CINEMA STUDIES

Director, Associate Professor Steve Wurtzler

Advisory Committee and Faculty:  Professor Margaret McFadden (American Studies); Associate Professor Laura Saltz (American Studies); Assistant Professors Dean Allbritton (Spanish) and Elena Monastireva-Ansdell (Russian)

Program Affiliated Faculty:  Professors Arthur Greenspan (French) and Laurie Osborne (English); Associate Professors Audrey Brunetaux (French), Arne Koch (German), and Maple Razsa (Anthropology); Assistant Professor Cyrus Shahan (German); Visiting Assistant Professor Kyle Stevens (Cinema Studies)

Few art forms have had a greater impact on modern culture than cinema. Over the course of cinema's relatively brief history, film criticism and theory have grappled with some of the issues most central to the humanities, including how to represent and transform the world and how technological changes have affected the production and consumption of images. As an academic discipline, cinema studies has addressed these and attendant issues through a range of strategies, directing attention both to the highest form of rarified art practice and to the most popular forms of entertainment and diversion.

The minor in cinema studies focuses on the history, theory, and culture of film and related media such as digital media and photography. It makes coherent both the historical and aesthetic dimensions of cinema, including the mutual influence of cinema with its cultural, technological, national, and transnational contexts. As a distinct field of study influenced by a range of disciplines—among them art history, English, and the sciences—the minor draws its strength from connections among departments at the same time that it provides a core of courses foundational to the discipline of cinema studies itself.

Requirements for the Minor in Cinema Studies

Six courses, including Cinema Studies 142, 251 or 252, 321, one non-U.S. cinema studies course, and two electives selected from the list of courses approved for the minor or approved by the director. No more than two courses can count toward both the cinema studies minor and another minor or major.

Courses Approved for the Minor in Cinema Studies

American Studies

- 243 Introduction to Television Studies: The L Word
- 334 Film and Society: Films of the 1940s
- 493 Seminar: Spike Lee’s United States of America

Art

- 285 History of Photography

East Asian Studies

- 240 Japanese Animation: Sensitivity to Differences

English

- 386C Special Topics: Documentary Radio
- 412 Global Shakespeares
- 493 Seminar: Literature and Film Adaptation

French

- 237 Francophone African Cinema
- 323 Holocaust in French Cinema

German

- 234 German Culture through Film

Global Studies

- 437 Media, Culture, and the Political Imagination

Religious Studies

- 319 Bollywood and Beyond: South Asian Religions through Film

Russian

- 242 Russian Cinema from Lenin to Putin
Spanish
- 266 Language of Spanish Cinema
- 362 All About Almodóvar

Course Offerings

CI120f  From Cyborgs to Selfies: Love in the Digital Age  Some of the most popular movies of the past summer, such as Ex Machina and The Avengers: Age of Ultron, feature cyborgs in villainous roles. At the same time, we are ourselves becoming more and more like cyborgs as we incorporate technology into the fabric of our existences. We will learn to write in clear and robust ways in order to think together about the competing attitudes toward new technology, its role in our lives, and how it is changing the ways stories are told on screen.  Four credit hours.  W1.  STEVENS

CI142fs  Introduction to Cinema Studies  An introduction to the discipline of cinema studies, its history, and dominant approaches. Functions as a gateway to the minor and serves as a prerequisite for the required film theory course. Previously offered as American Studies 198.  Four credit hours.  A.  STEVENS, WURTZLER

CI215j  The Image of Women and Men in American Film  How Hollywood films of "The Sixties" (1958-1978) reflected and helped determine the vast social and psychological changes that women, men, and the country were experiencing—or were denying experiencing—during a tumultuous period of U.S. history. Topics include gender roles, genre, directorial style, historical background, the effects of camera placement, movement and lighting, and the function of narrative—how to "read" a film. A few additional required screenings will be scheduled and some class meetings may be extended for longer films or double features. Previously offered as American Studies 115 and 215.  Three credit hours.  EISEN

CI243j  Narrative Film Production  Students will learn the essential skills required to produce a compelling narrative short film through development of pre-production skills from initial idea, to writing a script, to storyboarding, to creating a shot list. We will learn the basics of cinematography, casting, and directing. Finally, students will learn how to edit and manage a post-production workflow. Previously offered as Cinema Studies 297 (2014).  Three credit hours.  MURPHY

CI245j  Documentary Video Production: An Editor’s Perspective  A documentary comes to life in the editing room. We will engage with various forms of documentary storytelling from an editor’s perspective. In addition to analyzing documentary films, students will produce and edit their own documentary projects. While attention will be paid to developing creative ideas and the basics of video production, students will focus most heavily on the editing phase of production. Time will be given to refine, recut, and reedit each video. Students will learn the art of the process, of revision and reimagining, as well as technical skills such as using a camera, shooting a scene, and interviewing techniques. Students will also develop their understanding and knowledge of the documentary genre in general. Previously listed as Cinema Studies 297.  Four credit hours.

