



Aspects of Film/TV Genres

- Familiar roles
 - Hero/sidekick; villain, monster, heroine, etc.
- Familiar setting
 - Soap opera: domestic/gangster: urban
- Familiar problem/issue to solve
 - what is the problem to be solved, who solves the problem, and how is it resolved
 - Science fiction: the unidentifiable object
 - Detective: the crime
- Familiar value assumptions
 - Comedy: problems can be resolved
 - Detective: crime doesn't pay



Genre Story Writing

- **Create original or parody familiar genres**
 - **Romance, mystery, horror, comedy, sci-fiction**
- **Define story development**
 - **What's the problem, who/how solve problem, underlying value assumptions=theme**
- **Write TV Guide abstracts for genres**
- **Create storyboard/video based on writing**



Social Genres

- Genres as systematic ways of relating to or interacting with others
 - Greetings, sales transaction, request of favors
- Familiar, defined ways of coping with conflict or crisis
 - Funerals, blues songs, hearings, mediations
- Grounded in “double-voiced” history
 - IRE teacher routine as based on previous history of teacher/student interactions



Gangster

- Godfather I, II, III, Goodfellas, Miller's Crossing, Billy Bathgate, Bugsy, Casino, Donnie Brasco, The Sopranos,
- Good vs. evil
- Hero as fated
- Hero as admirable/ 'rags to riches": value of American "business"/growth/"success"
- Ambiguous reaction: ends justify the means
- Contradictions inherent in American culture
 - Gatsby, Nixon, Godfather



The Western

- *High Noon The Magnificent Seven, Unforgiven, Dances with Wolves*
- Hero as “outsider” who is not tied down to “the town” or “women”/family
 - Insider sheriff/bureaucrats as incompetent
- Defined system of “eye for an “eye” justice
- “West” as controlled by whites
 - Stereotypes of Native Americans



The Western: Cross-cultural Comparisons

- Western: individual/loner hero as “outsider”
 - Sheriff (collective government) as incompetent
 - Use of guns
- Japanese Samurai: collective group designed to protect society
 - Reflects valuing of collective vs. individual action



The road movie

- Bonnie and Clyde, Badlands, Natural Born Killers, Easy Riders, O Brother, Where Art Thou?, Thelma and Louise
 - Casting loose from roots to escape law or “find oneself”
 - Violation of the rules
 - Desire to free of roots or constraints
 - “Born to be wild”



Soap Opera

- Gendered oppositions
 - Female=home, personal, talk, community
 - Male=public, work, action, individualism
- Continuous, unresolved story
- Talk/gossip/rows
- Complex relationship networks
- Middle/upper-middle class
- Challenging social norms



Soap Opera Fans

- Informing
 - Sharing information
- Speculating
 - What may or should happen
- Criticizing
 - Lack of realism
 - Ideological objections
- Rewriting
 - Creating alternative plots



Romance/romantic comedy

- My Best Friend's Wedding, French Kiss, When Harry Met Sally, Sleepless in Seattle, While You Were Sleeping
 - Comic elements: mixed identities/confusion
 - Discover “true love” at the end after doubts/challenges/break-ups
 - Happy end: celebration of society restoring itself



Romantic Tragedy

- Heroine/hero seek forbidden love
 - Noble stature
 - Violates social norms
 - Love more important than family
 - Suffers for own violation of social norms
 - Anna Kanerina
 - House of Mirth
 - Romeo and Juliet



Horror/monster

- Fear of death/mortality or id/sexuality
- Initial sense of stability
- Sense of potential destruction
- Sense of the “everyday”/immediate threat
 - Girl in car attacked by zombies



Horror films for teens

- **Scream, Scream 2, I Know What You Did Last Summer**
 - Marketing specific to adolescents
 - Focus on the sensational
 - Builds on/requires knowledge of references to the genre
 - Removal of ideological aspects



Adventure science fiction: space wars

- *Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back, Return of the Jedi*
 - Mythic/archetypal search for the father
- *Star Trek, Star Trek Generations, Star Trek: First Contact*
 - Assumed multicultural harmony
 - Spock as side kick who knows about space



Action adventure

- Twister, Titanic, Jurassic Park, Tomorrow Never Dies, Armageddon, Die Hard series, Lethal Weapon series, Terminator 2
 - Special effects: constant danger
 - Hyperbolic, sensationalized violence
 - Violent computer games: “Blow-away” others



War Films

- Celebration of war hero/valor
- Often assumes “American” values
 - “American might” triumphs over “evil”
- Propaganda war films
 - *Green Berets* (Vietnam)
- “War is hell” films
 - *Saving Private Ryan, Glory, Quiet American*



Martial arts

- Bruce Lee/Jackie Chang films, The Karate Kid films, Sidekicks, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Mortal Kombat, The Matrix
 - “law-enforcement” subgenre
 - “adventure fantasy”
 - “video/cartoon” fantasy
 - Science fiction



Teen films/TV programs

- *Jerry Maguire, Romeo & Juliet, Titanic, Wild Things, Godzilla, Scream series*
 - Escapist, fantasy narratives
 - Role of “outsider”: appeal to teens
 - Teen “stars” replace older actors/actresses
- Friends, Party of Five, Buffy, the Vampire Slayer, Dawson’s Creek



Crime/Noir films

- *Chinatown, The Grifters, L.A. Confidential*
 - Corruption of the system
 - Nostalgic references to noir 1940/50 films
- *Pulp Fiction, The Usual Suspects, The Last Seduction, Red Rock West, Unforgettable*
 - Explore new themes of deception/morality
 - Post-Vietnam War perspective



Political films of the 1990's

- Oliver Stone: *JFK, Nixon*
 - Undemocratic political culture
- *City Hall, Bulworth, Primary Colors, Dead Man Walking, The Shawshank Redemption, The Insider*
 - Institutions not serving “the people”
- *Mad City, City of Hope, Night Falls on Manhattan*: urban decay
- Spike Lee: *Malcolm X, Three Little Girls*



Sports/Sports talk shows

- Focus on “facts”/”stats” vs. emotions
- Celebration of “competitive spirit”/”team-work”
 - “We all hung in there together”
- Visual highlights/replays
- Promotion of sports teams/fans
- Largely, but not necessarily, male



Game shows

- “Millionaire” shows, Wheel of Fortune
- Knowledge as “facts”/information
- Promotion of products as prizes
- Drama: risky/lucky decisions
- Desire to win: consumerism



Day-time Talk Shows

- Audience/ads: adolescents/women
- Topics: relationships, health, identities, books, consumer goods, cooking
- Celebrity/book promotions
- Little institutional critique
- “Entertaining” talk/conversation



“Reality” TV shows

- “Reality”: pseudo-staged
 - Editing/assumed drama focuses on sensational/conflicts
 - Norms for shows already familiar
 - Shows create their own “reality” genre
- Challenges to participants
 - Historical: 1900 House, Frontier House
 - Survival/competition: initiation rites