

SCHOOL OF MEDIA STUDIES/SCHOOL OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES
SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
FALL, 2020

ART OF FILM (NFLM 3411 A; CRN 1136)
SEP 02 – DEC 16
WED 6-7:50PM, Online

Instructor: Jen Heuson, PhD
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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

Online Component

This is a remote learning course. All course materials (readings, film links, and lectures) will be available on CANVAS. The course is divided into fifteen weeks with one topic each week. Students will be required to review the lecture (downloadable as a PowerPoint file), complete the assigned readings and films, and post a discussion board response for each topic. Students are required to submit all course assignments to our CANVAS site, including the final paper. A detailed list of weekly assignments and due dates is listed in the Course Schedule.

To access CANVAS, go to <http://my.newschoo.edu/>, log on and click on the “CANVAS” icon in the upper left of the window. Select “**Art of Film.A.Fa20**” to access our course.

Online Participation

Meaningful participation is an important part of this course. Students are expected to regularly access the course CANVAS site and be prepared to discuss assigned films and readings as members of a scholarly film community. Online posts should incorporate critical, college-level writing skills as well as a willingness to thoughtfully engage classmates' ideas and course concepts. Simply answering discussion prompts with little or no engagement in dialog with your classmates will not count as meaningful participation. Students will be expected to read and respond to others' comments and to illustrate their ideas using evidence from assigned films and readings. Students will be expected to regularly include film screenshots with their posts.

Students are also required to fully participate in five synchronous class meetings to be held during our scheduled class time (@6PM EST) via ZOOM. These meetings will be opportunities to discuss goals and requirements, answer questions about course concepts and films, and to build a community of film lovers capable of engaging in thoughtful film analysis. A complete list of required synchronous class sessions can be found in the Course Schedule.

Course Communications

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

Required Texts

Film Art: An Introduction 11th 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 (new or used) can also be purchased at online shops such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

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 9th 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 2-3 films outside of class (one feature-length and one or two short films). 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.

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 (60%): Students will post a 300-word response to a film or 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 12 responses in total.
2. Final Paper (30%): Students will write a 10-page critical film analysis paper on a film of their choosing. Students must submit films for approval along with a proposal and a sample scene analysis by OCT 28. **Papers are due DEC 16.**

Final Grade Calculation

Attendance/Participation	10
Reading/Film Responses x 12	60 (5% each)
Final Paper	30

Grading Criteria

Credit and film certificate students must complete all assignments and actively participate in online 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 online 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

Online Attendance

Students will be expected to log onto CANVAS to review lecture materials and discussion threads a minimum of once weekly to fulfill attendance requirements for this course. Failing to log on for a full week (Monday--Sunday) will result in an unexcused absence. Logging on, but failing to review the lecture and discussion thread will result in an unexcused absence. (Yes, I can see what pages you view and how much time you spend on each page on the site!) Students will also be expected to attend the five synchronous class meetings. Missing a synchronous class session will result in an unexcused absence.

The New School requires all credit students attend every class. If you must be absent, please notify me in advance via email. Keep in mind that missing means you are missing out on important discussions and assignment details. It is your responsibility to make up missed work. Two unexcused absences will result in a downgrade of ½ a letter. Three absences will impact your grade by a full letter. Four absences will result in failure.

Late Assignments

Reading/film responses are due via CANVAS NO LATER THAN 11:59PM on the due date. Late responses will be downgraded. Online responses will be marked down a ½ point for each day late. Proposals and final papers will lose 1 full point per late day. 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 18. Late papers or online responses will NOT be accepted after DEC 18.

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/student-disability-services>

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 is a remote-learning course. Most of our course content will be engaged in an asynchronous format. This means that you can log on to Canvas to complete assignments on your own. We will also have five synchronous class meetings via Zoom spread out over the course of the semester. These meetings will be to answer questions, develop our final film analyses, and build our community of film-loving folks. Synchronous meetings will always take place during our allotted class time, WED 6PM EST. All asynchronous content will be due by 11:59PM EST on WED.

We will closely follow the Bordwell & Thompson *Film Art* text. The outline below details the topics, readings, films, and assignments to be covered weekly. Additional film clips will be shown in class lectures. Synchronous Zoom sessions are also listed below.

