

## SHOOTING STARS -- THE HOLLYWOOD RENAISSANCE

**Coordinator:** Sheila O'Connell

In 1965, with the advent of television, the demise of the movie studio/theatre monopoly, and a series of expensive flops, a disaffected audience had produced the worst box office year in the history of American film. Desperate studios turned to film schools, to novice experimental film makers, to European directors, to anyone who seemed to understand the social and cultural milieu of the young audiences of the time. Thus was born the "New Hollywood," the period from the late 1960's to the late 1970's when the directors became the stars and were given virtually free rein to indulge their creativity...and their ambitions. We look at these "shooting stars" -- those who endured and those who fell -- and the movies we saw then and decide what we think of them now.

### **Readings and other Materials/Online Services:**

All of the films are readily available from the NYPL and Netflix. A number may also be available online.

**Sheila O'Connell** is a long time member of the IRP and gives it credit for saving her retirement. She spent her working career in corporate finance and the rest of the time at the movies.

\* \* \* \* \* **Syllabus – A Work in Progress** \* \* \* \* \*

### SETTING THE STAGE

WEEKS 1 & 2

BONNIE AND CLYDE, A. Penn  
EASY RIDER, D. Hopper

PRESENTATION: HISTORICAL BACKDROP OF THE MID-60'S REVOLUTION.

Of Bonnie and Clyde they said "...sheer tastelessness..."

Of Easy Rider, they said "...fascinating, particularly in its narcissism and fatalism..."

Bonnie and Clyde was, unexpectedly, a huge hit. Easy Rider may tell us more today that it did then.

Both classes will discuss the two films with a focus on Bonnie and Clyde in Week 1 and Easy Rider in Week 2.

WEEK 3

THE LAST PICTURE SHOW

P. Bogdanovich

" A sublime study of sexually charged ennui in a dying town."  
Bogdanovich accurately puts McMurtry on screen, and we recognize every person in it.

WEEK 4

THE WILD BUNCH

S. Peckinpah

"...a Western layered with social commentary about war, codes of honor among men, and humanity's childish nature..."  
Peckinpah was known for explicit depiction of action and violence and his revisionist approach to the Western genre; his world is one of nihilism and brutality.

Week 5

COMING HOME

H. Ashby

"...illuminated the conflicting attitudes of the Vietnam debacle..."  
Ashby won an Oscar for editing In the Heat of the Night and directed Shampoo. He yearned for the hippie life -- and found it.

Week 6

DAYS OF HEAVEN

T. Malick

"...one of the most beautiful movies ever made...a great cinematic achievement."  
Malick wanted to make a masterpiece. After it was released, he disappeared for 20 years

Week 7

THE DEER HUNTER

M. Cimino

"...demolishes the moral and ideological clichés of an era; it shoves the audience into hell, stranded without a map."

Cimino wrote and directed it and it won 5 Academy Awards. Three years later he could not get a job.

Week 8

APOCALYPSE NOW

F.F. Coppola

"It is beautiful. It is grotesque. It is profound, and it is perfect."

The excesses during the production of this film gained worldwide notoriety. It marked the end of the best of Coppola.

### THE MAVERICKS

Week 9

NASHVILLE

R. Altman

In this week's session we look at the "mavericks," the ones who made their own categories, including Altman, Stanley Kubrick and Mike Nichols who could be said to have started it all with The Graduate.

### THE SURVIVORS

Week 10

AMERICAN GRAFFITI

G. Lucas

"A brilliant work of popular art, the film that launched a thousand careers..."

This was Lucas' second film and was a critical and commercial success. You will recognize every actor in it. His next movie was Star Wars.

Week 11

TAXI DRIVER

M. Scorsese

"Like Aguirre or Apocalypse Now, Taxi Driver is an auteurist psychodrama."

Part of the "New Hollywood," Scorsese is regarded as one of the most significant and influential filmmakers in cinema history.

Week 12

JAWS

S. Spielberg

"...a sensationally effective action picture, a scary thriller...that's as frightening as The Exorcist."

Spielberg is the highest grossing director in history with a gross of over \$9 billion. And he has directed some of the best-loved American films.