

HIST*2020 - British History on Film
Summer 2025
Hybrid format

Office hours: Zoom upon request

Sections: 01 – W 11:30-12:20
02 – W 7:00-7:50
03 – Th 7:00-7:50

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

This course will consider film both as a source and as a comment on the past. Topics will vary depending on instructor expertise, and may include film as propaganda, the city in film, film as myth, women and gender in film, film and war. For information on the topic of a specific section, consult the History department website.

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/history>.

Prerequisite(s): 2.00 credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Film has become an increasingly important medium for the dissemination of historical knowledge. Though filmed history represents an exciting development that can offer many advantages over a printed text, historical films also face unique pressures when attempting to tell a true story. This course is intended to give the beginning student an introduction to the challenges of translating history to film, using Great Britain and Ireland as the case subject for study. We will evaluate each film for its accuracy and also will learn to discern the director's ideological outlook or argument. Students can expect to acquire some knowledge of the genre's technical aspects and vocabulary so that they can become a more critical consumer of media messages.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, if you have put in the required effort, you should be able to:

- 1) Recall and apply a fuller awareness of people and issues in British history.

- 2) Analyze history being told on film (and achieve a more sophisticated awareness of both the benefits and limitations of the visual representation of history).
- 3) Interpret media with new vocabulary and more formal insights into the techniques and art of storytelling on film.
- 4) Achieve improvement in your oral and written communication skills.

REQUIRED RESOURCES:

Films are available on the Library Course Reserves/ ARES site for HIST 2020. There is no cost to access any of the films via Course Reserves; you may prefer to watch the same titles on your own media streaming service.

Most of the articles listed below are available in the Courselink weekly modules for each film. I was not able to get copyright permission for a few of them to be posted on the Courselink site; you can access those articles independently via the Library's OMNI search interface. And you are always welcome to search for other relevant books and articles and bring your knowledge to our discussions!

REQUIRED READINGS FOR THEORY AND OVERVIEW OF ISSUES:

M Ferro "Film as Agent, Product and Source of History" *Journal of Contemporary History* 18, no. 3 (July 1983): 357-364.

R Rosenstone "History in Images/ History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History on Film" *American Historical Review* 93, no. 5 (December 1988): 1173-1185

J Saab "History Goes Hollywood and Vice Versa: Historical Representations and Distortion in American Film" *American Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (December 2001): 108-115.

Paul Swann "The British Culture Industries & the Mythology of the American Market: Cultural Policy and Cultural Exports in the 1940s and the 1990s." *Cinema Journal* 39, no. 4 (Summer 2000): 27-42.

R B Toplin "The Film maker as Historian" *American Historical Review* 93, no. 5 (December 1988): 1210-1227.

See also: Robert Ebert's reviews in the *Chicago Sun-Times* [online]

IMDB [Internet Movie Database] also has links to reviews for films.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

6 film response quizzes	60 % (10 % each; best 6 of 11 will count)
Discussion and engagement	20 %
Final exam	<u>20 %</u>
	100 %

A viewing guide for each film is available on the Courselink site. It will provide you with the names of the main characters, a basic plot outline, a description of the historical context, an indication of some of the historical inaccuracies, and a summary of key dialogue.

You are expected to consult the film guide before watching the film so that you will have a more informed viewing experience.

I have also matched some quality academic articles with each film. You should read at least three articles as preparation for viewing each film and for use in your response.

We will meet as a group once each week to discuss the film. I usually divide the class into smaller groups for discussion first to allow you more time to talk with each other and explore your ideas. After 15 minutes or so, we will reassemble and talk together as a class.

For your film response, you will be asked to respond to one of the questions posted in each weekly module. I will use the “quiz” function in Courselink for this purpose – click in to the weekly quiz and it will present you with a question from the list. You will then have a chance to write for 30 minutes and provide an answer to the question, using specific information from the film and the readings to illustrate your point and provide evidence. The quiz function is open all week so you can write your thoughts at the time that is most convenient for you.

