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Law & Film

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Law & Film

Jonathan Tuttle, Cataloging and Metadata Librarian

This fall the Law Library will host a three-night Law & Film student club. As an informal companion to the library's Spring Law & Literature course, the club offers students the chance to consider how popular culture reflects the law and how an imaginative art might stretch one's thinking about legal principles. With food provided, the club is also a great way to take a break from the books and relax with classmates.

The films, chosen by students at the club's first meeting, will be screened in the library. Anyone interested in the intersection of law and film or unwinding with some popcorn should come to the circulation desk at 6PM on September 24, October 15, and November 5, to watch and discuss:

[Body Heat](#) (Lawrence Kasdan, 1981)

September 24



Fresh off screenwriting stints for *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, Lawrence Kasdan made his directorial debut with the sultry neo-noir *Body Heat*. The film was the first of many films in the 80s and 90s to update the noir genre of the 40s and 50s with modern sensibilities. In it, a South Florida lawyer (William Hurt) attempts to make things easier for himself and his lover (Kathleen Turner) by murdering her wealthy husband. Turner though raises suspicions to the couple by forging her husband's will. We will also screen clips from the film that inspired *Body Heat*, 1944's *Double Indemnity*.

[Primal Fear](#) (Gregory Hoblitt, 1996)

October 15



Like *Body Heat*, *Primal Fear* is a neo-noir that serves as a cautionary tale for bad lawyers. Richard Gere plays an attorney who looks for fame and glory in a case he should not have taken, wherein a young Edward Norton is accused of murdering an archbishop. The case demonstrates the risks of introducing certain evidence and the benefits of an insanity plea. The film was based on a 1993 novel by William Diehl.

[Adam's Rib](#) (George Cukor, 1949)

November 5

Whereas *Primal Fear* showed Richard Gere arguing his case against a prosecutor who happened to be his former lover, the 1949 film *Adam's Rib* explores the lawyers-as-lovers premise in an altogether more comic style. Written by spouses Garson Kanin and Ruth Gordon (Maude of *Harold and Maude*), *Adam's Rib* stars Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn as married attorneys working on opposite sides of a criminal case. After a woman murders her husband after suspecting adultery, Hepburn comes to her defense, persuading the jury to "judge this case as you would if the sexes were reversed." Interestingly, the film was inspired by the real case of opposing lawyer-lovers William and Dorothy Whitney.



Come join us!

ART:

[Body Heat \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Primal Fear \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Adam's Rib \(Wikipedia\)](#)