

SCHOOL OF MEDIA STUDIES/SCHOOL OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES  
SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT  
FALL, 2019

**ART OF FILM** (NFLM 3411 A; CRN 2886)  
Wednesdays 6-7:50 PM  
AUG 28 – DEC 18  
Location tbd

Instructor: Jen Heuson, PhD  
heusonj@newschool.edu  
*office hours by appointment*

### **Course Description**

Lays the foundation for understanding the practical techniques, specialized language, and unique aesthetics of motion pictures. A consideration of the expressive range of cinematic language and the ways in which complex emotions and ideas are communicated to the viewer. Students analyze the basic elements of cinematic form as seen through essential properties of the medium including editing, cinematography, production design, and sound design and gain an appreciation of film history and for the impact of culture and technology on the development of the cinema. The filmmaking process and the impact of the “industry” on this collaborative art are also studied. While the work of the director is only one aspect studied, we discuss various films by directors including Francis Ford Coppola, Jean-Luc Godard, Alfred Hitchcock, Wong Kar-Wai, David Lynch, Lynne Ramsay, Kelly Reichardt, Quentin Tarantino, and Orson Welles among many others. Supplemented by readings, students acquire a general familiarity with the range of cinematic expression and become better prepared to form surer and sounder judgments about our own film experiences and to speak and write about those judgments with greater clarity and skill.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student should possess the following abilities and knowledge:

- An understanding of the communicative elements of the cinema and ability to identify and articulate constituent elements of both form and content.
- Knowledge of filmmaking as a craft and a collaborative process.
- A greater fluency in the communicative language of cinema and an ability to reflect critically and speak with confidence about a wide range of films.
- An ability to articulate the ways in which film work is grounded within a cultural, historical and/or social context.
- An appreciation for the technical apparatus of the cinema as well as the industrial complex that surrounds it.
- An appreciation for modes of filmic expression beyond the conventional narrative.
- Refined writing and oral presentations skills.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Required Texts**

*Film Art: An Introduction* 11<sup>th</sup> ed., by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson  
(New York: McGraw-Hill, 2016).

This text will provide all reading assignments for this course. Readings listed in the syllabus refer to the Ninth Edition (2010), but you may use versions 9 or above and refer to the chapter titles (examples will be different, but the information is basically the same). A digital (pdf) version of the text will be available on CANVAS. A hard copy will also be available through Course Reserves at the University Center Library or can be purchased at online shops such as Amazon.

### **Recommended Texts (OPTIONAL)**

Supplemental articles and videos about the films and topics will be posted on CANVAS. Here are two additional resources for assistance with film writing and basic film concepts.

*A Short Guide to Writing About Film* 9<sup>th</sup> ed., by Timothy Corrigan  
(New York: Pearson, 2014).

*Film Isms: Understanding Cinema*, by Ronald Bergen  
(New York: Universe, 2011).

### **Required Films**

Each week, students will be required to view two films outside of class (one feature-length and one short film). When possible, assigned films will be made available through Course Reserves on CANVAS. However, there may be instances when students will need to rent films through an online service such as Amazon, Netflix, or iTunes.

### **Online Component**

Please check CANVAS regularly. I will use it to notify the class of any schedule or assignment changes and to distribute information, including the course syllabus and detailed assignment guidelines. I will also post summaries of the topics and film clips discussed during each class.

Students are required to submit all course assignments to our CANVAS site. To access CANVAS, go to <http://my.newschool.edu/>, log on and click on the “CANVAS” icon in the upper left of the window. Select “**Art of Film.A.Fa19**” to access our course.

### **Course Communications**

Weekly announcements will be posted on CANVAS with details for all lecture, reading, film, and discussion assignments (see also the course schedule below). Please email or send a CANVAS message if you have questions about course materials or assignments or if you will be absent. I generally respond within 24 hours. DO NOT send me reading/film responses or papers via email or CANVAS messaging.

