FILM AND HISTORY: VISUALING RACE AND GENDER

Convenor: Dr Jennifer Smyth
## Table of Contents

- Context of Module ........................................ 3
- Module Aims ........................................... 3
- Intended Learning Outcomes ....................... 3

- Syllabus Listing ........................................ 4

- Illustrative Bibliography ......................... 4
**Context of Module**

This module, taught in the Spring Term, may be taken by students on the MA in the History of Race in the Americas, the MA in History, Culture, Class and Power, or taught Master's students outside the History Department.

**Module Aims**

This module focuses on the key historical and theoretical issues informing the construction of race and gender in the American cinema from the early twentieth century to the present. It interrogates the visual instability of gender and race as categories of difference and places them in historical conjunction with the equally complex social categories of class, ethnicity and sexuality. The module introduces students to the intertextual study of visual culture, familiarising them with the evolving discourses of racial and sexual identities in the United States and how popular history, literature, and Hollywood, in particular, have both reinforced and challenged the dominant racial and sexual discourses. Key filmmakers include D.W. Griffith, Victor Fleming, John Ford, Douglas Sirk, Fred Zinnemann, Alfred Hitchcock, Sam Peckinpah, and Spike Lee.

**Intended Learning Outcomes**

Students will explore, through the use of primary and secondary material, the visual history of gender and race in American culture and Hollywood's complex and often contradictory narratives about national identity, historical agency and power.
Seminar Listing

Seminar 1:  Course Overview
Seminar 2:  Inventing Whiteness
Seminar 3:  Race and National Identity
Seminar 4:  Women's History and the Challenge of Historical 'Fictions'
Seminar 5:  Ethnicity and Urbanisation
Seminar 6:  Race and Genre: Fictions of Violence and National Identity
Seminar 7:  Mulattas and Mestizas: at the Crossroads of Race and Gender
Seminar 8:  Beyond '9 to 5': Working Women
Seminar 9:  Deconstructing Race and Gender? Postmodernism and Identity Politics in Contemporary American Culture

Illustrative Bibliography


Lauren Berlant, The Female Complaint (2008)

Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (1990)

Thomas Dixon, The Clansman (1905)

Richard Dyer, White (1997)

Edna Ferber, Show Boat (1926)

Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, Performing Whiteness (2003)


Fannie Hurst, *Imitation of Life* (1933)


Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (1936)


