The Pleasures of Bollywood: Melodrama, Realism, Mythos

Course Outline:

This class will focus on cinema produced by the industry in Mumbai, popularly called Bollywood. Organized mainly around the themes (the angry young man, the Muslim social, nationalist revival, terrorism) that emboldened the efflorescence of cinematic modes and genres, the class will also address various topics worked out through these themes. The topics will include the relationship between fiction and documentation, between melodrama and realism, music and affect. Students will be taught the tools of film analysis and will be expected to watch and unpack films each week. They will also be expected to consider films in the social, political and economic contexts in which they were made.

Required Books:

Articles and chapters that are also included in weekly readings for this class will be uploaded and students will be expected to watch movies as part of weekly assignments.

Useful site:
http://www.uiowa.edu/~incinema/

Course Requirements and Assignments:

This class will be fairly tightly structured. Readings will teach you different aspects of what you are expected to think with; the class is focused on teaching you to think about facets of your life or your political practices that you have up to this point often taken for granted as a way of getting you to grapple with what you see in cinema, what you like or
hate in cinema, what you think is satisfying when you watch movies. The class will also introduce you to concepts and information that will give you tools for analysis. I expect you to get to know these over the course of the class. In addition you will be expected to watch movies outside class; movies are considered part of your weekly assignments.

If the class is large enough you will work in larger groups, if not you will work either independently or in groups of two. The class will be graded on weekly assignments: you will be expected to bring in an analysis of the readings and the movies each week.

**Unit 1: Introduction to Bollywood**
- Watch “Kahaani” or “Delhi 6” in class.
- Chaps: 1-3 in *A Short Guide*
- Ravi Vasudevan, “Chapter 1: The Melodramatic Public” in *The Melodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema* (Permanent Black, 2010)

**Unit 2: Where It All Began: Early Cinema**
- You tube: Nadia Hunterwali, Raja Harishchandra (1913) - The India Public Domain Movie Project, information on Alam Ara (India’s first sound film)
- Virchand Dharamsey, “Towards New Genealogies for the Histories of Bombay Cinema: The Career of Sagar Film Company (1929-40)” *Marg A magazine of the Arts* (100 Years of Bombay Cinema 64.4 (June 2013): 22-31
- Sridhar Kshirsagar, “Diary of a Silent Filmmaker” *Cinema Vision India: India’s First Professional Cinema Quarterly* 1.2 (April 1980):4-7
• Sridhar Kshirsagar, “‘Sounding Off’” *Cinema Vision India: India’s First Professional Cinema Quarterly* 1.2 (April 1980): 48-51
• Girish Karnad, “This One is for Nadia” *Cinema Vision India: India’s First Professional Cinema Quarterly* 1.2 (April 1980): 84-90

**Unit 3: Visual and the Oral Scapes**
• Watch “Om Shanti Om” and “Saaz”
• *Short Guide*, pages 130-142
• Dwyer and Patel, “Chapter 2: Film Styles: Settings and Costume”
• Anna Moorcom, *Hindi Film Songs and the Cinema* (Ashgate, 2007)
• Nasreen Munni Kabir, “Chapter 6: Calling the Shots” and “Chapter 7: Singing Through the Ages” in *Bollywood*
• Natalie Sarrazin, *Indian Music for the Classroom* (R &L Education, 2009)
• Gregory D. Booth, “R.D. Burman and Rhythm: ‘Making the Youth of this Nation to Dance” *Bioscope* 3 (2012): 147-166

**Unit 4: Family Sagas in the New Era: Marriage, Religion and Consumption**
• Watch “Hum Aapke Hain Kaun”

Unit 5: Genres of Masculinity: The 1950s Wanderer and the Social State
• Watch “Awara”
• Vijay Mishra, “Chapter 4, “Auteurship and the Lure of Romance” in Bollywood Cinema
• Gayatri Chatterjee, Awar (Wiley Eastern, 1992)

• Watch “Shree 420”
• Wimal Dissanayake and Malti Sahai, Raj Kapoor’s Films: Harmony of Discourses (New Delhi: Vikas, 1988)
• Bhaskar Sarkar, “Cinema’s Project of Nationhood” in Mourning the Nation: Indian Cinema in the Wake of Partition (Duke, 2009)

