

Dr. Alexander Ross
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STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I am a historian with special emphasis on qualitative methodologies, including the use of case studies, oral histories, archival materials, structured and unstructured interviews, and open-ended surveys. My long-term interest in the unparalleled importance of an education rich in critical thinking has led me to encourage students to be resourceful and inquisitive as they delve deep into their subjects of interest. These methodological approaches have long motivated students to pursue and build upon their original thinking and interpretation.

Drawing upon my extensive professional experience in the film industry, I also incorporate practical applications in my work as a lecturer, scholar and film historian. This includes the workings of the screenwriting process and the decision-making dynamics of the film industry. Thus, in my teaching, I advocate for interdisciplinary collaborations encouraging students to bridge the divide and find useful ways to synthesize the knowledge gained in the classroom and in academic research with the experience of working in the industry. As my own research interests are diverse, I also encourage students to be intellectually curious and not to limit themselves to one realm of knowledge building. This helps them prepare for their future educational and career paths.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. University of East Anglia

M.A. University of Cambridge, Economics & Political Science

M.A. Biography and Creative non-fiction writing, University of East Anglia

B.A. University of Cambridge, Economics & Political Science

RELEVANT UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

Researcher and Lecturer (Part-time), New College, University of Oxford (2021-)

I have a publishing contract for a biography of Major Geoffrey Langlands OBE on which I have been working as a member of the Oxford history faculty. Langlands went from being a British war hero to “Pakistan’s teacher”, establishing a school on the Afghan border and empowering his students to defy the encroaching Taliban through a curriculum rich in critical thinking.

I am simultaneously working on a book about the motion picture *Blade Runner* (1982). Much of the research has already taken place, including extensive interviews with leading cast and crew.

Visiting Academic, Faculty of History and St. Antony's College, University of Oxford (2020-2021)

My recent research has focused on the business model of blockbuster and franchise movies in Hollywood. Along with analyzing the first wave of modern blockbusters in the 1970s and 1980s, I also turned to specific films for exploring in depth how some films move along a longer trajectory to achieve blockbuster status, especially in durable cultural status and appeal.

Guest Lecturer, Various Institutions

University of Westminster and York St. John University

Prepared and offered lectures to students at undergraduate and master's degree levels on an ongoing basis.

Other schools for special topical presentations:

University of California-Los Angeles, Chapman University (Orange County, CA), London Film School, Leeds University, Bournemouth University, Girton College, Cambridge, Pembroke College, Cambridge, University of Oxford.

Other posts:

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Expert Consultant to the EACEA (European Union Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency MEDIA Program), helping identify screenplays for funding. 2016-ongoing). This is very similar to the development process and the decision-making protocols for green lighting projects in Hollywood.

Script Mentor: <https://alexrossmentor.com> (2011- ongoing)

I work with several long-term clients all the way from the idea development stage, through to writing the screenplay, finding appropriate agency representation, dealing with re-writes for production companies and ensuring they secure long term screenwriting careers. Part of my mentoring services is devoted to helping clients avoid the mistakes that many writers make when interacting with the business side of the film industry.

WriteMovies.com

Founded www.WriteMovies.com which has become an important entry point to the industry for new screenwriting talent in the US, UK, France and Germany. In 2004, established an internship program enabling British students to spend eight weeks working in the Los Angeles film industry.

Company sold in 2017.

In tandem, I became a consultant to the National Academy of Writing of Great Britain, then headed by Lord Bragg.

Fortis Entertainment

Established as a management company, and discovered Andrew Niccol who wrote and produced *The Truman Show* (Academy nominated for best screenplay) and directed *Gattaca*, *Simone*, *Lord of War*, etc. Amongst others, also discovered the screenwriter Iris Yamashita, who received an Academy nomination for the Clint Eastwood film *Letters from Iwo Jima*.

Fortis Entertainment was sold to actor Sandra Bullock.

Early years

Gray/Goodman agency. Represented Quentin Tarantino, Christopher De Vore (*Elephant Man*) & Mardik Martin (*Raging Bull*).

Worked for Ismail Merchant as assistant-director on *Maurice*, starring Hugh Grant. After moving to Los Angeles, I was trained as a story analyst in the M.G.M story department and worked as an analyst for Sally Field, Dick Clark and others.

Other film credits

Produced: *The List* starring Wayne Brady, Sydney Poitier, Brad Dourif, Illeana Douglas, and Jane Lynch. The movie was acquired by Warner Bros.

I am helping produce twice Academy nominated and twice BAFTA winner Habib Zargarpour's debut film as a director.

AFFILIATIONS

Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA)

British Academy (BAFTA)

PUBLICATIONS

I am based at New College, Oxford where I am working on my next book about *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). Much of the research has already taken place, including extensive interviews with screenwriters Hampton Fancher and David Webb Peoples.

Ross, Alexander G. *The Evolution of Hollywood's Calculated Blockbuster Films: Blockbusted*. Lexington Books. 2023

Ross, Alexander G. "No Ordinary Life." *Secrets & Lives: UEA Non-Fiction Anthology*, Egg Box Publishing, 2020, pp. 77–82.

Ross, Alexander G. 'We Were Just Trying to Entertain': *Grease* in Production. In Gruner, Oliver, and Peter Krämer, eds. *'Grease is the Word': Exploring a Cultural Phenomenon*. Anthem Press, 2019.

Ross, Alexander G. "Creative decision making within the contemporary Hollywood studios." *Journal of Screenwriting* 2.1 (2011): 99-116.

Ross, A. (2007), *The Confidential Studio Manual*, Iowa: Fidlal-Doubleday.

My PhD thesis: "The evolution of the blockbuster film business model during the New Hollywood period: A qualitative investigation of five case studies, 1966-1985". Is an analysis of several key films that looks for and identifies replicable markers of success.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

In addition to having been interviewed on prime-time network television by Dateline NBC, his career has been covered variously by *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Daily Variety*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Reuters*, *Newsday*, *The London Times*, *Daily Mail*, *The Guardian* and others.

LANGUAGE FLUENCY

English, French, German, Farsi.