

Film Remakes ENGL 381.01

Professor Rashna Richards

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Semester: Fall 2013

Class: TR 2:00-3:15
Screening: W 7:00-9:00

Room: 206 Palmer
Room: 34 Barret

Course Description



Remakes have always been popular in Hollywood; they are usually safe commercial bets, repeating successful formulas and emphasizing cinema's ability to shape and reshape the cultural imagination. They might even be seen, as Leo Braudy does, as metaphorically reflecting "the history and culture of this self-made and self-remade country." But remakes are never exact copies, and this course will consider the aesthetic and ideological dynamics of cinematic repetition with a difference. We will begin the semester with theoretical and critical perspectives on the remake as a formative genre in filmmaking. Then we will turn to remakes that cross cultural and national boundaries. Cross-cultural remakes recast, adapt, and make over popular culture, and such cinematic border crossings have significant implications for our understanding of how cultures embrace and resist, borrow from and interact with each other, particularly in the era of globalization. Finally, we will focus on Bollywood remakes of Hollywood films. Rather than regarding these remakes as uncritical homage or derivative plagiarism, we will examine them within wider debates about the transnational flows of media, the intertextual nature of cinematic productions, and the hybridizing character of cultural exchange. **Prerequisite:** Any 200-level film class, preferably ENGL 202, or permission from instructor.

Standard of Work: This is an advanced film studies course and is not recommended for students who are unfamiliar with rigorous film analysis. The readings are intellectually challenging, as are the films. You will need to take careful notes on the screenings, readings, and in-class discussions. In addition, assignments will expect you to engage critically with complex issues in film criticism and employ them in your writing. Therefore, do not take this course if you're expecting an easy ride.

Course Policies

Note 1: These policies will be applied without exceptions. In the interest of fairness to fellow students, please don't expect or ask for special accommodations or exemptions.

Note 2: Failure to remember or follow any of these policies will result in severe penalties to your professionalism grade.

Attendance: You are required to attend all classes. Do not email me about your absences. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get information and/or handouts from a classmate. You are allowed three class absences and one screening absence over the course of the semester, no questions asked. Save these absences for extracurricular activities or medical/personal emergencies. After the fourth absence, each subsequent absence will result in a deduction of 20 points from your final course grade. After six absences, you will fail the course.

Tardiness: You are required to be on time. Habitual tardiness, even if it's only a couple of minutes, will hurt your participation/professionalism grade.

Late Work: I do not accept late work. Paper copies of all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the deadline. Computer glitches or printing problems are not legitimate excuses for late work. If you do not plan on being here when an assignment is due, it must be in my mailbox before the deadline. You will receive a zero on an assignment if it is not turned in when it is due. Please note that you are required to complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade.

Class Participation: You are required to come to class prepared with the assigned reading for that day. I expect constructive verbal contribution to each class meeting. Fair warning: if you do not volunteer, you will be called on to contribute to class discussions. A student who disrupts class or in any way creates a hostile environment will be subject to disciplinary action. A student who reads or does homework for another class, chats with a neighbor, leaves the classroom, or simply dozes off should expect a very low participation grade. I will likely say nothing at the time of the incident, but disruptive behavior will adversely affect your professionalism grade; you may also be marked absent for that day.

Screenings: We will view a wide variety of films in class. You may find these films intellectually challenging or troubling. Learning how to watch and analyze them critically will be an important part of our discussions and assignments.

Electronic Devices: The use of all electronic devices is forbidden in this class. You should turn off all electronic devices, including laptops, before class begins. If you are observed texting, you will be marked absent for that day.

Food or Drink: I don't mind if you bring something to drink, but please avoid bringing any food into the classroom.

Consultation: I'll be happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns you have about the class. You don't need to make an appointment to stop by during my office hours. If those times

don't work, see me before or after class so we can set up another time that is mutually convenient. Appointments cannot be made by email.

Email: It is always preferable to meet in person to discuss any questions or concerns, since the impersonal medium of electronic communication is a poor substitute for a genuine face-to-face conversation. Email should only be reserved for emergencies, when your question cannot wait to be answered until the next time we meet. Please regard email correspondence as formal communication and abide by rules of professional etiquette. Email is absolutely not the medium for negotiating special requests, addressing grade concerns, or discussing ideas for assignments; those issues must be handled in person.

Format of Assignments: All written assignments need to be typed and double spaced, in 12 pt. font, using Times New Roman, with one-inch margins on all sides. The format and citations must conform to MLA specifications, or the assignment may not be accepted. You do not need a title page; instead, include your name, my name, course name/number, and date in the top left corner of the first page. Be sure to number and staple your pages; also, proofread your work before printing up the final draft. I do not accept any assignments via email.

