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## **THE CINEMA OF ROMAN POLANSKI**

Professor Gordana Crnković  
Teaching Assistant: Matt Boyd

C LIT 397 B, Special Topics in Cinema Studies  
SLAV 223 A, East European Cinema  
TTh 12:30-2:20, AU 2015, SIG 134, 5 credits, VLPA

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The films of Roman Polanski have attracted a world-wide audience and made him one of the most well-known and best-regarded contemporary directors. His acclaim spans from the early films of the 1950s, such as *Two Men and a Wardrobe* (1958)—directed while he was a student—to 2002's *The Pianist*, winner of the Academy Award for Best Director, to the present day. This course will explore Polanski's remarkable cosmopolitan, decades-spanning oeuvre. We will focus on Polanski's most successful films, starting with his experimental Polish shorts, proceeding to his highly acclaimed English production *Repulsion*, then onto such Hollywood classics as *Rosemary's Baby* and *Chinatown*. We'll move from there to his post-Hollywood, multinational productions, including such films as *The Tenant* and *Frantic*, his 1990s films *Bitter Moon* and *Death and the Maiden*, and then his lauded *The Pianist*, provocative *The Ghost Writer*, hyper-intense *Carnage*, and his newest, *Venus in Fur* (2013). The course will look into how Polanski's movies adopt a number of different genres and aesthetic approaches to deal with the recurrent themes of solitude, victimization, and the idiosyncratic worldview of an isolated individual. Requirements: film viewing, readings, three quizzes.

### **NOTE ON THE USE OF LAP-TOPS AND CELL PHONES**

No lap-top or cell phone use is allowed during the class, regardless of whether we are having a discussion, a lecture, or viewing a film clip. Please put away your laptops and turn off your cell phones when in class, and do not disturb the class by leaving the room to make or take your texts or calls.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

#### **1) Viewing the Films**

Unless we have an in-class viewing of the film, you are required to view the film on your own before the class in which we are discussing it. All of the films for this class are on reserve in the Media Center, as well as available as streaming video. Instructions on how to access films online will be given in the first class.

#### **2) In-class quizzes**

Three in-class quizzes, the first two for 35% of the final grade and the third one for 30% of the final grade.

### 3) Written Responses

We shall have a few in-class or at home writing assignments, to be announced in the class. These will be optional and not graded. They are intended to help focus your viewing responses and to help you improve your writing and articulation of thoughts on the films and subjects we tackle, as well as to get more comprehensive feedback on your work.

### 4) Readings

Relevant articles or book chapters are available on our class site, providing additional ways of approaching Polanski's films. Some of these are required and noted as such in the syllabus, and some are optional. We shall review the main points of these articles in the class as well.

### CLASS SCHEDULE

Th, Oct 1	Introduction
Tu, Oct 6	Early Short Films: <i>Two Men and a Wardrobe</i> (1959), in-class viewing and discussion (Film is on the bonus disc of <i>Knife in the Water</i> )
Th, Oct 8	<i>Repulsion</i> (1965), introduction and beginning in-class viewing
Tu, Oct 13	<i>Repulsion</i> , discussion
Th, Oct 15	CHANGE: <i>Fearless Vampire Killers</i> (1967)
Tu, Oct 20	<i>Rosemary's Baby</i> (1968)
Th, Oct 22	<i>Chinatown</i> (1974) <u>Reading</u> : Roger Ebert, "Beyond Narrative: The Future of the Feature Film" (1978) <u>Reading</u> : Herbert Eagle, "Polanski"
Tu, Oct 27	<b>1<sup>st</sup> in-class Quiz</b> <i>Macbeth</i> (1971), introduction
Th, Oct 29	Matt Boyd's lecture on <i>Macbeth</i> (1971) and <i>Tess</i> (1980)
Tu, Nov 3	<i>The Tenant</i> (1976)
Th, Nov 5	<i>Frantic</i> (1988)
Tu, Nov 10	<i>Bitter Moon</i> (1992)
Th, Nov 12	<i>Death and the Maiden</i> (1994) <u>Reading</u> : Gordana Crnković, "Death and the Maiden"
Tu, Nov 17	Group Discussions, Review of the Class Material
Th, Nov 19	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> in-class Quiz</b>
Tu, Nov 24	Matt Boyd's lecture on <i>The Ninth Gate</i> (1999) <i>The Pianist</i> , introduction and beginning in-class viewing
Th, Nov 26	<u>Thanksgiving Holiday, no class</u>

Tu, Dec 1	<i>The Pianist</i> , discussion
Th, Dec 3	<i>Ghost-Writer</i> (2010) <u>Reading</u> : Polanski interview, 2009
Tu, Dec 8	Lecture on <i>Venus in Fur</i> ; Other Films by Polanski, Polanski as an Actor <u>Reading</u> : David Walsh, “An evaluation of Roman Polanski as an artist”
Th, Dec 10	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> in-class Quiz</b> Wrap-up of the Class

**READINGS FOR THIS CLASS, AVAILABLE ON CANVAS AND/OR ON WEB SITES BELOW.**

**General Humanities Readings:**

1) William Deresiewicz, “The Neoliberal Arts: How college sold its soul to the market”

<http://harpers.org/archive/2015/09/the-neoliberal-arts/1/>

2) The Ancient Greeks’ 6 Words for Love (And Why Knowing Them Can Change Your Life),  
*Roman Krznaric*

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/the-ancient-greeks-6-words-for-love-and-why-knowing-them-can-change-your-life>

**General Film Readings**

3) Matt Boyd’s Comprehensive Film Terminology

4) Beyond Narrative: The Future of the Feature Film (1978), *required*

<http://www.rogerebert.com/rogers-journal/beyond-narrative-the-future-of-the-feature-film>

