Department of English, Theatre, Film & Media

FILM Courses (tentative)

2022-2023

(PLEASE NOTE: this course list is subject to change without notice. Please see Aurora Class Schedule for up-to-date information.)

3 credit hour FALL COURSES

FILM 1290  The Art of Film 1
Fall (3)   Multiple sections / instructors
The study of film as an art form, entertainment and document.

FILM 1310  Film History
Fall (3)   Dr. George Toles
Our primary goal in this course will be to offer an intensive exploration of roughly one decade in film history—1957-1967—from a global perspective. We will be reaching back in the second week of the course to 1955 for a cultural analysis of James Dean and Rebel Without a Cause. It has often been argued that this film marked the birth of adolescent reality as a separate world in American film. The selection of one decade has, of course, not been arbitrary. In this brief period many crucial changes, both culturally and in the film industry of various nations, took place. The studio system in Hollywood collapsed, and what has come to be known as the New Hollywood of the late 60s and 1970s came into being. The rules for various genres underwent radical transformation. American narratives were significantly affected by Holocaust literature, the Cold War and the fear of nuclear devastation, the Civil Rights movement, existentialism, psychotherapy, and the emergence of major gay playwrights and novelists who did not hide their orientation. Second wave feminism began in the United States in the early 1960s. The French New Wave emerged in the late 1950s, and its influence on filmmakers worldwide was immediate and extraordinary. English cinema had a significant artistic resurgence with left-leaning films featuring angry, disaffected male and female protagonists, under the rubric of “kitchen sink realism.” Satyajit Ray’s Apu Trilogy garnered international attention for a major Indian filmmaker. The Swedish filmmaker, Ingmar Bergman, and the Japanese director, Akira Kurosawa, helped generate a new fascination with art house cinema, and experimentation in both storytelling and visual style. This by no means exhaustive list may indicate why the decade I’ve chosen is especially worthy of careful, extended investigation.

FILM 2330  Film and Contemporary Thought
Fall (3)   Dr. George Toles
In this course we will be considering the aesthetics and morality of what might be termed the cinema of excess or extremism. Excess can of course be stylistic, religious, paranoid, monstrous, erotic, violent, or political (the latter in any movement whose aims are deemed to be frighteningly weird or radical). The films we examine will include saints and demented visionaries, lone wolf vigilantes, couples involved in mad divorces, sex with cars, various flavors of horror and dystopian wildness, and massive memory loss. A form of extremism and spectacle for nearly every predilection. The literature we read will also be playing at the edge of one crumbling social realm or another.
FILM 2370  Experimental Cinema  
Fall (3)  Dr. Jonah Corne
What are the possibilities for film outside the boundaries of the mass-market-oriented film industry? How has film form, and subject matter, been pushed in extreme ways by a succession of generations of avant-gardists working on the margins, independently, most usually on wildly low budgets? How have experimental filmmakers subversively mined and "remixed" popular culture, and how in turn has the mainstream incorporated certain of their innovations? How have developments in technology, like video and the digital, altered experimental film practices? What are the relationships between experimental film, video art, and "new media" art?
This course traces the history of experimental film, beginning at the beginnings of cinema itself, in order to explore such questions and more. At the end of the course, it is hoped that you will have a firm grasp of what we might call, with ineluctable irony, "the classics" of experimental film, and thus that you will be well equipped to research materials beyond this canon, and to better contextualize the vast and diverse array of contemporary work, only some of which we will be able to cover.

FILM 3440  Filmmaking  
Fall (3)  TBA
In order to develop the necessary skills to be a filmmaker, a student must first understand the methods of technical narrative construction in dramatic filmmaking. There are many complicated tools that need to be understood and mastered in order to properly realize the scope and potential of a film idea. Within the framework of narrative film storytelling technique, this course is an introduction to the filmmaking process. The goals are as follows:

- Basic understanding of film-making procedure
- Basic understanding of the aesthetics of film-making and film language
- Understanding of basic story-telling techniques and narrative film structure
- Knowledge of film-making terminology
- Knowledge of scripting format
- Introductory knowledge of digital camera equipment
- Knowledge of Final cut Pro editing equipment and procedure
- Basic understanding of film crew responsibilities with special emphasis on directing
- Understanding of on-set procedure
- Understanding of pre-production and post-production procedure

3 credit hour WINTER COURSES

FILM 1290  The Art of Film  
Winter (3)  Multiple sections / instructors
The study of film as an art form, entertainment and document.

FILM 1310  Film History  
Winter (3)  TBA
In this course students will examine films from more than one period in film history,
exploring the relationships among and between films in terms of genre, style, theme, structure, and other aesthetic elements. Students will study films selected from various periods of world cinema, taking into consideration how and in what ways films bear the traces of their time and place, or are affiliated with relevant movements in art, history, or society, or have been shaped by technical and artistic developments in the art of film.

**FILM 2410  The American Film From 1950**

Winter (3)  Dr. George Toles

In this course we will be exploring representative popular and “art house” films released in America from 1980 to 2000. We will be examining films made by major directors (Scorsese, Lynch, Altman, Lee, Heckerling, Tarantino, P.T. Anderson, Bigelow, Spielberg, Haynes, Fincher, etc.) as well as trends in genres, social criticism, and stylistic and storytelling innovations. We will also spend time examining how films mirror what was happening in the culture at large. Our primary texts will be J. Hoberman’s Make My Day: Movie Culture in the Age of Reagan, and Sharon Waxman’s Rebels on the Backlot: Six Maverick directors and How They Conquered the Hollywood System.

**FILM 2460  Film Genres: Horror Cinema**

Winter (3)  Dr. David Annandale

This course is an introduction to the horror film from an historical perspective. We will examine major developments in the genre around the world, as well as exploring how and why horror works. Questions that will naturally arise are how to define horror, what it offers audiences, and how it reflects its sociohistorical context.

**FILM 3250  Special Topics in Film: Film and Photography**

Winter (3)  Dr. Jonah Corne

In standard film histories, photography plays the role of the critical predecessor of the film medium that promptly vanishes from consideration once the image gets moving. But what if we entertained the possibility that the still image continued, and continues, to play a vital role in and in relation to film? Given that cinema imperceptibly consists of still images, or "frames," how might it be useful to think about photography as the repressed of film? How do photographic techniques invade film (i.e. the freeze-frame), and the reception of film (i.e. the pause button)? How do photographs and photographers figure in film narratives? And, of particular interest to the course, how might we draw lines of aesthetic, political, philosophical, and ethical affiliation between specific photographers and directors?