Intellectual Honesty: All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, google or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. You are advised against posting your work on the internet, since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. You are also advised to save drafts of your work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and, if convicted, the student will receive an F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, please consult me.

Disability Issues: Students with documented disabilities may be entitled to specific accommodations. Please contact the office of Student Disability Services for more information. In every case, it is your responsibility to provide me with an official letter from SDS.

Course Evaluation

Grade Distribution

Participation/Professionalism	20%	200 points
Essay #1	20%	200 points
Essay #2	20%	200 points
Essay #3	40%	400 points
Total	100%	1000 points

Assignments (Additional guidelines will be provided when each assignment is introduced.)

Participation/Professionalism: You are required to contribute comments and questions that further class discussion. Simply agreeing or disagreeing with your classmates and/or the readings is not enough. You are expected to add thoughtful ideas to the debate by engaging with the texts in a sophisticated manner. Participation will be evaluated in terms of quantity and quality. Active engagement will be rewarded, and disengaged behavior will be penalized. From time to time, you will be quizzed or asked to respond to specific short-answer questions on the week's film or reading. Quizzes are always unannounced, and they cannot be made up. Failure to follow any course policies or guidelines will hurt your professionalism grade.

Essay #1 (4-5 pages): For the first essay, you will draw on one of Verevis's remake categories to analyze a pair of films not discussed in class. No research is expected for this paper.

Essay #2 (4-5 pages): For the second essay, you will draw on the notion of cinematic border crossings to analyze a pair of films not discussed in class. You will work with two external sources in this essay.

Essay #3 (12-15 pages): The final project for the class is a research paper on some aspect of film remakes and transnational media flows. You will be given several prompts, which you will use to develop your own topic for the project. You will be required to research your topic comprehensively. Your paper will be evaluated on the originality of your critique, the rigor of your analysis, and the thoroughness of your research.

Grading Guidelines

A = 100-94; **A-** = 93-90

B+ = 89-87; **B** = 86-84; **B-** = 83-80

C+ = 79-77; **C** = 76-74; **C-** = 73-70

D+ = 69-67; **D** = 66-64; **D-** = 63-60

F < 60

A range (100-90): Excellent work; exemplary in argument and organization; professionally presented; free of mechanical errors.

B range (89-80): Good, solid work; substantive in argument and organization; meets all requirements, but needs some revisions; no more than five mechanical errors.

C range (79-70): Satisfactory work; addresses the assignment adequately, but requires some significant revisions of content and/or mechanics.

D range (69-60): Below average work; misses one or more central aspects of the assignment; inadequate focus and/or development; awkwardly written; requires extensive rewriting.

F range (< 60): Unacceptable work; fails to meet the requirements of the assignment; incomplete or irrelevant material; lack of focus or development.

Course Materials

- Horton, Andrew and Stuart Y. McDougal, eds. *Play It Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1998. (PAS)
- Verevis, Constantine. *Film Remakes*. New York: Palgrave, 2005. (FR)
- Additional essays on film criticism (*)

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1: Introductions

Thurs., Aug. 22 Introduction to the course

Week 2: Remaking Films, Rethinking Cultures

Tues., Aug. 27 Eberwein, "Remakes and Cultural Studies" (PAS 15-33)
Clips: Siegel, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956); Kaufman, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978)

Screening Haynes, *Far from Heaven* (2002)

Thurs., Aug. 29 Skvirsky, "The Price of Heaven"*
Clips: Sirk, *All That Heaven Allows* (1955); Fassbinder, *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974)

Week 3: Remake as Industrial Category

Tues., Sept. 3 Verevis, "Commerce" (FR 37-57)
Clips: Goff and Roberts, *Charlie's Angels* (1976-81); McG, *Charlie's Angels* (2000)
Introduction to Essay #1

Screening Hitchcock, *Psycho* (1960)

Thurs., Sept. 5 Verevis, "Authors" (FR 58-78)
Clips: Carpenter, *Halloween* (1978); De Palma, *Dressed to Kill* (1980); Van Sant, *Psycho* (1998)

Week 4: Remake as Textual Category

Tues., Sept. 10 Verevis, "Texts" (FR 81-104)
Clips: Schaffner, *Planet of the Apes* (1968); Burton, *Planet of the Apes* (2001)

Screening Kasdan, *Body Heat* (1981)

Thurs., Sept. 12 Verevis, "Genres" (FR 105-25)
Clips: Wilder, *Double Indemnity* (1944); Garnett, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946); Rafelson, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1981)

