

Course Description:

CIN370-S11 -- HOLLYWOOD REBELS: A HISTORY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENT FILM

Mandatory Pre-Session April 26, 6-8pm.

Class meets May 13-17 -- LSM-MAS

The term “independent film” has come to be defined rather broadly. It can mean a film that was produced outside of a major Hollywood studio. It can mean a film that was made for a miniscule budget. It can refer to a style of storytelling and a mode of production that stands in contrast to what we think of as a conventional Hollywood film. Add to this the rapid advances in digital technology that have made filmmaking equipment vastly more affordable and the fact that the Internet now allows millions to distribute their work without the help of traditional gatekeepers, and the definition of “independent film” becomes even more complex. This course will examine American independent film from all of these perspectives: economic, technological, aesthetic and cultural. We will try to place key films within the context of their times and explore how innovations that often start on the fringes can work their way into the mainstream. Starting with D.W. Griffith and *Birth of a Nation*, moving into directors like Maya Deren working on the edge of the Hollywood studio system, into the volatile 1960’s, through the work of John Cassavetes and Spike Lee, into the golden age of Miramax in the 1990’s, on to the “mumblecore” movement and the works of Lena Dunham, and ending with Jordan Peele’s *Get Out*, this course will survey the American independent film landscape and study the key works of the 20th and early 21st century.