5) Prof. Michael Goldberg 's "Some Suggestions on How to Read a Film":

<http://faculty.washington.edu/mlg/students/readafilm.htm>

6) Jean-Luc Godard, *The Future(s) of Film: Three Interviews 2000-01*

**Polanski Readings**

7) Herbert Eagle, “Polanski”, *required*

8) Gordana Crnkovic, “Death and the Maiden” (review essay), *required*

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1213615>

9) Gordana Crnkovic, “From the Eye to the Hand: the Victim’s Double Vision in the Cinema of Roman Polanski.” <http://www.kinoeye.org/04/05/crnkovic05.php>

10) Polanski interview, 2009, *required*

<http://www.dga.org/Craft/DGAQ/All-Articles/0804-Winter-2008-09/Interview-Roman-Polanski.aspx>

11) David Walsh: "An evaluation of Roman Polanski as an artist", *required*  
<http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2009/11/pola-n20.html>

## **FILMS ON RESERVE FOR THIS CLASS, at the Media Center**

### **All Directed by Roman Polanski**

1. Nóż w wodzie / Knife in the Water, Roman Polanski, 2-disc Criterion ed., DVD CRIT 710
2. Repulsion, Roman Polanski, DVD CRIT 439
3. Rosemary's Baby, Roman Polanski, DVD CRIT 673
4. Macbeth, Roman Polanski, DVD CTHV 280
5. The Tenant, Roman Polanski, DVD PARA 145
6. Tess, Roman Polanski, DVD CRIT 749
7. Frantic, Roman Polanski, DVD WHV 1066
8. Bitter Moon, Roman Polanski, DVD SOUTHH 073
9. Death and the Maiden, Roman Polanski, DVD AA 010
10. The Ninth Gate, Roman Polanski, DVD AA 020
11. The Pianist, Roman Polanski, DVD UNIV 075
12. Oliver Twist, Roman Polanski, DVD SONYHE 011
13. The Ghost Writer, Roman Polanski, DVD SUMME 007
14. Carnage, Roman Polanski, DVD SONYHE 213
15. Venus in Fur, Roman Polanski DVD EUR 305

Course Reserves can be searched for in the UW Libraries Catalog by course number or instructor name: <http://www.lib.washington.edu/types/course>

**All media course reserves should be returned directly to the Media Center Desk to avoid fines.**

Also available the following streaming link. You will need your UW NetID to access this and other UW Libraries licensed streaming media titles.

*Knife in the Water*

<http://tinyurl.com/nwkaupt>

## **SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY ON POLANSKI**

**NOTE:** You are encouraged but not required to read the following secondary literature. The instructor will include the pertinent points from these and other readings in her lectures.

Belmans, Jacques: *Roman Polanski* (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1971)

Crnković, Gordana P.: *Death and the Maiden*. *Film Quarterly* 50.3 (Spring 1997, Berkeley: University of California Press)

\_\_\_\_\_: "From the Eye to the Hand: the Victim's Double Vision in the Cinema of Roman Polanski." *Kinoeye: New Perspectives on European Film*; Volume 4, Issue 5, November 29, 2004. Polish Cinema issue, part 1. Available at: <http://www.kinoeye.org/04/05/crnkovic05.php>

Eagle, Herbert: "Polanski." In Daniel Goulding, ed.: *Five Filmmakers* (Indiana University Press; Bloomington, 1994)

Eagle, Herbert J.: "Exile and emigration in the films of Roman Polanski." In Halina Stephanovich, ed., *Living in translation: Polish writers in America* (Amsterdam, New York, NY: Rodopi, 2003), *Studies in Slavic literature and poetics* v. 38.

Strong, Jeremy: "Tess, Jude, and the Problem of Adapting Hardy." *Literature Film Quarterly* 34.3 (July 1, 2006, Salisbury State University), pp.195-203.

Kiernan, Thomas: *The Roman Polanski's Story* (New York: Selilah/Grove, 1980)

Kimball, Samuel: "Laius a tergo, the symbolic order, the production of the future: Chinatown's primal scene." *Literature and Psychology*, vol. 48, issue 1/2, 2002; also available on web

Leaming, Barbara: *Polanski, A Biography: The Filmmaker as Voyeur* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981)

Marciniak, Katarzyna: "Cinematic Exile: Performing the Foreign Body on Screen in Roman Polanski's *The Tenant*." *Camera Obscura* 15.1 (2000)

Mazierska, Ewa: *Roman Polanski: The Cinema of a Cultural Traveler* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007)

Martin, Adrian: "Landscapes of the Mind: the Cinema of Roman Polanski." *Senses of Cinema*: [http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/15/biff\\_polanski.html](http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/15/biff_polanski.html)

Meikle, Denis: *Roman Polanski: Odd Man Out* (London : Reynolds & Hearn, 2006)

Morrison, James: "The Old Masters: Kubrick, Polanski, and the Late Style in Modern Cinema" (*Raritan*; New Brunswick, Fall 2001; vol. 21, issue 2); also available on web

\_\_\_\_\_ : *Roman Polanski* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007)

Orr, John and Elzbieta Ostrowska: *The Cinema of Roman Polanski: Dark Spaces of the World* (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2006)

Polanski, Roman: *Roman* (New York: Morrow, 1984)

Sandford, Christopher: *Polanski* (London: Century, 2007)

Szpilman, Wladyslaw: *The Pianist* (Picador: New York, 2003)

Weschler, Lawrence: "Profile: Artist in Exile." *The New Yorker*, December 5, 1994.

For more bibliography on Polanski, see:  
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/polanski.html>