



Variations on the American Hero

American Culture and Society

(BBNAN13400 – D2)

Kinga Földvály



Time: Fridays 10.15–11.45
Place: BTK D 312
Availability: By e-mail: foldvary.kinga@btk.ppke.hu
Course material: MS Teams

Course schedule:

Week 1 (13 Feb)	Cinematic reflections of society and culture
Week 2 (20 Feb)	The first "American" hero: <i>1492: Conquest of Paradise</i> (1992, dir. Ridley Scott)
Week 3 (27 Feb)	The romantic coloniser: <i>The New World</i> (2005, dir. Terrence Malick)
Week 4 (6 March)	The cowboy: <i>The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance</i> (1962, dir. John Ford)
Week 5 (13 March)	The private detective: <i>Chinatown</i> (1974, dir. Roman Polanski)
Week 6 (20 March)	The man of the law: <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> (1962, dir. Robert Mulligan)
Week 7 (27 March)	The soldier: <i>Forrest Gump</i> (1994, dir. Robert Zemeckis)
(3 April)	EASTER BREAK – NO CLASS
(10 April)	EASTER BREAK – NO CLASS
Week 8 (17 April)	The female scientist: <i>Hidden Figures</i> (2016, dir. Theodore Melfi)
Week 9 (24 April)	The perfect woman: <i>The Stepford Wives</i> (2004, dir. Frank Oz)
(1 May)	NO CLASS
Week 10 (8 May)	The hero of the future: <i>Blade Runner 2049</i> (2017, dir. Denis Villeneuve)
Week 11 (15 May)	End-term test

Requirements:

- **Active participation**, watching movies at home, reading course material, regular attendance (max. 3 missed classes)
- Weekly **reflections** on the movies, to be submitted to Teams before the class
- In-class **presentation** on a film (or TV series) that presents a version of/reflection on American heroism
- **End-term test – short essay questions, terms, based on movies, discussions and short readings:**
 - Nathaniel Carlson: "Lost at Sea: A Reappraisal of Ridley Scott's *1492: Conquest of Paradise*", *Offscreen*, Volume 20, Issue 1 / January 2016, <https://offscreen.com/view/1492-conquest-of-paradise>
 - André Bazin: "The Western, or the American Film *Par Excellence*", pp. 140–148 in *What Is Cinema?* Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972.
 - Scott, Steven D. "Like a Box of Chocolates: 'Forrest Gump' and Postmodernism." *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2001, pp. 23–31. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43797013>
 - Steve Greenfield: "Hero or Villain? Cinematic Lawyers and the Delivery of Justice", *Journal of Law and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Law and Film (Mar., 2001), pp. 25–39, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3657945>
 - Thompson, C. L. (2020). "See what she becomes": Black women's resistance in *Hidden Figures*. *Feminist Media Studies*, 22(4), 866–882. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2020.1836012>
 - Steve Rose, "'I've seen things you people wouldn't believe': what *Blade Runner 2049*'s dystopia tells us about 2017", *The Guardian*, 6 October, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/oct/06/blade-runner-2049-dystopian-vision-seen-things-wouldnt-believe>