CINEMA STUDIES PROGRAM

Director, Associate Professor Steve J. Wurtzler

Advisory Committee and Faculty: Associate Professors Dean Allbritton (Spanish) and Audrey Brunetaux (French Studies); Assistant Professors Se Young Kim (Cinema Studies) and Elena Monastireva-Ansdell (Russian); Visiting Instructor Erin Murphy (Cinema Studies)

Program Affiliated Faculty: Professor Laurie Osborne (English); Associate Professors Arne Koch (German), Mouhamédoul Niang (French Studies), and Maple Razsa (Global 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 explores moving images circulating in a variety of media platforms and formats.

The minor in cinema studies focuses on the history, theory, and practice of film and related media. 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 on connections among departments, while at the same time providing 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

English
- 386C Special Topics: Documentary Radio
- 411 Shakespeare on Screen
- 412 Global Shakespeare
- 493A Seminar: Literature and Film Adaptation

French
- 237 Francophone African Cinema
- 323 Holocaust in French Cinema

German
- 234 German Culture through Film

Religious Studies
- 319 Bollywood and Beyond: South Asian Religions through Film

Russian
- 242 Back to the Future: Recent Russian Cinema

Spanish
- 266 Language of Spanish Cinema
- 362 All about Almodóvar

Course Offerings

CI138f Film and Media: 1919-1939 From the aftermath of World War I to the outbreak of WWII, film and mass media took on increasing importance in American life. Filmmakers, writers, musicians, photographers, and artists grappled with first a period of prosperity and media invention, then the aftermath of the stock market crash of 1929, and finally the prospect of war in Europe and elsewhere. Mass media not only entertained, but they also became tools to document and to shape the realities faced by US citizens, functioning at the service of various movements for social change. We will focus on different types of film in relation to nonfiction writing, theater, radio, photography and recorded sound. Prerequisite: Concurrent enrollment in English 138 and History 138. Elect Integrated Studies 138. Four credit hours.
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.  

- Video Games and Game Studies  A survey of the history of the medium of video games, focusing on the major modes and genres in relation to the production and consumption of games. In addition, the course considers how media scholars have attended to emergent media, paying close attention to the genealogy of the field and its origins in film studies and media studies. Students will learn how to critically analyze video games within the medium’s historical context, while also gaining understanding regarding game studies, including its historical development and current directions.  

Visual Ways of Knowing: Transcultural Documentary Filmmaking  Listed as Global Studies 227.  

- Documentary Video Production: An Editor's Perspective  Introduces students to the basics of documentary video production. Students will learn how to conceive, plan, shoot, and edit a documentary short subject about food production and sustainability in Waterville, Maine. Students will actively engage with the ethics of documentary filmmaking while developing relationships with their subjects. Ultimately, students will leave this course knowing how to build relationships through documentary filmmaking, while raising awareness of the challenges around food production and insecurity in Central Maine. Humanities lab course.  

Visual Storytelling: Found Materials and the Archive  In the past century, humans have created (and lost) so many visual objects — from 16mm films of vacations, to snapshots of graduations and birthdays, to scrapbooks from childhood, to postcards from abroad. More recently we have created and forgotten about Snapchats, Facebook posts, and digital videos. We will take these ephemeral materials and bring them back to life through the art of visual storytelling. We will use materials from our own lives, from the Colby archive in Special Collections, and from the Northeast Historic Film archive to tell new and compelling stories. Students will also learn how to shoot and edit digital video. Previously offered as CI298A (Spring 2018).  

Digital Publishing: Telling Stories Online  Explores the many methods and tools available for creating digital online stories. Students learn the basic skills of multimedia production and develop strategies for conceiving original and creative projects. We will explore the multitude of options for publishing these stories online. Students will learn how to create audio stories, photographic essays, and short-form videos. Students will also become fluent in a variety of programs, including Photoshop, Audacity, and DaVinci Resolve, and engage with a variety of publishing platforms including Vimeo, WordPress, Flickr, and StoryMaps.  

