director/Producer: George Stevens
- Writer: Richard Flournoy, Lewis Foster, from the short story by Garson Kanin
- Cinematographer: Ted Tetzlaff
- Editor: Otto Meyer
- Art Director: Lionel Banks and Rudolph Sternad
- Music: Morris Stoloff

With: Jean Arthur, Joel McCrea and Charles Coburn

II. Postwar Hollywood, 1946-1962

***I Was a Male War Bride* (20th Century Fox, 1949)**

- Director: Howard Hawks
- Producer: Sol Siegel
- Writer: Charles Lederer, from the book by Henri Rochard
- Cinematographer: Osmond Borradaile and Norbet Brodin
- Editor: James Clark
- Art Director: Albert Hogsett
- Music: Cyril Mockridge

With: Cary Grant and Ann Sheridan

***The Mating Season* (Paramount, 1951)**

- Director: Mitchell Leisen
- Producer: Charles Brackett
- Writer: Charles Brackett, Richard Breen, and Walter Reisch
- Cinematographer: Charles Lang
- Editor: Frank Bracht
- Art Director: Roland Anderson
- Costumes: Oleg Cassini
- Music: Joseph Lilley

With: Gene Tierney, John Lund and Thelma Ritter

Read: Casper, Postwar Hollywood, 1946-1962

Session 6: Wednesday, June 10

- Postwar Hollywood (cont.)

***An Affair to Remember* (20th Century Fox, 1957)**

- Director/Screenwriter/Songwriter/Composer: Leo McCarey
- Producer: Jerry Wald
- Short Story: Mildred Gram
- Cinematographer: Milton Krasner
- Editor: Frank Bracht
- Art Director: Jack Martin Smith
- Costumes: Charles LeMaire
- Music: Lionel Newman

With: Cary Grant and Deborrah Kerr

Session 7: Monday, June 15

- Postwar Hollywood (cont.)

***Teacher's Pet* (Paramount, 1958)**

- Director: George Seaton
- Producer: William Perlberg
- Writer: Fay Kanin and Michael Kanin
- Cinematographer: Haskell Boggs
- Editor: Alma Macrorie
- Art Director: Earl Hedrick
- Costumes: Edith Head
- Music: Roy Webb

With: Doris Day, Clark Gable and Gig Young

***Lover Come Back* (Universal, 1961)**

- Director: Delbert Mann
- Producer: Martin Melcher and Stanley Shapiro
- Writer: Stanley Shapiro and Paul Henning
- Cinematographer: Arthur Arling
- Editor: Marjorie Fowler
- Art Director: Robert Clatworthy
- Costumes: Irene
- Music: Frank De Vol

With: Doris Day, Rock Hudson and Tony Randall

Session 8: Wednesday, June 17 Paper #2 Due

III. Reactionary/Revolutionary Hollywood

***The Taming of the Shrew* (Columbia Pictures, 1967)**

- Director: Franco Zeffirelli
- Producer: Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor
- Writer: Suso Cecchi D'Amico and Paul Dehn, from the play by William Shakespeare
- Cinematographer: Oswald Morris and Luciano Trasatti
- Editor: Peter Taylor
- Art Director: Luigi Gervasi
- Costumes: Danilo Donati and Irene Sharaff
- Music: Nino Rota

With: Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton

Session 9: Monday, June 22

- Reactionary/Revolutionary Hollywood (cont.)

***Goodbye, Columbus* (Paramount Pictures, 1969)**

- Director: Larry Peerce
- Producer: Stanley Jaffe
- Writer: Arnold Schulman, from the book by Philip Roth
- Cinematographer: Gerald Hirschfeld and David M. Walsh
- Editor: Ralph Rosenblum
- Art Director: Manny Gerard
- Costumes: Gene Coffin
- Music: Charles Fox

With: Richard Benjamin, Ali MacGraw and Jack Klugman

***The Owl and the Pussycat* (Rastar Pictures, 1970)**

- Director: Herbert Ross
- Producer: Raymond Stark
- Writer: Buck Henry, from the play by Bill Manhoff
- Cinematographer: Andrew Laszlo and Harry Stradling
- Editor: Margaret Booth and John F. Burnett
- Art Director: Philip Rosenberg
- Costumes: Ann Roth
- Music: Dick Halligan

With: Barbra Streisand and George Segal

Session 10: Wednesday, June 24

- Reactionary/Revolutionary Hollywood (cont.)

***Lovers and Other Strangers* (ABC, 1970)**

- Director: Cy Howard
- Producer: David Susskind
- Writer/Play Author: Joseph Bologna and Renée Taylor
- Cinematographer: Andrew Laszlo
- Editor: David Bretherton and Sidney Katz
- Art Director: Ben Edwards
- Costumes: Albert Wolsky
- Music: Fred Karlin

With: Bea Arthur, Bonnie Bedelia, Michael Brandon and Richard S. Castellano

Session 11: Monday, June 29

- The Romantic Comedy and Reactionary/Revolutionary Hollywood (cont.)

***Pete 'n' Tillie* (Universal, 1972)**

- Director: Martin Ritt
- Producer: Julius Epstein, Jennings Lang
- Writer: Julius Epstein
- Cinematographer: John Alonzo
- Editor: Frank Bracht
- Art Director: George C. Webb
- Costumes: Edith Head
- Music: John Williams

With: Walter Matthau and Carol Burnett

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