CI248f  Digital Publishing: Telling Stories Online  Explores the many methods and tools available for creating digital stories. Students learn the basic skills of multimedia production and develop strategies for conceiving original and creative projects. They explore the potential uses of digital storytelling, including promoting nonprofits, marketing a new business, and developing social justice campaigns. Projects include the creation of animated .gifs, photo manipulations, audio soundscapes, digital video mash-ups, and promotional web videos. Students also become fluent in a variety of programs, including Photoshop, Audacity, and Final Cut X, and engage with a variety of publishing platforms including Vine, Flickr, WordPress, Vimeo, and Tumblr. Previously listed as Cinema Studies 298.  Four credit hours.  A.  MURPHY

CI251f  History of International Cinema I  The first of a two-semester survey of the history of global cinema, providing a broad overview of the development of cinema as an art form from the beginning of cinema (c. 1890) to 1945. Students will develop an understanding of the historical, national, economic, aesthetic, and cultural contexts of films produced and received by international audiences in the first half of cinema history. They will also gain proficiency in written and oral communication and develop their skills in critical thinking.  Four credit hours.  A.  STEVENS

CI252s  History of International Cinema II  The second of a two-semester survey of the history of global cinema. Provides students with a broad overview of the development of cinema as an art form from the midpoint of cinema’s history (1945) to the present. Students will develop an understanding of the historical, national, economic, aesthetic, and cultural contexts of films produced and received by international audiences in the second half of cinema history. They will also gain proficiency in written and oral communication and develop skills in critical thinking.  Four credit hours.  A.  WURTZLER

CI280f  Topics in Global Cinema  Specific focus will vary, but will emphasize the history or contemporary practices of non-U.S. cinemas, and may emphasize European silent cinemas, postwar ‘New Wave’ cinemas, the global avant-garde, contemporary African cinemas, global
CI298As  Fools Rush In: Comedy and Adaptation in Hollywood  Examines the history of the comic mode in 20th-century mainstream American film and literature (and one British novel). Comedy has always been a space in which U.S. culture self-consciously, and perhaps anxiously, works out its opinions, codes, and etiquette. Despite seemingly affirmative or utopian endings, comedies are often the first texts to illuminate and challenge sociopolitical issues, and while laughing at the powerless is usually considered cruel, comedy does not always attack the powerful, either. By examining the representation and expression of manhood and masculinity, we will track comedy's attitudes towards authority, hegemony, and normativity.  Four credit hours.  STEVENS

[CI298B]  Crazy Voices: Language Use at its Limits  We will examine atypical voices in media history in order to consider how different kinds of speech or singing have shaped what it means to hear a voice—and what different voices mean. By reading philosophical treatises on life's verbal register, and listening to the voices in a diverse set of films (including the The Wizard of Oz, Brief Encounter, and Birdman), we will explore such questions as: How do certain voices cue us to take certain types of characters, and people, seriously? How did media teach us to hear someone as gay or straight? Can a style of singing in a musical be subversive? Does it matter that a character's inner voice sounds the same as her outer one? And what is the relationship between language use and the impression that a character is thinking?  Four credit hours.

CI321f  Topics in Film Theory: Cinema/Landscape  Explores the relationship between cinema and the landscape, understood as both the natural and the built environment. We often experience landscapes and nature through the mediation of cinema, but rarely consider how such mediation also shapes our encounters with nature itself. While film is our primary focus, we will engage with screens of varying types and modes of representation that both preceded cinema and intersected with its later development. Human/Nature theme course.  Prerequisite: Cinema Studies 142 or equivalent.  Four credit hours.  WURTZLER

CI321Bs  Topics in Film Theory: Hitchcock's Cinema  The evolution of the cinema of one of the most important and influential artists of the 20th century. We screen work spanning silent cinema, British classical cinema, classical Hollywood, television, and new Hollywood, paying special attention to the representation of gender, sex, class, and sexuality, and to shifting ideological contexts. We trace key concepts and debates in the discipline of film studies. By reading Robin Wood's seminal book and key essays, we examine how Hitchcock's films have been deployed in arguments about authorship, genre, and aesthetic merit, as well as the relations of directors and performers, art and commerce, art and entertainment, and cinema and nationhood.  Prerequisite: Cinema Studies 142 or equivalent.  Four credit hours.  STEVENS

CI491f, 492s  Independent Study  Individual topics in areas where the student has demonstrated the interest and competence necessary for independent work.  One to four credit hours.  FACULTY