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.  

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.  

Topics in Global Cinema: Korean Cinema  A survey of contemporary South Korean cinema beginning with the political cinema of the Korean New Wave in the 1980s to the commercially and critically successful New Korean Cinema of the late 1990s and early 2000s. The course will cover a variety of genres and modes from the Korean blockbuster to the so-called "Asia Extreme" films and international film festival fare. Includes films such as Chilsu and Mansu (1988), Oldboy (2003), and Parasite (2019).  

Documentary Film: History and Theory  Examines documentary cinema through historical and theoretical perspectives. We explore the dominant aesthetic approaches to global nonfiction filmmaking and how they changed over time. Students will encounter different theoretical perspectives on the relationships between cinema, reality, ideology, and power, and we will consider the social and ethical issues raised by documentary film. Through writing assignments (both short informal writings and longer argumentative papers) and class discussions, students will critically and creatively engage with an important category of cinema. Prerequisite: Cinema Studies 142.
[CI285] Experimental Cinema Explores the international history of experimental cinema from the European modernists of the 1920s to contemporary practices. We focus on cinema's relationship to the other arts (poetry, painting, photography, dance) and the aesthetic approaches of a variety of films that are more comfortable in an art gallery than in a multiplex. Through writing assignments (both short informal writing and longer argumentative papers) and class discussions, students will critically and creatively engage with this important category of global cinema. **Prerequisite:** Cinema Studies 142.  **Four credit hours.**

[CI287] Postwar U.S. Cinema and Culture, 1946-1964 We examine postwar US culture by focusing on a variety of types of film and moving image production, including Hollywood, the avant-garde, and television in the context of cultural, political, and socioeconomic developments, including the Civil Rights Movement, the Cold War, and the Baby Boom. Discussion topics including the red scare, the rise of youth culture, suburbanization, shifting concepts of gender and sexuality, and the anxiety surrounding nuclear weapons as we consider the political implications of representation within a historical moment in which the competition between prominent ideologies manifested in popular culture.  **Three credit hours.**

[CI298As] New Media, Digital Identities The ubiquity of social media, video games, streaming services, and VR make it difficult to imagine a world without new media and internet technologies. But even harder is trying to understand the degree to which new media has changed us. This course will investigate the entanglement between new media and contemporary notions of identity by analyzing a range of texts and platforms that have dominated life in the twenty-first century, from Twitter, Instagram and Tik Tok, to Netflix and the Oculus Rift. In doing so, the course looks to illuminate the precise ways in which online computational technologies have come to inform or even make possible the particular ways in which we understand ourselves.  **Four credit hours.**

[CI298Bs] Militarization and American Culture While the 2014 unrest in Ferguson made militarization an urgent concern, militarization is not exclusive to the police. This course demonstrates the degree to which militarization penetrates American culture through a survey of cinema (Heat), television (The Walking Dead), video games (Grand Theft Auto), and childrens toys (Nerf). This breadth and depth of militarization reveals its central role in violence today, from police brutality to perpetual war, to mass shootings and white supremacist militias. More critically, a full picture of the ideological mission of US culture reveals the true subject of militarization to be neither the cop nor the soldier, but rather the civilian. Ultimately, militarization is about us.  **Four credit hours.**

[CI321s] Topics in Film Theory: The Film Noir After a brief survey of the constituent features of the film noir, we will explore a number of different film theories for what they can reveal about this cycle of films. Genre, literary adaptation, authorship, ideology, theories of 'the gaze' and sound, as well as postmodernism provide a series of theoretical frameworks to reconsider these films and by implication the multifaceted nature of cinema. **Prerequisite:** Cinema Studies 142 or equivalent.  **Four credit hours.**

[CI321A] 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 various types and modes of representation that both preceded cinema and intersected with its later development (including painting, the panorama, photography, post cards, tourist photography and home movies). **Prerequisite:** Cinema Studies 142 or equivalent.  **Four credit hours.**

[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.**