Course Description

In this course we will study the changing shape of the Road Movie genre over the course of the twentieth century. Though our primary focus will be on international adaptations of the genre since the 1960s, we will historicize the modern permutations of the genre by beginning with a consideration of the simultaneous emergence of moving pictures and high-speed forms of transportation. In addition to considering the limits and possibilities of genre as a category of analysis, we will grapple with a number of questions that will persist throughout the course: What is the relationship between cinema and the automobile? Is the road trip a peculiarly American fantasy, and what happens when non-US filmmakers adopt the genre? How does gender emerge as a concern of this genre? What role do urban and rural spaces play in shaping the journeys attempted within these films? What kinds of border-crossings does this genre enact or prohibit? And finally, do the often-radical fantasies of characters within this genre necessarily translate into films with radical politics?

Required Books (available at Penn Book Center, corner of Walnut and 34th, and on reserve at Rosengarten, Van Pelt Library, with screened movies):


Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, eds., The Road Movie Book (London and New York: Routledge, 1997)


Lynne Kirby, Parallel Tracks: The Railroad and Silent Cinema (Durham: Duke UP, 1997)

All other readings will be available on electronic reserve on course Blackboard site.
Course Requirements:

1) Complete reading prior to class.
2) Attend screenings, or, if you have conflicts with other academic events, view films individually prior to Thursday lecture.
3) Full attendance and participation in class discussions, presentations and blackboard exchanges.
4) 1 5-page paper; 1 8-10 page paper; 1 midterm examination with short essay answers.

Grading:

Attendance and participation in Blackboard, presentations and class discussion: 20%
Paper #1 (5 pages): 20%
Midterm: 20%
Paper #2 (8-10 pages): 40%

A Note on Paper Writing:

All papers should be written in accordance with MLA manual of style. Endnotes or footnotes are acceptable, but please use correct citational format. Papers should be in Times 12 font, double-spaced. All sources used in paper writing must be cited, and, if doing research, please avoid over-reliance on internet sources. They are often questionable in quality, and I would prefer to read your own thoughts and arguments about the films in question. Above all, I value critical and original thinking, careful attention to the film texts and scholarly texts under consideration, well-constructed arguments, and polished prose.

I. Predecessors of the Genre

1) The Railroad: Cinema and Modernity

January 11: Introduction: Genre criticism

January 13: Lynne Kirby, *Parallel Tracks*, 1-74; 241-252 (Introduction, Ch. 1, Conclusion)
Screening (in class): *The Great Train Robbery* (Edison/Porter, 1903)

2) The Western

January 18: Stephanie Watson, “From Riding to Driving: Once Upon A Time in the West,” in Jack Sargeant and Stephanie Watson, *Lost Highways: An Illustrated History of Road Movies* (PCP International: Creation Books,
III. The Not-So-Straight and Narrow Path

3) Outlaws

David Laderman, “Paving the Way: Sources and Features of the Road Movie,” Laderman, Ch. 1.

Screening: Bonnie and Clyde (USA, Arthur Penn, 1967)

Ian Leong, Mike Sell and Kelly Thomas, “Mad Love, Mobile Homes, and Dysfunctional Dicks,” in Cohan, Ch. 3.

4) Women Drivers

Laderman, “Remapping Road Movie Rebellion,” 184-204.

Screening: Thelma and Louise (USA, Ridley Scott, 1991)


5) Border Crossing: Race, Gender, Genres

Screening:  *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar* (USA, Beeban Kidron, 1995)


6) The Bus


Screening:  *Get on the Bus!* (USA, Spike Lee, 1996)

February 17: CLASS CANCELLED

III. Speed, Slowness and Stasis

7) The Urban Road Movie: Immobility


Screening:  *Crash* (Canada, David Cronenberg, 1996)


8) Midterms:

March 1: Midterm review. Please come to class with questions for review.

March 3: MIDTERM EXAMINATION (Short answers; in class)
March 8 / 10: **SPRING BREAK**

9) **David Lynch and the Road Movie**

**March 14:** Free screening of *Mulholland Drive* (Lynch, 2001) at The Bridge, 5pm? Check Cinema Studies website for full details


Mary Sweeney talks about her co-authorship of *The Straight Story* (David Lynch, 1999). Includes free screening of *The Straight Story* (attendance mandatory in place of Wednesday screening).

Meyerson Hall, Room B1, 210 South 34th Street (corner of Walnut). **5pm. Registration required.**

[http://humanities.sas.upenn.edu/04-05/event_sweeney.html](http://humanities.sas.upenn.edu/04-05/event_sweeney.html)

\March 17: Discussion of Sweeney and *The Straight Story.*

**IV. Nations and Borders**

10) **The End of the Road: France**


Lademan, “Traveling Other Highways: The European Road Movie,” 247-259.

**Screening:** *Weekend* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1967)

**March 24:** Peter Rojas, “From the French Revolution to Gaullist Weekends: Jean-Luc Godard’s ‘Weekend’ Road Trip,” in Sargeant and Weston, 258-264 (BB).


11) **New German Cinema on the Road**

**March 29:** Tim Corrigan, “A History, A Cinema: Audience, Codes, and the New German Cinema” and “Wenders’s *Kings of the Road: The Voyage from***

Screening: Kings of the Road (Wim Wenders, 1976 )

March 31: Class cancelled.

12) The Mexican Road Movie

April 5: Pat Aufderheide, “Y Tu Mama Tambien,” (film review), Cineaste (Winter 2001): 27.2 (BB)
A. Basoli, “Sexual Awakenings and Stark Social Realities: An Interview with Alfonso Cuaron,” Cineaste (Summer 2002): 27.3 (BB)

Screening: Y Tu Mama Tambien (Mexico, Alfonso Cuarón, 2002)

April 7: One-page, single-spaced outline of papers with thesis statement due today.

*Blackboard assignment: post 1-page review of film in which you outline the relationship between the film and the Road Movie genre as we have understood it to date. The review must be posted by Wednesday, 8pm, and will form the basis of class discussion.

13) The Road of Exile

April 12: Paper-writing workshop today—please bring rough drafts of paper to class.

Screening: Time of the Gypsies (Emir Kusturica, 1989)


14) Experimenting with the Road

(Evaluations handed out today.)

Screening: Su Friedrich, Rules of the Road (USA, 1993, 31 minutes)

April 21: Last class. Final papers due today