### **Assignments**

Students are expected to complete the required readings and assignments on the date listed in the syllabus. This includes assigned film viewings. Written work is due no later than 11:59PM on the due date. Film/reading responses must be posted to the corresponding “**Discussions**” thread on our CANVAS site. Final papers must be uploaded to CANVAS as PDF files. Assignment details will be posted weekly. Below are the assignments required of this course:

1. Online Responses (50%): Students will post a 300-word response to a film and reading discussion question. Responses will be part of threaded discussions, and students will be expected to read and engage their classmates’ posts. Responses will be posted to CANVAS by 11:59PM on the due date. There will be 10 responses in total.
2. Final Paper (25%): Students will write a 12-page critical film analysis paper on a film of their choosing. Students will be required to submit films for approval by NOV 05. Students will also be required to draft a final paper proposal (due NOV 12); an outline of their argument and evidence (due NOV 19); and a sample scene analysis (due DEC 03).  
**Papers are due DEC 16.**

### **Participation**

Participation is a crucial part of this course. Not only is it 25% of your final grade, but respectful and responsible discussion is the foundation of scholarship. Students will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned films and readings as members of a community. Openness to dialogue, respect for classmates, and thoughtful speech are critical to your success in this course.

### Online Participation

Students are expected to regularly access CANVAS and to discuss assigned films and readings as members of a scholarly community. Online posts should incorporate critical, college-level writing skills as well as a willingness to thoughtfully engage classmates' ideas and course concepts.

### Final Grade Calculation

Attendance/Participation	25
Reading/Film Responses x 10	50 (5% each)
Final Paper	25

### Grading Criteria

Credit and film certificate students must complete all assignments and actively participate in classroom discussions to receive a grade for this course. Assignments will be graded in part on how well the criteria of the assignment are met. These criteria will be distributed and discussed as assigned. Written work will be evaluated based on logical argumentation, engagement with course concepts and films, and general standards of academic writing. Participation will be evaluated based on respectful and responsible discussion and engagement with course concepts and films. Non-credit students are expected to fully participate in class discussions.

The following grading scale will be used:

93 – 100 = A	77 – 79 = C +
90 – 92 = A -	74 – 76 = C
87 – 89 = B +	70 – 73 = C -
84 – 86 = B	69 or less = F
80 – 83 = B -	

### Course Policies

#### Attendance

The New School requires all credit students attend every class. If you must be absent, please notify me. Keep in mind that missing class means you are missing out on important discussions and assignment details. It is your responsibility to make up missed work. **One absence will not affect your grade. Two absences will result in a half letter grade reduction. Three absences will result in a full drop in a letter grade. Four absences will result in failure of the class. If you miss four classes regardless of reason, you will automatically fail this course. Per New School policy this includes classes missed during the add/drop period.** Non-credit students will be held to the same attendance/work requirements.

It is every student's right to fail. There are circumstances where students cannot, for some external reason, fulfill the minimum attendance requirement of the class. While these are often personal and difficult circumstances, I do not make judgments about them. Class requirements remain the same for everyone.

#### Lateness

Class will start promptly at 6PM. The door to the classroom will be closed at that time. Anyone walking in more than 5 minutes after class starts will be marked late. More than two instances of lateness will count as an absence. Leaving more than 15 minutes early also counts as an absence.

#### Late Assignments

Reading/film responses are due via CANVAS NO LATER THAN 11:59PM on the due date. Late responses will be downgraded. Technical issues, illness, or other problems do not alter due dates.

#### Incompletes

No incompletes will be given in this class. For anyone needing a grade, the absolute last day to turn in work is DEC 16. Late papers or online responses will NOT be accepted after DEC 16th.

### **Cell Phones, Laptops, and other Devices**

You will not be allowed to use phones, laptops, or other devices during class. Turn your devices off and store them out of sight. If you have an urgent message, please leave class to respond. If you wish to use a device for note taking, you must have a letter from Student Disability Services. All other device use during class will result in the following: 1<sup>st</sup> occurrence results in a warning; 2<sup>nd</sup> occurrence results in an absence recorded for your daily attendance/participation; the 3<sup>rd</sup> occurrence results in an automatic F grade and you being asked to permanently leave the class.

### **Delays and Cancellations**

In rare instances, I may be delayed arriving to class. If I have not arrived by the time class is scheduled to start, you must wait a minimum of 30 minutes. If I will miss class, an announcement will be posted to our CANVAS site and a sign placed on the classroom door.

### **Certificate Students**

Please note that this class fulfills a requirement of the Certificate in Film Production. Students must be registered as a Certificate Student in order to count this class towards their requirements *and* students must complete all assignments and do minimally the equivalent of “B” work for the class.

