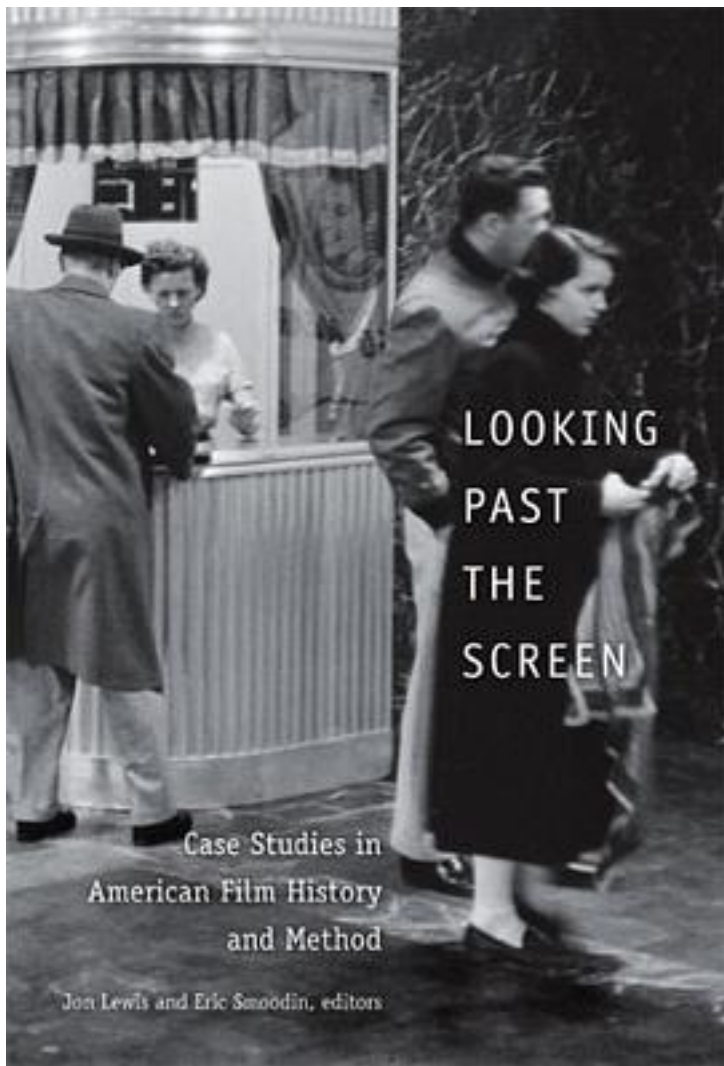


Looking Past the Screen



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Film scholarship has long been dominated by textual interpretations of specific films. "Looking Past the Screen" advances a more expansive American film studies, one in which cinema is understood to be a social, political, and cultural phenomenon extending far beyond the screen. Presenting a model of film studies in which films themselves are only one source of information among many, this volume brings together film histories that draw on primary sources including collections of personal papers, popular and trade journalism, fan magazines, studio publications, and industry records. Focusing on the era of classical Hollywood cinema, roughly 1915-1960, contributors explore specific institutional histories as well as aspects of film stardom, regulation, reception, and production. They examine negotiations over the content of American films shown abroad as revealed in State Department records; analyze the star image of Clara Smith Hamon, who was notorious for having murdered her lover; and consider film journalists' understanding of the arrival of auteurist cinema in Hollywood as it was happening during the early 1970s. One contributor chronicles the development of film studies as a scholarly discipline; another offers a sociopolitical interpretation of the origins of film noir. Still another brings to light Depression-era film reviews and Production Code memos so sophisticated in their readings of representations of sexuality that they undermine the idea that queer interpretations of film are a recent development. "Looking Past the Screen" suggests methods of historical research, and it encourages further thought about the modes of inquiry that structure the discipline of film studies.

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