CINEMA STUDIES

Director, Associate Professor Steve Wurtzler

Advisory Committee and Faculty: Associate Professors Laura Saltz (American Studies) and Audrey Brunetaux (French Studies); Assistant Professors Dean Allbritton (Spanish) and Elena Monastireva-Ansdell (Russian); Visiting Assistant Professor Chelsea Wessels (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 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, 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

American Studies
- 334 Film and Society: Films of the 1940s

Art
- 285 History of Photography

East Asian Studies
- 240 Japanese Animation: Sensitivity to Differences

English
- 386C Special Topics: Documentary Radio
- 411 Shakespeare on Screen
- 412 Global Shakespeares
- 493A 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 Ethnic Wars and Peace in (Post)-Soviet Cinema
Spanish
• 266 Language of Spanish Cinema
• 362 All about Almodóvar

Course Offerings

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.  

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, race, 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.  

CI241f  Cameraless Film  We explore the practice of cameraless filmmaking — making movies without the use of a camera or other image capture, or making movies by hand. Drawing and painting on celluloid, scratching, bleaching, dyeing, and otherwise distressing pre-existing footage, physically splicing strips of 16mm film, operating analogue projectors — these will be our primary activities as we also read about, screen, and discuss examples of cameraless cinema. Students will learn some techniques of experimental cinema, some of the history of alternative cinema, and gain an understanding of the mechanics and aesthetics of analogue cinema.  

CI243f  Narrative Film Production  Students will learn the essential skills required to produce a compelling narrative short film through development of preproduction 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 postproduction workflow. Previously offered as Cinema Studies 297 (2014).  

CI245f  Documentary Video Production: An Editor's Perspective  Students will produce and edit short documentaries about Allen Island and mid-coast Maine. Topics may include art, the environment, food production, or island life. Students will learn the basics of video production, although the focus will be on video editing. Students will learn the art of revision, as well as technical skills such as using a camera, shooting a scene, and interviewing subjects. Students' videos will be informed by best practices in the documentary genre. One overnight trip to Allen Island is required.  

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.  

CI250s  Topics in Global Cinema: The Global Western  Examines the western genre from a global perspective in order to consider how ideas of form, space, violence, and politics are reconfigured in different contexts. Beginning with questions of genre more broadly, we will trace the evolution of a global genre from early cinema to contemporary examples. Through screening films and reading texts drawn from Latin America, Europe, Australia, and East Asia, we will consider the interrelation of national and global factors that have led to the
emergence and the adoption of the western as a popular genre. Prerequisite: Cinema Studies 142 or English 142. Four credit hours. WESSELS

CI284f  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. Four credit hours. WURTZLER

CI285s  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. WURTZLER

CI298As  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. Origins humanities lab. Four credit hours. MURPHY

CI298Bs  Advanced Documentary Production  Students will deepen their documentary filmmaking practice by planning, shooting, and editing their own documentary short. They will choose their subject and spend substantial time researching and planning the film before shooting and editing. They will become more familiar with various modes of documentary storytelling in order to develop their own creative process. They will also be required to assist their peers on shoots and to give high-quality feedback on works-in-progress. Prerequisite: Cinema Studies 245. Four credit hours. MURPHY

CI321Af  Topics in Film Theory: Cinema/Landscape  Individual courses offered under the rubric of Topics in Film Theory will change in specific focus but keep consistent the rigorous engagement with a theoretical issue central to cinema studies. Students collaboratively engage with a set of questions regarding the nature of cinema and its relationships with power. Through both informal and formal analytical writing as well as class discussions and formal presentations, students not only develop a greater understanding of cinema but also enhance their written, critical, and verbal skills. Prerequisite: Cinema Studies 142 or equivalent. Four credit hours. WURTZLER

CI321Bs  Topics in Film Theory: Mainely Cinema: Film and the Archive  Focuses on the study of local cinema production and reception, as well as how images of a particular location (Maine) develop meaning. Provides both a theoretical framework for archival research and practical experience engaging with archival materials. Students will take a research trip to the Northeast Historic Film archives in Bucksport, develop their own research projects related to film in Maine, and create a website to share their findings publicly. Origins humanities lab. Prerequisite: Cinema Studies 142 or equivalent. Four credit hours. WESSELS

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