

Film Extra Evening Class

All in the family

National Media Museum



Like Father, Like Son

Wednesday evenings 25 September to 6 November 2013 (7 weeks) 18.15 – 20.15

Where do the stories in films come from? How do writers create dramatic conflicts from given situations? The relationships between family members, the survivalist instincts of the family as a collective group and the constraints placed on individual family members together comprise a rich source of 'conflict material' for creative filmmakers. This course will focus on three very different films which use aspects of the family dynamic to create stories. From three different filmmaking cultures, these films will also help us to explore both the universal and the culturally specific elements of family life.

The course uses three screenings from the current public programme at the National Media Museum. Screenings will usually be in the Cubby Broccoli Cinema but please be aware that they are sometimes moved to Pictureville or the IMAX screen. Each screening will have a short introduction of around 10 minutes. Notes will be provided for both screening and discussion weeks.

The course structure follows a pattern, after the introduction week, of a screening session one week and a discussion session the following week, extended using selected extracts from other films. The films selected for full screenings will usually be playing at other times during the week but because these are recently-released films, it is unlikely that they will be available on DVD.

Week One, 25 September: Introduction

Using extracts from family-focused films, this first session will introduce some of the basic concepts for analysing films and understanding how they produce their meanings. No previous knowledge of film theory is required. Classes are discussion based and all contributions are welcomed.

Week Two, 2 October: Family Relationships and Comedy

Screening: *Looking for Hortense* (France 2012) (100 mins)

A sophisticated Parisian 'comedy of manners' (and social issues), this film narrative is built around a seemingly simple request by Iva (Kristin Scott Thomas) to her partner Damien (Jean-Pierre Bacri). But since it involves speaking to his father with whom he has a difficult relationship Damien struggles to carry out the request and there are all kinds of unfortunate and sometimes very funny consequences.

Week Three, 9 October: Discussion, Families and Comedy

Following discussion of *Looking for Hortense*, the session will explore other examples of comedy films built around family relationships, considering different types of film comedy and how the conflicts between family members can be exploited to entertain audiences – and to explore questions about family life and broader social issues.



Week Four, 16 October: Fighting for the Family

Screening: *Metro Manila* (Philippines/UK 2013) (115 mins – this programme will run slightly longer than the usual class time)

In a world of global capitalism poorer people are often forced to move to where there might be work. British filmmaker Sean Ellis tells a familiar story about Oscar and Mai and their two small children moving from the countryside to the big city. The basic story idea might be familiar but Ellis offers a new approach, using local actors and shooting on the streets in the local language. In classic neo-realist style, the two unusual plot twists come from his own observations and a remarkable local news story.

Week Five, 23 October: Discussion, Family dramas and

action genres

Ellis has described his film as “starting as World Cinema and then becoming a thriller genre film”. We’ll explore this tension between realist social drama and crime/genre thriller, discussing *Metro Manila* alongside extracts from familiar action genres that exploit family ties.

Week Six, 30 October: Emotional dramas and family relationships

Screening: *Like Father, Like Son* (Japan 2013) (119 mins – this programme will run slightly longer than the usual class time)

Is blood thicker than water? Does the nature-nurture debate still count? Japanese director Kore-eda Hirokazu has proved himself one of the contemporary masters of the family drama. His 2012 film *I Wish* was well-received here at the Museum earlier this year. In his new film he revisits the ‘babies swapped at birth’ scenario and asks what might happen if a father discovers that his six year-old son is not his biological child at all. How should he reconcile his own feelings with those of everyone else involved?

Week Seven, 6 November: Discussion and Course Conclusion

In this final session we’ll discuss Kore-eda’s work across two or three of his child-centred and family-centred films. Similar films are rare in a British or American context and this might allow us to think back across our earlier discussions to consider whether ‘the family’ is a universal institution as represented by different film industries or one closely defined by its cultural context.

Tutor: Roy Stafford

Further materials relevant to the course will be posted on <http://itpworld.wordpress.com>

For details of how to book the course call **0844 856 3797**