The purpose of the film responses is to tie together the film, the outside reading, and the insights you gained through class discussion. It will be assessed on quality of thought and integration of evidence from the film and the readings to make your specific point.

The essential point of the responses, and the criterion by which your grades will be assessed, is your ability to incorporate specific details to make your point. The assigned articles will give you some structured analysis to give your responses added historical

context. Your grades will rise and fall according to your ability to be rigorous, detailed and analytical. Simple impressionistic and emotional responses (ie: "I liked it" or "the film was good" are not appropriate for this kind of writing assignment).

May 8-14 INTRO TO THE COURSE AND REQUIREMENTS
DISCUSS LIMITS & BENEFITS OF STUDYING HISTORY THROUGH FILM

Reading: Baugh, Ferro, Rosenstone, Saab, Toplin

Question: 1) Do historical film makers have an ethical responsibility to be accurate and truthful when they tell their stories, or should they be permitted freedom to alter details in the name of their art? Explain your opinion and its ramifications for public memory, the representation of history, and the impact that the knowledge of the past has on present actions.

Question 2) What are some of the major themes or concerns that seem to emerge in these depictions of British history and identity? What version of themselves and their history "sells" to the British public?

May 15-21 KING ARTHUR

Suggested Reading:

Davidson, Roberta. "The Reel Arthur: Politics and Truth Claims in Camelot, Excalibur, & King Arthur." *Arthuriana* 17, no. 2 (2007): 6284.

Hodges, Kenneth. "How King Arthur Invented Christmas: Reimagining Arthur and Rome in Early Modern Scotland and England." *Arthuriana* 29, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 25-42.

Malory, Thomas. *Le morte d'Arthur* [early account from 1485, versions in EEBO database]

Peck, Russell. "Antoine Fuqua's King Arthur within Imaginary Boundaries of the Celtic World" *Arthuriana* 26, no. 2 (2016): 86 -109.

Schneider-Mayerson, Matthew. "The Dan Brown Phenomenon: Conspiracism in Post-9/11 Popular Fiction." *Radical History Review* 111 (2011)

Shippey, Tom. "Fuqua's King Arthur: More Myth-making in America." *Exemplaria* 19, no. 2 (2007): 310-326.

Sullivan, Joseph. "Cinema Arthuriana without Malory? The International Reception of Fuqua, Franzoni, and Bruckheimer's King Arthur (2004)." *Arthuriana* 17, no. 2 (2007): 85-105.

May 22-28 A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS (about St. Thomas More)

Suggested Reading:

Veidemanis, Gladys. "A Play for All Seasons." *English Journal* 55, no. 8 (Nov 1966): 1006-1014.

Green, Paul D. "Suicide, Murder & Thomas More." *Studies in the Renaissance* 19 (1972): 135-155.

Derrett, J. Duncan M. "The Trial of St Thomas More." *English Historical Review* 79, no. 312 (July 1964): 449-477.

May 29-
June 4 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE (Elizabeth I, piracy, court intrigue)

Suggested Reading:

Fischlin, Daniel. "Political Allegory, Absolutism, and the Rainbow Portrait of Elizabeth I." *Renaissance Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (1997): 175-206.

Heisch, Allison. "Queen Elizabeth and the Persistence of Patriarchy." *Feminist Review* 4 (1980): 45-56.

Hennings, Emmy. "Waging War on History: Elizabeth - The Golden Age." *Screen Education* 48 (Autumn 2008): 34-48. Film review.

King, John N. "Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen" *Renaissance Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 30-74.

Lehmann, Courtney. "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Agenda: How Shakespeare and the Renaissance Are Taking the Rage Out of Feminism." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 260-279.

McAdam, Ian. "Fiction and Projection: The Construction of Early Modern Sexuality in *Elizabeth* and *Shakespeare in Love*" *Pacific Coast Philology* 35, no. 1 (2000): 49-60.

