

HUAS 7360-001: THE FILM MUSICAL
Spring 2018, 1:00-3:45 PM Thursday, JO4.112

Instructor: Dr. Adrienne McLean

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Office Hours: After class and by appointment; room JO5.606 (Jonsson Building). *Email queries are answered promptly, and are encouraged.*

Required Texts: **Ebook** Steven Cohan, ed., *Hollywood Musicals: The Film Reader* (2002) (**HM**); available online through McDermott Library.

Other weekly required readings (indicated by **RR**) are posted on **eLearning** for printing and/or downloading. Some are from other ebooks and are indicated as such.

Full-length films are also assigned weekly for viewing before the regular class session and are required texts as well. All are on reserve at the Media Services desk at McDermott Library, but are likely also available through a number of other suppliers.

[Please note also that eLearning will be used only for the posting of the syllabus, readings, university policies, and other such documents, and occasionally for circulating announcements meant to reach the whole class. It will not be used for grading or general discussion.]

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Course Description and Format. For more than thirty years the musical was perhaps Hollywood's most popular and profitable adult genre, and its utopianism and sexual energy are still useful to art and popular culture. We will explore the rise and fall (and rise?) of the film musical from its beginnings in 1927 through the present day, primarily in the U.S. but with attention paid to India/Bollywood as well. We will consider the musical as a set of myths, as an industrial product, and as an art form, investigating its historical development and how it interacted with other film genres and other kinds of theatrical performances and entertainment industries; its narrative structure and formal features; its modes of performance; and the meanings it produced for its audiences. Always we will trace the ways in which the musical represents race and ethnicity, class, and gender and sexual difference—to consider it as both “conservative” and “transgressive” in its politics. After an introduction to genre and study of the history of the film musical, each week will be devoted to a specific topic or issue. Lecture and brief screenings of relevant material will augment our discussions, and from time to time entire films will be screened during class meetings.

Grading and Requirements. You are expected to attend all classes and screenings and to participate vigorously in discussions of films and readings. If you must miss a class, you remain responsible for all course material covered in that class; there are no make-up sessions, and each class will only be taught once. Each class period represents one week's worth of work, so roll will be taken at the beginning or end of every class. The week's reading and screening assignments are all to be completed by the beginning of each Thursday session, and it is *imperative that you watch the film(s) for the week; discussion of the films will constitute a major portion of the course.* Each student will be responsible for a presentation and review essay on a weekly reading, a short critical paper, and a final critical or research paper.

Please note that the *Rules on Student Services and Activities*, specifically the *Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty*, of the University of Texas System will be strictly adhered to. For information on the administration's rules and policies regarding student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, email use, withdrawal from class, student grievance procedures, incomplete grade policies, AccessAbility services, Title IX compliance, campus carry, religious holy days, and other rules and regulations, consult the material, generated by the administration, available through eLearning or in the university catalogue. **Note also that all course requirements must be met: this means that if you miss more than four weeks of class, and/or fail to complete all assignments and papers in full, you will generate an automatic failing grade for the course. All papers must be uploaded to Turnitin.com and/or submitted as hard copies on the due date and by the time specified; late papers will be penalized. Incompletes can be permitted only in the most serious circumstances (family emergency or illness) which must be documented to my and the university's satisfaction.**

Course grades will be figured from the following requirements:

Attendance and participation	20%
Short critical paper (4-5 pages)	20%
Presentation and review essay	30% total
Final formal paper (12-15 pages)	30%

Particulars regarding the presentation and review essay and papers are attached and will be further discussed in class.

CLASS CALENDAR

Date	Topic/Screening(s)/Reading
Week 1 January 11	Introduction, Course Mechanics
Week 2 January 18	Genre and the “Problem” of the Film Musical OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>High School Musical</i> (Kenny Ortega, 2006; 98 mins.) and <i>La La Land</i> (Damien Chazelle, 2016; 128 mins.). READING: RR Steven Cohan, “How Do You Solve a Problem Like the Film Musical?” from <i>The Sound of Musicals</i> (2010).
Week 3 January 25	All-Talking, All-Singing, All-Dancing: Technology and Early Musicals SCREENING [IN-CLASS]: <i>Broadway Melody</i> (Harry Beaumont, 1928; 104 mins.). OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Singin’ in the Rain</i> (Stanley Donen/Gene Kelly, 1952; 103 mins.). READING: HM Steven Cohan, “Introduction: Musicals of the Studio Era.”
Week 4 February 1	“Aggregate” Form: Busby Berkeley and the Tradition of Spectacle SCREENING [in-class]: <i>42nd Street</i> (Lloyd Bacon, 1933; 89 mins.). OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Gold Diggers of 1933</i> (Mervyn LeRoy, 1933; 96 mins.). READING: HM Martin Rubin, “Busby Berkeley and the Backstage Musical”; Patricia Mellencamp, “Sexual Economics: <i>Gold Diggers of 1933</i> .” ... Presentations begin ...
Week 5 February 8	“Integrated” Form: Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Top Hat</i> (Mark Sandrich, 1935; 101 mins.) and <i>Swing Time</i> (George Stevens, 1936; 103 mins.). READING: HM Rick Altman, “The American Film Musical as Dual-Focus Narrative.” RR Text of the Production Code (1930/1934).
Week 6 February 15	The Musical and/as Cultural Work: The Fairy Tale and Folk Subgenres OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>Meet Me in St. Louis</i> (Vincente Minnelli, 1944; 113 mins.) and <i>An American in Paris</i> (Vincente Minnelli, 1951; 114 mins.). READING: HM Richard Dyer, “Entertainment and Utopia.” ... Paper 1 due at start of class and uploaded to Turnitin by 11:59 PM ...
Week 7 February 22	The Show Musical and Self-Reflexivity OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: <i>The Band Wagon</i> (Vincente Minnelli, 1953; 112 mins.) and <i>All That Jazz</i> (Bob Fosse, 1979; 123 mins.). READING: HM Jane Feuer, “The Self-Reflective Musical and the Myth of Entertainment.”

