

**SYLLABUS**

**Masterseminar**

**„How Western Movies Represent the Relationship Between Violence, Statehood, and Economy“**

Wintersemester2022/23

Prof. Dr. Volker Depkat  
 Prof. Dr. Thomas Steger

**Concept**

The seminar will analyze a selection of Western and Neo-Western movies through an economic lens, asking how the movies negotiate the role and varieties of violence in the process of the Frontier. The Frontier as it was theorized by Frederick Jackson Turner in his seminal essay „The Significance of the Frontier“ in 1893 is a key ideological resource of the Western genre in its many forms. All too often, the Western hero and the specific form of violence connected to him are bound to vanish as the society of a given Frontier region grows, as political institutions develop, and as the local economy diversifies and gets integrated into the national and international markets. This, however, produces new forms of violence.

After introducing students to Frederick Jackson Turner’s Frontier Thesis and its critical reception, the seminar will move on to discuss the generic features of Western movies. This will lay the basis for the analysis of the four Western movies: *Shane* (1953), *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968), and *Django Unchained* (2012).

The class will be taught in English and German. The movies will be watched in English with German subtitles.

Time/Place	
<p><b>Registration</b>            First come – first serve</p> <p><b>De-Registration</b>            From September 5 to November 28</p>	<p>- <b>WiWi students from September 5 to October 17 via FlexNow (max. 7 participants)</b></p> <p>- <b>students from American Studies from September 5 to October 17 via FlexNow (max. 7 participants)</b></p> <p>- <b>students from Criminology from September 5 to October 17 via FlexNow (max. 6 participants)</b></p> <p>Erasmus and other exchange students register via email using the accreditation form at: <a href="mailto:sekretariat.fo@ur.de">sekretariat.fo@ur.de</a></p>

Th 27.10.2022, 16.00-18.00 W 112	<b>Introduction meeting</b>
Th 10.11.2022 16.00-18.00 W 112	<b>Overview of the topic I</b>
Mo 14.11.2022 18.00-20.00 R 006	<b>Overview of the topic II</b>
Mo 21.11.2022 18.00-22.00 R 007	<b>Movie I</b> "Shane"
Th 24.11.2022 16.00-18.00 W 112	<b>Discussion Movie I</b>
Mo 28.11.2022 18.00 -22.00 R 007	<b>Movie II</b> "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance"
Th 01.12.2022 16.00 -18.00 W 112	<b>Discussion Movie II</b>
Mo 05.12.2022 18.00 -22.00 R 007	<b>Movie III</b> "Once Upon a Time in the West"
Th 08.12.2022 16.00 -18.00 W 112	<b>Discussion Movie III</b>
Mo 19.12.2022 18.00 -22.00 R 007	<b>Movie IV</b> "Django unchained"
Th 22.12.2022 16.00 -18.00 W 112	<b>Discussion Movie IV</b>
Th 26.01.2023 16.00 -18.00 W 112	<b>Closing meeting</b>

### Readings

Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, New York: Holt & Company, 1920. Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II, and Charles E. Rankin, eds., *Trails: Toward a New Western History*, Lawrence, KS: UP of Kansas, 1991. Bernd Kiefer and Norbert Grob, eds., *Western: Reclam Filmgenres*, Stuttgart: Reclam, 2014. Werner Faulstich, *Grundkurs Filmanalyse*, 3rd ed., Paderborn: Fink, 2013.

### Assessment

The seminar grade comprises two parts:

1. **Moderation (of one Discussion meeting) / oral contributions to the seminar** (weight: 25%)
2. **Written homework**, ca. 8000 words (excl. Literature/annexe) (weight: 75%)

Both parts must be passed successfully. Successful pass of the seminar will be awarded with **6-14 ECTS** (dependent on the study program).

**Questions?**

All questions may be directed via email to [volker.depkat@ur.de](mailto:volker.depkat@ur.de) or [thomas.steger@ur.de](mailto:thomas.steger@ur.de)