

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### “Myth, Inc.: The Business World in Film and Television”

An area of multiple panels for the *Film & History* Conference on “Film and Myth”

September 26-30, 2012

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

[www.filmandhistory.org](http://www.filmandhistory.org)

**Deadline: June 1, 2012**

The business world, as idealized in film and television, sustains many enduring myths of modern life, such as assuring audiences that anyone with the right stuff can rise from the ranks to “make it.” The right stuff, however, can mean anything from honesty and industry to rapacious ambition and avarice, depending on the requirements of the narrative. *Wall Street*, for example, is a perverted version of the Horatio Alger “rags-to-riches” myth, while *9 to 5* assures that “rags-to-riches” is a myth for women in business, too, if they’re bold and clever.

The American Dream itself, nebulous as it is, is a type of business myth—at least in those interpretations that equate success with material trappings and a happy home life, as seen in *Bewitched* and *Executive Suite*. Counter-myths, such as reassurances that underlings are happier than their bosses, may also be seen across genres in narratives as diverse as *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* and *The Jetsons*’ office episodes. Similarly, lying, cheating, and stealing are legendary in cinematic and televised worlds of business, but even this widely embraced myth is the subject of challenge and parody: it has been satirized (*The Hudsucker Proxy*), spoofed (*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*), and drowned in pessimism (*The Method* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*).

This area, comprising multiple panels, invites contributions that explore the myths propagated in depictions of the business world in television and film, including, but not limited to:

Chronicles of the business world (*Startup.com*, *Salesman*)

The boss from hell (*The Devil Wears Prada*, *Horrible Bosses*)

Take this job and ... (*Wanted*, *Office Space*)

Climbing the ladder (*The Secret of My Success*, *Swimming with Sharks*, *Head Office*)

The underdog prevails (*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *9 to 5*)

Proposals for complete panels (three related presentations) are also welcome, but they must include an abstract and contact information, including an e-mail address, for each presenter. Please e-mail your 200-word proposal by June 1, 2012:

Tony Osborne, Area Chair, 2012 *Film & History* Conference

“Myth, Inc.: The Business World in Film and Television”

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