Week 8
March 1

The Hollywood Musical in the Post-Studio Era

OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *It's Always Fair Weather* (Stanley Donen/Gene Kelly, 1955, 101 mins.) and *The Sound of Music* (Robert Wise, 1965; 234 mins.).

READING: RR Bruce Babington and Peter William Evans, "It's Always Fair Weather and the Gene Kelly Musical," from *Blue Skies and Silver Linings* (1985); Brett Farmer, "The Singing Sixties: Rethinking the Julie Andrews Roadshow Musical," from Cohan, *The Sound of Musicals*.

... Paper topic(s) due by email ...

Week 9
March 8

Integrated Musicals? Containing Race and Ethnicity in the Musical Canon

OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *Show Boat* (James Whale, 1936; 110 mins.).

READING: RR Sean Griffin, "The Gang's All Here: Generic versus Racial Integration in the 1940s Musical," *Cinema Journal* (2002). Peter Stanfield, "From the Vulgar to the Refined: American Vernacular and Blackface Minstrelsy in *Showboat*," in Bill Marshall and Robynn Stilwell, eds., *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond* (2000); ebook.

Week 10
March 12-16

SPRING BREAK

OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *The Producers* (Mel Brooks, 1967; 90 mins.) and *The Producers* (Susan Stroman, 2005; 134 mins.).

Week 11
March 22

Exceeding the Couple: Extremely Competent Women

READING: RR Adrienne L. McLean, "Putting 'Em Down Like a Man: Eleanor Powell and the Spectacle of Competence," from Sean Griffin, ed., *Hetero* (2009); Catherine Williamson, "Swimming Pools, Movie Stars: The Celebrity Body in the Post-War Marketplace," *Camera Obscura* (1996).

OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *Broadway Melody of 1940* (Norman Taurog, 1940; 102 mins.) and *Fiesta* (Richard Thorpe, 1947; 104 mins.).

Week 12
March 29

NO CLASS - paper work day

OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *Jailhouse Rock* (Richard Thorpe, 1957; 96 mins.).

READING: HM Steven Cohan, "'Feminizing' the Song-and-Dance Man."

Week 13
April 5

Camp I: Visual Codes, Spectatorship, Performance

HM Matthew Tinkcom, "'Working Like a Homosexual': Camp Visual Codes and the Labor of Gay Subjects in the MGM Freed Unit"; Dyer, "Judy Garland and Camp."

OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *The Pirate* (Vincenzo Minnelli, 1948; 102 mins.).

Week 14
April 12

Camp II: "Wrong" Couples?

SCREENING [IN-CLASS]: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks, 1953; 92 mins.).

OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *On The Town* (Stanley Donen/Gene Kelly, 1949; 98 mins.).

READING: HM Lucie Arbuthnot and Gail Seneca, "Pre-text and Text in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*." RR Rick Altman, "From Homosocial to Heterosexual: The Musical's Two Projects," from Cohan, *The Sound of Musicals*.

Week 15
April 19

Beyond Hollywood: Bollywood and Its Influence

READING: RR Bhaskar Sarkar, "The Mellifluous Illogics of the 'Bollywood Musical,'" from Cohan, *The Sound of Musicals*.

OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* [DDLJ; *The Brave Heart Will Take the Bride*] (Aditya Copra, 1995; 179 mins.) and *Moulin Rouge!* (Baz Luhrmann, 2002; 128 mins.).

GUEST LECTURE by Madhavi Biswas, UTD.

Week 16
April 26

Summing Up: What Is a Musical Now?

OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENING: Chosen by class.

READING: Kelly Kessler, "Epilogue: I Could Go On Singing," from *Destabilizing the Hollywood Musical* (2010); **ebook**.

Discussion of student research plans.

FINAL PAPER DUE Monday, April 30, by email and uploaded to Turnitin.com by 11:59 PM

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All screening times are approximate.

Syllabus subject to change, but not without notice.

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THE REST OF THE SYLLABUS IS AVAILABLE ON eLEARNING TO ENROLLED STUDENTS.