We will pursue genre, its history and theory, through case studies in three important genres in American film history: the Western, the Screwball Comedy, and the Musical. Our aim is not just to classify Hollywood films from the Golden Age, but to de-classify sensitive information about American history and culture. Of particular interest are such issues as gender and sexual difference, race, class, bourgeois illusionism, myths of individualism and national identity, and the institutions of family and marriage.