Why would a Brazilian director depict not the guerrilla Che Guevara but the young doctor developing his social awareness? Walter Salles’s *Motorcycle Diaries* will set the tone for the discussion of Brazil’s emphasis on the social agenda as its major contribution to world cinema. This course will approach the evolution of this genre, beginning with Cinema Novo, the shift towards the commercial film (*Central Station*), the development of a new aesthetics (*City of God*) and of recent radical experimentations. Discussions will include the tensions between aesthetics and ethics, the achievement of the commercial film and of the documentary as social action, and film as a tool for the empowerment of the marginalized.

**Assessment:** Two 2000-word essays (50 per cent each).

**Value:** 15 credits

**Screenings online in advance of relevant class**

Course Organizer: Professor Else R. P. Vieira

Office Hours: tbc

e-mail: e.vieira@qmul.ac.uk

E-mail etiquette: 3 working days

Submission of essays: Via QMPLUS, in Word format (not PDF)

Deadline for Essay 1: Sunday Nov 8th, 2020 at 23:55


**Timetable**

**Week 1**  
Introduction to module

**Week 2**  

**Week 3**  
Lecture and seminar: Representations of Che Guevara in *The Motorcycle Diaries* and in *Che I* (Steve Soderbergh, 2009)
**Week 4**  Lecture and seminar: Retomada. The internationalization of Brazilian social film in the commercial circuit. The representation of the urban suburbs and the sertão in *Central Station*. (Walter Salles, 1998)

**Week 5**  Lecture and seminar: *Central Station* (Continued). Allegorical readings

**Week 6**  Lecture: Cinema Novo/ New Cinema. The *Aesthetics of Hunger*. The *Aesthetics of Violence*  
**Seminar:** Essay tutorials Essential to bring an outline (time tbc)

**Week 7**  Reading Week

**Week 8**  and Lecture and seminar: Black God White Devil (Glauber Rocha, 1964). The sertão/ backlands; Messianism; Cangaço (social banditry);

**Week 9**  Lecture and seminar *City of God* (Fernando Meirelles, 2002)

**Week 10**  Lecture and seminar *City of God* (Fernando Meirelles, 2002)

**Week 11**  Lecture and seminar: The plight of the street child in *Bus 174* by José Padilha (2002)

**Week 12**  Lecture: Film and the humanization of marginalized sexual minorities (the transvestites). *Princesa*  
**Seminar:** Essay tutorials.. Essential to bring an outline

**General Reference**


**Introduction:** The sertão and the favela. The Retomada films


Motorcycle Diaries and Che I


Central Station


*Black God White Devil*

Da Matta, Roberto (13 September 1996), *Understanding Messianism in Brazil: Notes from a Social Anthropologist* [online text] IDB Cultural Center Lecture Series No. 17. IDB Cultural Center, Washington DC.


**City of God**


Meirelles, Fernando. ‘Writing the Script, Finding and Preparing the Actors”. In Vieira 2005


**Bus 174 (José Padilha, 2002)**


**Princesa**


BENCHMARKS

Level 5 Benchmarks (Culture): At this level students are additionally expected to demonstrate:

- Detailed knowledge of major discipline(s) and awareness of a variety of relevant concepts/contexts/frameworks
- Capacity to analyse a range of texts/cultural products and to place them in their contexts with minimum guidance
- Awareness of the complexity of the subject and of the tasks set, ability to identify key issues and to discern the most appropriate approaches
- Ability to work within major theories/critical frameworks of discipline
- Capacity to distinguish between these theoretical/critical approaches, to compare them and their implications
- Ability to synthesise a range of ideas and to re-think them in the light of a given task
- Capacity to challenge received opinion and to begin to develop own criteria and judgement
- Awareness of the formal attributes of primary texts and cultural products
- Capacity to communicate findings effectively and in a format appropriate to the discipline
- Ability to construct a coherent argument

Level 2 (FILM STUDIES): At this level students are additionally expected to demonstrate:

- A cultivated and critical sense of a wide range of different theories of film resulting in a more detailed factual, conceptual and historical knowledge of the field of study
- Confidence in the use of essential terminology and key concepts
- Strong research, analytical and problem-solving skills
- The ability to use sequence, or mise-en-scene, analysis, within a wide range of tasks with minimum guidance
- Sophisticated understanding of the relationship between film texts and their cultural, historical and political contexts
- (and for students who opt to study film production) The ability to demonstrate video production skills related to the directing of drama in terms of working with performers, preparing a script and blocking and staging action
- (and for students who opt to study film production) The ability to write a script as an adaptation of a prose text and the ability to write an original screenplay to a good standard in terms of format and layout and in relation to narrative drama (incl. plot, characterization, genre)
- Capability and confidence in communicating ideas in a format appropriate to the discipline

MARKING CRITERIA

PLEASE CONSULT QMPLUS