Week 5: Remake as Critical Category

Tues., Sept. 17 Verevis, "Audiences" (FR 129-50)
Clips: Hooper, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974); Nispel, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (2003)

Screening Godard, *Breathless* (1959)

Thurs., Sept. 19 Verevis, "Discourse" (FR 151-72)
Clips: Lewis, *Gun Crazy* (1950); Penn, *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967);
McBride, *Breathless* (1983)

Week 6: Auto-Remakes

Tues., Sept. 24 McDougal, "The Director Who Knew Too Much" (PAS 52-69)
Clips: Hitchcock, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934); Hitchcock, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956)

No Screening

Thurs., Sept. 26 **Essay #1 due**
Introduction to Essay #2

Week 7: Remakes as Theft

Tues., Oct. 1 Brashinsky, "The Spring, Defiled" (PAS 162-71)
Clips: Bergman, *The Virgin Spring* (1960); Craven, *The Last House on the Left* (1972)

Screening Tarantino, *Reservoir Dogs* (1992)
Thurs., Oct. 3 Verevis, "Conclusion" (FR 173-78)
Clips: Lam, *City on Fire* (1987)

Week 8: Remakes as Translation

Tues., Oct. 8 Horton, "Cinematic Makeovers and Cultural Border Crossings" (PAS 172-90)
Clips: Coppola, *The Godfather* (1972); Kusturica, *Time of the Gypsies* (1988)

Screening Hung, *Eastern Condors* (1987)
Thurs., Oct. 10 Aufderheide, "Made in Hong Kong" (PAS 191-99)
Clips: Aldrich, *The Dirty Dozen* (1967); Cimino, *The Deer Hunter* (1978)

Week 9: Remakes as Parody

Tues., Oct. 15 No classes: Fall Break

No Screening

Thurs., Oct. 17 Fischer, "Modernity and Postmaternity" (PAS 200-16)
Clips: Sirk, *Imitation of Life* (1959); Almodovar, *High Heels* (1991)

Week 10: Remakes as Haunting

Tues., Oct. 22 Michaels, "Nosferatu, or the Phantom of the Cinema" (PAS 238-49)
Clips: Murnau, *Nosferatu* (1922); Herzog, *Nosferatu, the Vampyre* (1978)

Screening Coppola, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992)
Thurs., Oct. 24 Konigsberg, "How Many Draculas Does It Take to Change a Lightbulb?" (PAS 250-75)
Clips: Browning, *Dracula* (1931); Badham, *Dracula* (1979)

Week 11: Transmedia Remakes

Tues., Oct. 29 Somigli, "The Superhero with a Thousand Faces" (PAS 279-94)
Clips: Burton, *Batman* (1989)

No Screening

Thurs., Oct. 31 **Essay #2 due**
Introduction to Essay #3

Week 12: Popular Hindi Cinema

Tues., Nov. 5 Kasbekar, "An Introduction to Indian Cinema"*
Clips: Kapoor, *Shri 420* (1955); Chopra, *Deewaar* (1975)

Screening Chopra, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995)

Thurs., Nov. 7 Ganti, "And Yet My Heart Is Still Indian"*
Clips: Lyne, *Fatal Attraction* (1987)

Week 13: Remakes as Cultural Adaptation

Tues., Nov. 12 Nayar, "The Values of Fantasy"*
Clips: Scorsese, *Taxi Driver* (1976); Bhatt, *Sadak* (1991)

Screening Bhatt, *Ghulam* (1998)

Thurs., Nov. 14 Mazumdar, "The Rebellious Tapani"*
Clips: Kazan, *On the Waterfront* (1954); Ray, *Rebel without a Cause* (1955)

Week 14: Remakes as Contested Repetition

Tues., Nov. 19 Wright, "Tom Cruise? Tarantino? E.T.? . . . Indian!"*
Clips: De Palma, *Mission: Impossible* (1996); Khan, *Main Hoon Na* (2004); Gupta, *Kaante* (2002)

Screening Roshan, *Koi . . . Mil Gaya* (2003)

Thurs., Nov. 21 Alessio, "Nationalism and Postcolonialism in Indian Science Fiction"*
Clips: Spielberg, *E.T.* (1982)

Week 15: Remakes as Pastiche

Tues., Nov. 26 Richards, "(Not) Kramer vs. Kumar"*
Clips: Deutch, *Some Kind of Wonderful* (1987); Meyers, *The Parent Trap* (1996); Johar, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998)

No Screening

Thurs., Nov. 28 No classes: Thanksgiving Break

Week 16: Drawing Conclusions

Tues., Dec. 3 Final discussion

No Screening

Fri., Dec. 6 **Essay #3 due by noon (leave in box on office door—307 Palmer)**