### **CT Labs**

The CT lab is a critical course designation for continuing education, non-credit courses to account for the myriad activities, projects, and work that happens outside the NFLM and NSRW coursework. In each enrolled NFLM or NSRW course, students will be assigned projects that include an average of three hours a week of outside commitment. These projects and assignments can include but are not limited to:

- weekly independent screenings of full length and short form films and videos
- group oriented film shootings that take place outside of class time at locations on campus and away from The New School, usually on weekends.
- planning and attending group production meetings (including pre-production and post production project meetings) outside of scheduled class time.
- Scheduling independent and group sessions to edit projects in designated on-campus labs outside of class.
- Attending events such as film festivals, screenings, lectures, and symposiums both on campus and in the NYC region that relate to your course material
- Visiting museums, places of business, and cultural centers in the NYC region that relate to your course materials.

*Please refer to your course syllabus for how these projects, events, and tasks fold into your assignments and impact your grading.*

### **University Policies & Resources**

#### **Academic Honesty and Integrity**

Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university. Students are responsible for understanding the University’s policy on academic honesty and integrity and must make use of proper citations of sources for writing papers, creating, presenting, and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research. It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures specific to their discipline for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others.

The full text of the policy, including adjudication procedures, is found at:

<http://www.newschool.edu/leadership/provost/policies>  
 Intellectual Property Rights: <http://www.newschool.edu/leadership/provost/policies>

**Responsibility**

Students are responsible for all assignments, even if they are absent. Late papers, failure to complete the readings assigned for class discussion, and lack of preparedness for in-class discussions and presentations will jeopardize your successful completion of this course.

**Resources**

The university provides many resources to help students achieve academic and artistic excellence.

These resources include:

The University (and associated) Libraries: <http://library.newschool.edu>

The University Learning Center: <http://www.newschool.edu/learning-center>

University Disabilities Services: <http://www.newschool.edu/student-services/studentdisabilityservices>

In keeping with the university’s policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting accommodations will also need to contact Student Disability Service (SDS). SDS will conduct an intake and, if appropriate, the Director will provide an academic accommodation letter for you to bring to me. I will review the letter and discuss with you the accommodations related to this course.

**Course Schedule**

This course closely follows the Bordwell & Thompson *Film Art* text. The outline below details the topics, readings, films, and assignments to be covered weekly. Readings and viewings are to be completed by 11:59PM on the due date. Additional film clips will be shown in class.

	Lecture title/topic	Assignment	Due date @ 11:59 PM	Points and percentage value
	<b>PART I: FILM ART</b>			
WEEK 1: AUG 28	<u>What is film art?</u> Introduce class structure and requirements and key aspects of film as an art form.	1. Reading: “Notes on ethnographic film by a film artist” (Chick Strand, 1978)  2. Films: <i>Roma</i> , Alfonso Cuarón (2h15m, 2018) <i>Fake Fruit Factory</i> , Chick Strand (22m, 1986)  3. Introductions: Post an introductory film moment to the discussion board.	8/28	n/g
WEEK 2: SEPT 04	<u>Film as art + industry</u> Introduce the history, technology, and industry of making moving images.	1. Reading: Chapter 1 “Film as Art: Creativity, Technology, and Business”  2. Films: <i>Blade Runner</i> , Ridley Scott (1h57m, 1982) and <i>The Hire: Ambush</i> , John Frankenheimer (9m, 2001)  3. Post film/reading response #1	9/3	5 points/5%