Montrose, Louis. "Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I." *Representations* 68 (Autumn 1999): 108-161.

Moss, David Grant. "A Queen for Whose Time? Elizabeth I as Icon for the Twentieth Century." *Journal of Popular Culture* 39, no. 5 (2006): 796-816.

Prieto-Arranz, José Igor. "Whiggish History for Contemporary Audiences: Implicit Religion in Shekhar Kapur's *Elizabeth* and *Elizabeth: The Golden Age*." *Journal for the Study of Religion and Ideologies* 14, no. 41 (Summer 2015): 52-78.

Schleiner, Winfried. "'Divina Virago': Queen Elizabeth as an Amazon." *Studies in Philology* 75, no. 2 (1978): 163-180.

Shorland, Sophie. "'Womanhood and Weakness': Elizabeth I, James I and Propaganda Strategy." *Renaissance Studies* 34, no. 2 (April 2020): 260-277

June 5-11 THE LIBERTINE (17th century, Restoration England)

Suggested Reading:

Ellenzweig, Sarah. "Hitherto Propertied : Rochester's Aristocratic Alienation and the Paradox of Class Formation in Restoration England." *English Literary History* 69, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 703-725.

-----. "The Faith of Unbelief: Rochester's "Satyre," Deism, and Religious Freethinking in Seventeenth-Century England." *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 27-45.

Hume, Robert. "'Satire" in the Reign of Charles II." *Modern Philology* 102, no. 3 (2005): 332-371.

Kramnick, Jonathan Brody. "Rochester and the History of Sexuality." *English Literary History* 69, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 277-301.

Maus, Katherine Eisaman. "Playhouse Flesh and Blood: Sexual Ideology and the Restoration Actress." *English Literary History* 46, no. 4 (Winter

1979): 595-617.

Narain, Mona. "Libertine Spaces and the Female Body in the Poetry of Rochester and Ned Ward." *English Literary History* 72, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 553-576.

Rokotnitz, Naomi. "'Too far gone in disgust': Mirror Neurons and the Manipulation of Embodied Responses in The Libertine." *Configurations* 16, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 399-426.

Rosenthal, Laura J. "All injury's forgot": Restoration Sex Comedy and National Amnesia." *Comparative Drama* 42, no. 1 (2008): 7-28.

Sanchez, Melissa. "Libertinism and Romance in Rochester's Poetry." *Eighteenth Century Studies* 38, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 441-459.

Wilcoxon, Reba. "Pornography, Obscenity, and Rochester's 'The Imperfect Enjoyment.'" *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 15, no. 3 (1975): 375-390.

June 12-18 THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE (US Independence, 18th century)

Suggested Reading:

O'Mealy, J.H. "Royal Family Values: The Americanization of Alan Bennett's 'The Madness of King George.'" *Literature/Film Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1999): 90-96.

Parissien, R. "George III" *History Today* 52 (June 2002): 36-43.

Kaufman, R. "The Madness of George III, by Mary Wollstonecraft" *Studies in Romanticism* 37, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 17-25.

Prasch, Thomas. "The Madness of King George: Review." *American Historical Review* 100, no. 4 (Oct 1995): 1225-1226.

Webb, Stephen Saunders. "The Madness of King George: Review." *William and Mary Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (1995): 747-749.

June 19-25 MRS BROWN (About Queen Victoria and her Scottish gardener)

Suggested Reading:

Arnstein, Walter. "Warrior Queen: Reflections on Victoria and her World." *Albion* 30, no. 1 (Spring, 1998): 1-28.

Grosvenor, B. "Dear John." *History Today* 55, no. 1 (Jan 2005): 2-3.

Lamont-Brown, R. "Queen Victoria's Secret Marriage." *Contemporary Review* 283 (Dec 2003): 349-352.

Weintraub, S. "John Brown: Review." *Victorian Studies* 44, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 524-525.