Module	Lecture title/topic	Assignment	Due date @ 11:59 PM	Points and percentage value
	PART I: FILM ART			
WEEK 1	<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) and <i>Fake Fruit Factory</i> , Chick Strand (22m, 1986) 3. Introductions: Post an introductory film moment to the discussion board.	9/2	n/g
WEEK 2	<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	9/9	5 points/5%
ZOOM SESSION #1	<u>Welcome to Art of Film</u> Introduce class goals and requirements. Q&A plus opportunity to say hello to the group.	4. Attend synchronous Zoom meeting to discuss class goals and requirements.	9/9 @6PM EST	n/g

	PART II: FILM FORM			
WEEK 3	<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) and <i>The Plains Indian Sign Language</i>, Elisa Harkins and Nathan Young (3m, 2017)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #2</p>	9/16	5 points/5%
WEEK 4	<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) and <i>Blow Up My Town</i>, Chantal Akerman (13m, 1989)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #3</p>	9/23	5 points/5%
WEEK 5	<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) and <i>The Discipline of DE</i>, Gus Van Sant (9m, 1979)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #4</p>	9/30	5 points/5%
WEEK 6	<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) and <i>Arabesques</i>, Germain Dulac (5m, 1929)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #5</p>	10/7	5 points/5%
ZOOM SESSION #2	<p><u>What is film form?</u></p> <p>Discuss film form and answer questions about the formal patterns examined thus far.</p>	<p>4. Attend synchronous Zoom meeting to discuss film form.</p>	10/7 @6PM EST	n/g

WEEK 7	<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>	10/14	5 points/5%
WEEK 8	<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>	10/21	5 points/5%
WEEK 9	<p><u>Writing the final paper</u></p> <p>Review final paper requirements.</p>	<p>1. Post final paper film selection + proposal + sample scene analysis</p> <p>2. Films: <i>Killer of Sheep</i>, Charles Burnett (1h23m, 1979) OR <i>Orlando</i>, Sally Potter (1h34m, 1992)</p>	10/28	n/g
ZOOM SESSION #3	Discuss final paper requirements and progress.	3. Attend synchronous Zoom meeting to discuss final paper ideas and requirements.	10/28 @6PM EST	n/g
	PART III: FILM STYLE			
WEEK 10	<p><u>Film style</u></p> <p>Review film forms. Discuss how forms coalesce into filmmaker styles.</p>	<p>1. Reading: Chapter 8 “Summary: Style as a Formal System”</p> <p>2. Films: <i>Django Unchained</i>, Quentin Tarantino (2h45m, 2012) and <i>Tulleries</i>, Joel and Ethan Coen (6m, 2007)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #8</p>	11/04	5 points/5%
WEEK 11	<p><u>Film genre</u></p> <p>Introduce genre as a descriptive term, and discuss western, horror, and musical forms and styles.</p>	<p>1. Reading: Chapter 9 “Film Genres”</p> <p>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)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #9</p>	11/11	5 points/5%

WEEK 12	<p><u>Film type</u></p> <p>Examine forms/styles unique to documentary, ethnographic, experimental, and animated films.</p>	<p>1. Reading: Chapter 10 “Documentary, Experimental, and Animated Films”</p> <p>2. Films: <i>Nanook of the North</i>, Robert Flaherty (1h19m, 1922) and <i>Meshes of the Afternoon</i>, Maya Deren (18m, 1943) and <i>Charlie Squash Goes to Town</i>, Duke Redbird (4m, 1969)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #10</p>	11/18	5 points/5%
ZOOM SESSION #4	<p><u>Engaging film style</u></p> <p>Discuss film style, genre, and type as frameworks for film analysis.</p>	<p>4. Attend synchronous Zoom meeting to discuss film style, genre, and type.</p>	11/18 @6PM EST	n/g
THANKSGIVING BREAK				
WEEK 13	<p><u>Film history</u></p> <p>Examine the history of film, including moving image toys and early film style and exhibition.</p>	<p>1. Reading: Chapter 12 “Film Art and Film History”</p> <p>2. Films: <i>Rashomon</i>, Akira Kurosawa (1h28m, 1950) and <i>The Mystery of the Leaping Fish</i>, J. Emerson & C. Cabanne (25m, 1916)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #11</p>	12/02	5 points/5%
WEEK 14	<p><u>Film analysis</u></p> <p>Introduce the work of the film critic, exploring how to write about film form and style.</p>	<p>1. Reading: Chapter 11 “Film Criticism: Critical Analyses”</p> <p>2. Films: <i>Breathless</i>, Jean Luc Godard (1h30m, 1960) and <i>Diary of a Pregnant Woman</i>, Agnès Varda (16m, 1958)</p> <p>3. Post film/reading response #12</p>	12/09	5 points/5%
ZOOM SESSION #5	<p><u>Writing the final cont.</u></p> <p>Discuss final paper requirements and progress.</p>	<p>1. Attend synchronous Zoom meeting to review final paper requirements and progress.</p>	12/09 @6PM EST	n/g
WEEK 15	<p><u>Final paper work week</u></p> <p>Review final paper requirements and samples.</p>	<p>1. Post final film analysis paper</p>	12/16	30 points/30%

		2. Reflections: Post a final thought reflecting on an impactful film moment from the course	12/18	n/g
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