From the moment the first crude nickelodeons flickered across their tiny screens, the movies have been a site where cultural regulation has been vigorously contested. This course examines the shifting cultural and political terrain of movie censorship, from early films to the present. We examine early movements to control the movies, focus in particular on the regime of cultural regulation established by Hollywood’s Production Code Administration, survey the gradual and inelegant demise of the PCA, and reflect on the cross-currents of the present-day ratings system. Throughout the course we attempt to understand who wants censorship and why, what the results have been for works of the imagination, and how motion picture censorship fits into broader historical issues of the control of expression.

The formal class meeting is on Monday evenings. There will be two group screenings of films on Sunday nights; you are strongly encouraged to attend. The movies are an indispensable part of the course, and seeing them in a group enhances the experience. If you can’t make the Sunday night screenings, be sure you see the films (on reserve) at another time.

There are three writing assignments. The first two are synthetic essays of approximately six to eight pages in length; in each you analyze the readings, films, and discussions to that point in the class. The final essay (up to ten pages) aims at a synthesis of the issues surrounding movie censorship. Each essay counts one-third of the final grade. I’m also open to your doing a special project, which could replace the final essay. It’s particularly interesting to compare a literary text with its Hollywood treatment, and Anna Karenina makes a potent subject.

Active participation in discussion, based on careful reading and analysis, is essential. Class participation may be helpful in resolving borderline grades.

Required texts:

Leonard Leff and Jerold Simmons, *The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship & The Production Code from the 1920s to the 1960s*, rev. ed., University of Kentucky Press,

1. Sept. 10 Screening and discussion of *This Film Is Not Yet Rated* by Kirby Dick


   Lee Grieveson, *Policing Cinema*, introduction and chap. 1
   Ruth Gavison, “Incitement and the Limits of Law,” pp 43-45 (on reserve)


3. Sept. 24 Regulating the Early Movies

   Grieveson, chaps. 2-4
   Jane Addams, ÔThe House of DreamsÔ (handout)

4. Oct. 1 Early Movies, Book Censorship, and the Constitution

   Grieveson, chap. 5 and conclusion
   Paul Boyer, *Purity in Print: Book Censorship in America from the Gilded Age To the Computer Age* (2nd ed., 2002), chap. 2, “The Vice Societies in The Progressive Era” (on reserve)

**Oct. 8 First Essay Due**

5. Oct. 8 Sound: The New World of Movie Regulation

   Leff & Simmons, *The Dame in the Kimono*, preface, chaps 1-3
   Lea Jacobs, *Wages of Sin*, preface and chap. 1

   Mae West in *I’m No Angel* (1933) screened in class on Monday


   Oct. 15 The Production Code Administration Takes Charge
   Leff & Simmons, chap. 4 and “the code”; Jacobs, chaps. 2-4; Maltby, TBA
Oct. 22 – No Class. Fall Break.

7.  Oct. 29  The PCA in Operation
    Jacobs, chaps. 5-7; Leff & Simmons, chap. 5
    Greta Garbo in *Anna Karenina* (1935) screened in class on Monday

**Nov. 5  Second Essay Due**

8.  Nov. 5  *Film Noir* Undermines the Code
    Biesen, *Blackout*, chaps. 1-5
    Billy Wilder’s *Double Indemnity* (1945) or *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1945)
    Screened in class

9.  Nov. 11 (Sunday) Marlon Brando in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951)

10. Nov. 12  The Code Embattled
    Biesen, chaps. 6-7; Leff & Simmons, chaps. 6-8


12. Nov. 26  Last Rites for the PCA; The Changing Constitutional Climate
    Leff & Simmons, chaps. 9-11 and “aftermath”

13. Dec. 3  The Ratings Game
    Vaughn, *Freedom and Entertainment*, intro and chaps. 1-4
    Arthur Penn’s *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967)

    Vaughn, chaps. 5-10
    Reprise of Dick’s *This Film Is Not Yet Rated*

**Final Essay Due on Date to be Determined**