

**Course Descriptions for Graduate English Classes**  
**May Intersession 2014**

**ENGL 5723/6723, The Reel South**

**Teacher: L. Hinrichsen**

**Course Description:**

In this course we will investigate how the U.S. South has been cinematically imagined and invented in ways that both construct and unsettle national narratives. In screening a wide variety of films from the early twentieth-century to more recent postmodern examples, we will analyze how cinematic representations of “the South” attest to the ways in which the region is inherently a visual and visualized space. As we discuss the relationship between the South and Hollywood, we will examine how the cinematic South speaks to national and transnational transformations, including changing modes of conceptualizing race, class, gender, and regional identity itself. How does film work to complicate or reaffirm the traditional iconic elements of “the South” (a sense of place, community, and the presence of the past)? Does cinema provide the space for a performance of place that can illuminate the transnational or hemispheric affiliations between the U.S. South and the Global South, or otherwise reveal aspects of the region’s complicated cultural hybridity and multiplicity? How do films entrench or complicate certain ways of seeing the South in relationship to the nation at large? In answering these questions and others, we will examine *Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Jezebel* (1938), *Gone with the Wind* (1939), *Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), *Deliverance* (1972), *Mississippi Burning* (1988), *Mississippi Masala* (1991), *C.S.A.: The Confederate States of America* (2004), and *Django Unchained* (2012). We will examine how cinematic meaning is conditioned by specific uses of camera, editing, lighting, sound and acting; and we will explore the impact of technological developments on film production and pay special attention to issues of adaptation and genre. Through course readings, class discussions, and in-class writing exercises, you will develop the vocabulary and analytical skills that will allow you to discuss a film within its historical, cultural, textual, and technical contexts.

**Required Texts:**

No books required. Films will be screened in class and required readings provided on Blackboard.

**Course Requirements:**

Daily quizzes (25%), writing portfolio (25%), discussion section participation and class presentation (20%), cumulative final exam (30%).