June 26-
July 2

MICHAEL COLLINS (Irish Independence, 1920s)

Suggested Reading:

Bew, Paul. "Moderate Nationalism and the Irish Revolution, 1916-1923." *The Historical Journal* 42, no. 3 (1999): 729-749.

Boyd, Ernest. "Recent Irish History: Book Reviews." *Foreign Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1923): 319-327.

Curtis, L. Perry. "Moral and Physical Force: The Language of Violence in Irish Nationalism." *Journal of British Studies* 27, no. 2 (1988): 150-189.

English, Richard. "'The Inborn Hate of Things English': Ernie O'Malley and the Irish Revolution 1916-1923." *Past & Present* 151 (1996): 174-199.

Hart, Peter. "The Geography of Revolution in Ireland 1917-1923." *Past & Present* 55 (May 1997): 142-176.

Hart, Peter. "The Social Structure of the Irish Republican Army, 1916-1923." *The Historical Journal* 42, no. 1 (1999): 207-231.

Landy, Marcia. "The International Cast of Irish Cinema: The Case of 'Michael Collins'." *boundary 2* 27, no. 2 (2000): 21-44.

Loughlin, James. "Creating 'A Social and Geographical Fact': Regional Identity and the Ulster Question 1880s-1920s." *Past & Present* 195 (2007): 159-196.

Lynch, Robert. "The People's Protectors? The Irish Republican Army and the "Belfast Pogrom," 1920-1922." *Journal of British Studies* 47, no. 2 (2008): 375-391.

July 3-9

A UNITED KINGDOM (Race, colonialism, South Africa, Botswana)

Suggested Reading:

Benneyworth, Garth. "Bechuanaland's Aerial Pipeline: Intelligence and Counter Intelligence Operations against the South African Liberation Movements, 1960-1965." *South African Historical Journal* 70, no. 1 (2018): 108-123.

Bland, Lucy. "White Women and Men of Colour: Miscegenation Fears in Britain after the Great War." *Gender & History* 17, no. 1 (2005): 29-61.

Henderson, Willie. "Seretse Khama: A Personal Appreciation." *African Affairs* 89, no. 354 (January 1990): 27-56.

Hyam, Ronald. "The Political Consequences of Seretse Khama: Britain, the Bangwato, and South Africa." *The Historical Journal* 29, no. 4 (December 1986): 921-947.

Maguire, Anna. "'You Wouldn't Want Your Daughter Marrying One': Parental Intervention into Mixed-Race Relationships in Post-War Britain." *Historical Research* 92, no. 256 (May 2019): 434-444.

Ray, Carina E. "Decrying White Peril: Interracial Sex and the Rise of Anti-colonial Nationalism on the Gold Coast." *American Historical Review* 119, no. 1 (February 2014): 78-110.

Waters, Chris. "'Dark Strangers in Our Midst': Discourse of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963." *Journal of British Studies* 36 (April 1997): 207-238.

Webb, Clive. "Special Relationships: Mixed Race Couples in Post War Britain and the United States." *Women's History Review* 26, no. 1 (2017): 110-129.

Zaffiro, James. "In Service of Two Masters: A Political History of Radio in Pre-Independence Botswana." *Critical Arts* 28, no. 6 (2014): 958-976.

July 10-16 SCANDAL (Cold War, Profumo Affair, 1963)

Suggested Reading:

Francis, Martin. "Tears, Tantrums, and Bared Teeth: The Emotional Economy of Three Conservative Prime Ministers, 1951-1963." *The Journal of British Studies* 41, no. 3 (2002): 354-387.

Lloyd, Trevor. Review of book by Wayland Young called 'The Profumo Affair. Aspects of Conservatism.' *International Journal* 19, #3 (Summer 1964): 441-442.

Mort, Frank. "Scandalous Events: Metropolitan Culture and Moral Change in Post-Second World War London." *Representations* 93 (2006): 106-137.

Perren, Alisa. "Sex, Lies and Marketing: Miramax and the Development of the Quality Indie Blockbuster." *Film Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (Winter 2001-2002): 30-39.