	<b>PART II: FILM FORM</b>			
WEEK 3: SEPT 11	<p><u>What is film form?</u></p> <p>Introduce the concept of film form, and discuss how form, content, and meaning interact.</p>	<p>1. Reading: Chapter 2 “The Significance of Film Form”</p> <p>2. Films: <i>Meek’s Cutoff</i>, Kelly Reichardt (1h44m, 2010) and <i>There Is Only One Sun</i>, Wong Kar-Wai (9m, 2007)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #2</p>	9/10	5 points/5%
WEEK 4: SEPT 18	<p><u>Narrative form</u></p> <p>Examine how narrative forms structure story, plot, time, space, and perspective.</p>	<p>1. Reading: Chapter 3 “Narrative as a Formal System”</p> <p>2. Films: <i>Citizen Kane</i>, Orson Welles (1h59m, 1941) and <i>Winkies</i>, David Lynch (5m, 2005)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #3</p>	9/17	5 points/5%
WEEK 5: SEPT 25	<p><u>Mise-en-Scene</u></p> <p>Discuss the use of setting, lighting, costumes, and performance to stage film scenes.</p>	<p>1. Reading: Chapter 4 “The Shot: Mise-en-Scene”</p> <p>2. Films: <i>Freaks</i>, Tod Browning (1h30m, 1932) and <i>Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy</i>, Tracey Moffatt (19m, 1990)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #4</p>	9/24	5 points/5%
WEEK 6: OCT 02	<b>NO CLASS FOR THE FESTIVAL OF NEW</b>	<p>1. Attend TNS Centennial events.</p> <p>2. Visit MoMI. Response due DEC 03.</p>		
OCT 09		<b>NO CLASS FOR YOM KIPPUR</b>		
WEEK 7: OCT 16	<p><u>Cinematography</u></p> <p>Examine shot composition, focusing on film stock, lenses, framing, duration, and movement.</p>	<p>1. Reading: Chapter 5 The Shot: Cinematography”</p> <p>2. Films: <i>Morvern Callar</i>, Lynne Ramsay (1h37m, 2002) and <i>Two Cars, One Night</i>, Taika Waititi (12m, 2004)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #5</p>	10/15	5 points/5%
WEEK 8: OCT 23	<p><u>Editing</u></p> <p>Discuss the core editing principles, such as continuity, used to establish relations between shots.</p>	<p>1. Reading: Chapter 6 “The Relation of Shot to Shot: Editing”</p> <p>2. Films: <i>The Birds</i>, Alfred Hitchcock (2h, 1963) and <i>La Jetée</i>, Chris Marker (28m, 1962)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #6</p>	10/22	5 points/5%
WEEK 9: OCT 30	<p><u>Sound</u></p> <p>Explore how aspects of film sound, including rhythm and fidelity, shape story, mood, and space.</p>	<p>1. Reading: Chapter 7 “Sound in the Cinema”</p> <p>2. Films: <i>The Conversation</i>, Francis Ford Coppola (1h53m, 1974) and <i>Swimmer</i>, Lynne Ramsay (20m, 2012)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #7</p>	10/29	5 points/5%

	<b>PART III: FILM STYLE</b>			
WEEK 10: NOV 06	<u>Film style</u> Review film forms. Discuss how forms coalesce into filmmaker styles.	1. Reading: Chapter 8 "Summary: Style as a Formal System" 2. Films: <i>Django Unchained</i> , Quentin Tarantino (2h45m, 2012) and <i>Tulleries</i> , Joel and Ethan Coen (6m, 2007) 3. Post film/reading response #8 4. Post final paper film selection	11/5	5 points/5%
WEEK 11: NOV 13	<u>Film genre</u> Introduce genre as a descriptive term, and discuss western, horror, and musical forms and styles.	1. Reading: Chapter 9 "Film Genres" 2. Films: <i>Night of the Living Dead</i> , George Romero (1h36m, 1968) and <i>The Cowboy and the Frenchman</i> , David Lynch (30m, 1988) 3. Post film/reading response #9 4. Post final paper proposal	11/12	5 points/5%
WEEK 12: NOV 20	<u>Film analysis</u> Introduce the work of the film critic, exploring how to write about film form and style. Review final paper requirements and samples.	1. Reading: Chapter 11 "Film Criticism: Critical Analyses" 2. Films: <i>Breathless</i> , Jean Luc Godard (1h30m, 1960) and <i>Diary of a Pregnant Woman</i> , Agnès Varda (16m, 1958) 3. Post final paper outline	11/19	n/g
<b>NOV 27</b>		<b>NO CLASS FOR THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>		
WEEK 13: DEC 04	<u>Film history</u> Examine the history of film, including moving image toys and early film style and exhibition.	1. Reading: Chapter 12 "Film Art and Film History" 2. Films: <i>Rashomon</i> , Akira Kurosawa (1h28m, 1950) and <i>The Mystery of the Leaping Fish</i> , J. Emerson & C. Cabanne (25m, 1916) 3. Post MoMI field trip response #10 4. Post final paper scene analysis	12/3	5 points/5%
WEEK 14: DEC 11	<u>Film type</u> Examine forms/styles unique to documentary, ethnographic, experimental, and animated films.	1. Reading: Chapter 10 "Documentary, Experimental, and Animated Films" 2. Films: <i>Nanook of the North</i> , Robert Flaherty (1h19m, 1922) and <i>Meshes of the Afternoon</i> , Maya Deren (18m, 1943) 3. Work on final paper	12/10	n/g
WEEK 15: DEC 18 [make-up for 10/09]	<u>Class celebrations and reflections</u>	1. Post final comparative film analysis 2. Reflections: Post a final thought reflecting on an impactful film moment from the course	12/16	25 points/25%