Unit 6: “Sholay”, the Angry Young Man and a Different State
• Watch ‘Sholay” and “Deewar”
• Wimal Dissanayake and Malti Sahai, Sholay: A Cultural Reading (Wiley Eastern, 1992)
• Koushik Banerjee, “‘Fight Club’: Aesthetics, Hybridization and the Construction of Rogue Masculinities in ‘Sholay’ and ‘Deewar’” in Bollywood
• Vijay Mishra, “Chapter 5, The Actor as Parallel Text: Amitabh Bachchan” in Bollywood Cinema
• Vinay Lal, “The Impossibility of the Outsider in the Modern Hindi Film” in The Secret Politics of Our Desires
• Ranjani Mazumdar, “Rage on Screen” in Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City (University of Minnesota Press, 2003)
• Watch “Karma Yogi”

Unit 7: One Version of Urban 1990s Masculinity—The Tapori
• Watch “Rangeela” and “Ghulam”
• Ranjani Mazumdar, “Introduction: Urban Allegories” and “The Rebellious Tapori” in Bombay Cinema

Unit 8: Genres of 1950s Femininity: Mother India and the Nation
• Watch “Mother India”
• Gayatri Chatterjee, Mother India (London: BFI, 2002)
• Rosie Thomas, “Sanctity and Scandal: The Mythologization of Mother India” Quarterly Review of Film and Video 11:3 (1989): 11-30
• Vijay Mishra, “Chapter 3, The Texts of ‘Mother India’” in Bollywood Cinema

Unit 9: Genres of Femininity: The Prostitute and the Courtesan
• Watch “Pyaasa”
• Vijay Mishra, “Chapter 4, “Auteurship and the Lure of Romance” in Bollywood Cinema
• Darius Cooper, “The Hindi Film Song and Guru Dutt” *East-West Film Journal* 2:2 (1988): 49-65
• Daisy Rockwell, “Visionary Choreographies: Guru Dutt’s Experiments in Film Song Picturisation” *South Asian Popular Culture* 1:2 (October 2003): 109-124
• Alison Griffiths, “Discourses of Nationalism in Guru Dutt’s ‘Pyaasa’” *Deep Focus* VI (1996): 24-31

• Watch “Umrao Jaan” – Both versions: 1981 and 2006
• Fareed Kazmi, “Muslim Socials and the Female Protagonist: Seeing a Dominant Discourse at Work” in *Forging Identities: Gender, Communities, and the State*, ed. Zoya Hasan (Kali for Women, 1994)

**Unit 10: Genres of Femininity: Zeenat Aman and New Wildness**
• Watch “Hare Rama Hare Krishna”
• Ranjani Mazumdar, “Chapter 3: Desiring Women” in *Bombay Cinema Filmfare* 1971 issues, advertising from *The Illustrated Weekly of India* 1971 issues

**Unit 11: Genres of Cinema: The 1960s and Global Travel and Postcard Visions**
• Watch “Sangam” and “Love in Paris”
• Biru Paksha Paul, “Globalization and Monetary-Policy Independence in India” Journal of Developing Areas 46.2 Fall 2011: 205-211

Unit 12: Genres of Cinema: Horror and the B-Movie

Unit 13: Genres of Cinema: Gangland
• Watch “Satya” “Parinda” and “Company”
• Travis Crawford, “Bullets Over Bombay: Exposing the Underworld of Hindi Cinema (Both Onscreen and Off)” Film Comment (May-June 2002): 53-55
• Ravi Vasudevan, “The Exhilaration of Dread: Genre, Narrative Form and Film Style in Contemporary Urban Action Films” Sarai Reader 2002: The Cities of Everyday Life (New Delhi, 2002)
• Ranjani Mazumdar, “Chapter 5: Gangland Bombay” in Bombay Cinema
• Lalitha Gopalan “Memory and Gangsters in Vidhu Vinod Chopra’s ‘Parinda’” in Cinema of Interruptions: Action Genres in Contemporary Indian Cinema