



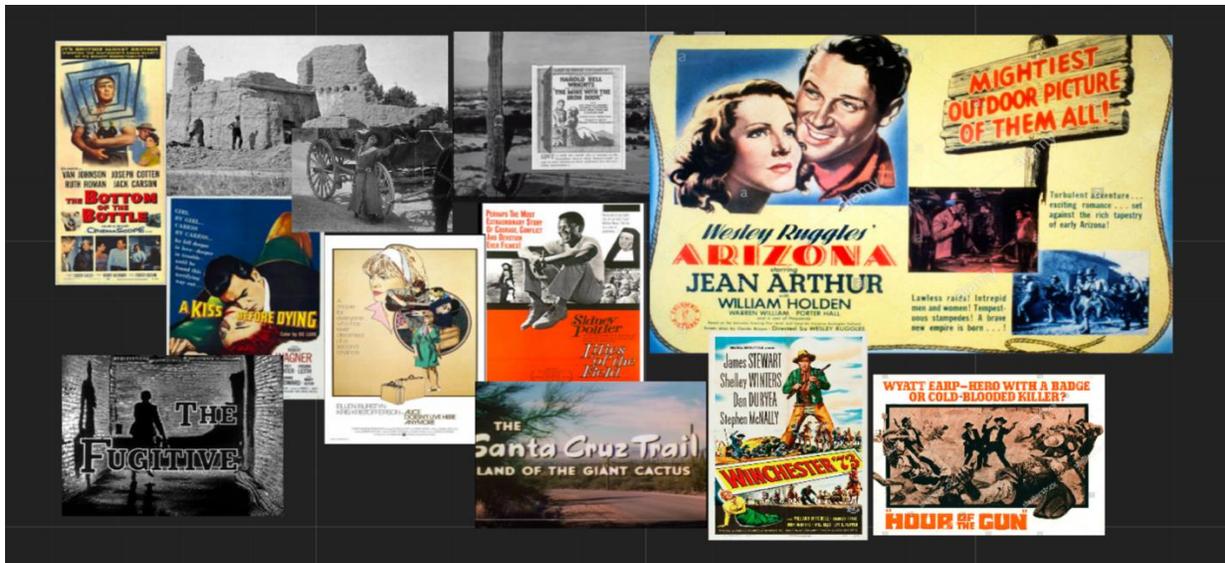
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

COMMUNITY CLASSROOM

Celluloid Desert: Tucson in Cinema History

Dr. Jennifer Jenkins

Spring 2021



Course Times

Live Online lecture and discussion:

Tuesdays, 5 to 6 p.m., March 9, 16, 23, 30, and April 6.

In each of the five weeks, a **one-hour asynchronous pre-recorded session** will introduce topics and films for the week. **One-hour live Zoom sessions on Tuesdays** will incorporate viewings of clips and shorter films, some lecture, and discussion.

Course Description

Just 15 years after the birth of the moving image, the first film was shot in Tucson. Sunshine, railroad access, and exotic flora, fauna, and faces made Tucson an ideal movie location. Images of the frontier, the Old West, and the New West have been shaped in the public imagination by our celluloid desert. Join film scholar and cultural critic Jennifer Jenkins as she discusses some of the many iterations of film in Tucson, including early silent films, Hollywood westerns, melodramas, mysteries, television series, commercials, and homemade films about the region.

Participants will gain an understanding of the mechanics of the early moving image, the ways in which cinemagoing changed as the medium evolved, and a historical understanding of the visual and cultural thematics of films shot in our desert region, including but not limited to the Western genre.

About the Instructor

Dr. [Jennifer Jenkins](#) is a Professor of Literature, Film, and Archival Studies and Research Social Scientist in the Southwest Center in UArizona College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Her work focuses on media archaeology and the regional cinema history of the Arizona-Sonora Borderlands. Her book, [Celluloid Pueblo](#) (UA Press, 2016), tells the story of Tucson-based Western Ways Features and its role in the invention of the Southwest of the visual imagination. She has curated the Puro Mexicano Tucson Film Festival, and she founded Home Movie Day Tucson and the Tombstone Home Movie Project. A longtime aficionada of Mexican cinema, in 2019 she was visiting research professor at the [Colegio de San Luis](#) in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, where she led a research group in a study of ephemeral cultural heritage. She leads the NEH-funded [Tribesourcingfilm.com](#) project to repatriate mid-20th century US educational films about Native Americans through recording new narrations from within tribal communities.

Course Outline

WEEK 1 BACKGROUND

Pre-recorded Lectures: Learning to Look (Available March 4)

- Brief History of Moving Image Technologies
- The Coming of Cinema to Tucson
- Short films from Britain, France, the U.S., and even Grand Canyon

Tuesday, March 9: Live Presentation, 5-6 p.m.

Silent Film in Tucson

- Star Films and Éclair-Lubin
 - *The Girl Stage Driver* (1914)
 - *The Mine with the Iron Door* (1924)
 - *Ridin' Wild* (1925)

WEEK 2 BACKGROUND

Pre-recorded Lecture: Old Tucson, Hollywood in the Desert (Available March 11)

- *Arizona!* (1939) and its heirs....
- *Winchester '73* (1950)
- *Rio Bravo* (1959)
- *El Dorado* (1966)
- The fire (1995) and its aftermath

Tuesday, March 16: Live Presentation

Landscapes of the West

Media Archaeology: mapping urban and rural change

WEEK 3 BACKGROUND

Pre-recorded Lecture: Tucson as Location and . . . Crime Scene? (Available March 18)

- *A Kiss Before Dying* (1956)
- *The Bottom of the Bottle* (1956)

Tuesday, March 23 Live Presentation

The Desert as Mutable Location

- *Lilies of the Field* (1963)
- *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974)

***WEEK 4 BACKGROUND**

Pre-recorded Lecture: Tucson in Nontheatrical Film (Available March 25)

- Western Ways Film Service
- Archival footage shot by Dr. A. E. Douglass, inventor of dendrochronology

Tuesday, March 30: Live Presentation

Advertising and Amateurs

- TWA, Chevrolet, and Hubba Bubba Bubble Gum
- Locally-made and home-made films about the region and its inhabitants,
- Ted DeGrazia and the Tucson Boys' Chorus

***Note: the pre-recorded and live content may be reversed, depending upon materials access.**

WEEK 5 BACKGROUND

Pre-recorded Lecture: Tucson on TV (Available April 1)

- Old Tucson Revived: *Rawhide Riley* (1951)
- *The Fugitive* (Quinn-Martin) 1961 pilot episode, "Fear in a Desert Town."
- *High Chapparral* (1967-71)
- *Petrocelli* (1974-76)
- *Little House on the Prairie* (1974-83)

Tuesday, April 6: Live Presentation:

Conclusions: Millennial Tucson—Anywhere But Here

- *Desert Bloom* (1986)
- *Tin Cup* (1996)