

# Liverpool Film Seminar

2015 – 2016 series

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Every year, Liverpool Film Seminar invites six experts to deliver a series of talks. Topics vary greatly and the series does not focus on a specific aspect of film. Instead, a range of genres and approaches are celebrated, from historical reach to the internet's impact on cinematic material.

**Dr Ian Scott** (University of Manchester)

**Propaganda Wars, Projections of America and the Dismantling of the Office of War Information at the close of World War II**

The OWI was *the* key agency for the distribution and dissemination of film and propaganda by the United States during World War Two. Working at home and abroad, it was the Overseas Branch of the OWI that came to dominate activity and the Motion Picture Unit of the OB that helped shape documentary production during the war. The OWI is thought to have had its activities wound down as the war came to a close in a manner in keeping with the reversion to peacetime government policy.

Yet, as this paper argues, events within the OWI in the last year of the war throw up previously uncovered evidence that suggests the agency was being deliberately sidelined – even undermined - in preparation for a more rigorous and ideological post-war propaganda apparatus. This propaganda philosophy was set in train by a select number of individuals, and their investigations into, and criticism of, the OWI is revealed for the first time in this presentation.

## Biography:



Ian Scott is Assistant Associate Dean and Senior Lecturer in American Studies at the University of Manchester. He is the author of *American Politics in Hollywood Film* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) Edinburgh: EUP, 2011, and *In Capra's Shadow: The Life and Career of Screenwriter Robert Riskin* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006, amongst other works, and has written extensively on political movies and Hollywood's relationship with Washington and American political culture more generally. He also works in documentary film and his first collaboration with docdays Production in Berlin, *Projections of America*, has appeared at various film festivals and was shown on ARTE in Europe in 2014 and Canadian television in 2015. It won the documentary prize at the Dallas Videofest in Oct 2015. He is currently completing a book of the film, *A Better Tomorrow: Transatlantic World War II Propaganda*. His new book, *The Cinema of Oliver Stone: Art, Authorship and Activism* (co-authored with Henry Thompson) will be published in summer 2016 by Manchester University Press, and is the result of an extensive series of interviews with the director conducted over more than five years.