Summers, John H. "What Happened to Sex Scandals? Politics and Peccadilloes, Jefferson to Kennedy." *The Journal of American History* 87, no. 3 (2000): 825-854.

Thomas, Paul. Review of film 'Scandal' in *Film Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (Summer 1990): 17-21.

See also the participant accounts:

David Profumo, *Bringing the House Down: A Family Memoir*

Christine Keeler, *The Truth at Last: My Story*

Mandy Rice-Davies, *Mandy*

July 17-23 SID AND NANCY (Punk rock; the Sex Pistols, 1970s)

Suggested Reading:

Cardullo, Bert. "Film Chronicle: Sid, Nancy, and Thérèse." *The Hudson Review* 40, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 121-130.

Court, Benjamin. "The Christ-like Antichrists: Messianism in Sex Pistols Historiography." *Popular Music & Society* 38, no. 4 (2015): 416-31.

Goss, Brian Michael. "Spectacular Recuperation: Alex Cox's Sid & Nancy." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (2000): 156-176.

Nehring, Neil. "Revolt into Style: Graham Greene Meets the Sex Pistols." *PMLA* 106, no. 2 (1991): 222-237.

Osborne, Richard. "A Great Friggin' Swindle? Sex Pistols, School Kids, and 1979." *Popular Music and Society* 38 (June 2015): 432-449.

Simonelli, D. "Anarchy, Pop and Violence: Punk Rock Subculture and the Rhetoric of Class, 1976-78." *Contemporary British History* 16, no. 2 (2002): 121-144.

Viano, Maurizio. Review of 'Sid & Nancy.' *Film Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (Spring 1987): 33-38.

July 24-30 VERONICA GUERIN (Drug Wars and Criminality in Ireland)

Suggested Reading:

Barry, J. "Policy Response to Opioid Misuse in Dublin." *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 56, no. 1 (2002): 6-7

Cullen, Kevin. "Dublin, June 1996: a fatal attraction to crime reporting." *Columbia Journalism Review* 42, no. 4 (2003): 62.

Ferriter, Diarmuid. "Women and Political Change in Ireland since 1960." *Éire-Ireland* 43, nos. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 2008): 179-204.

Ging, Debbie. "Masculinity in Contemporary Irish Cinema." *Estudios Irlandeses: Journal of Irish Studies* 1 (2006): Online.

Hamilton, Claire. "Organised Criminals as "Agents of Obligation": The Case of Ireland." *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 17, no. 4 (Dec 2011): 253-266.

O'Reilly, Emily. *Veronica Guerin: The Life and Death of a Crime Reporter*. New York and London: Vintage: 1998.

Slattery, David. "Green Paradise Lost. An Essay on Veronica Guerin, 'Craic' Houses and the Celtic Tiger." *City* 7, no. 3 (2003): 413-432.

“Veronica Guerin” [film review]. *Sight & Sound* 13, no. 10 (2003): 70-71.

FINAL EXAM Due in Dropbox on Courselink no later than 12 noon, Tuesday, August 5

Time: 2 hours

Course Policies

For this course, you may not use ChatGPT or any other outside technology that will write, organize or generate ideas and/or outlines for you. In return, I promise that you will receive weekly comments and feedback on your ideas so that you can improve. Our collective goal is to improve and grow and write and think together. I want to engage with your ideas!

If you are struggling with time management or writing troubles, don't worry. There are no late penalties this semester. Talk to us! We want to help and support you.

MANDATORY UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member

or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability. Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 days in advance, and no later than the first business day in November, March or July as appropriate for the semester. Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. For students at the Guelph campus, information can be found on the SAS website.

Accommodation of Religious Obligations

If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Accommodations of Religious Obligations.

Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all undergraduate students except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration

are available in the [Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses](#).

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Health and Wellbeing

The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the [Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness](#). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a [Student Wellness Navigator](#) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our [mental wellbeing resources](#). The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#).

