

Film Courses

Fall 2020



Visual Storytelling

UCOR 1300-01

Dr. Justine Barda | TTh 1:30-3:35

Structured around the topic of artificial intelligence, this course will explore a concept that has inspired filmmakers from the dawn of the medium to the present

day, and that has particular resonance now, both in the film world and beyond. The subject of artificial intelligence has given rise to both humanity's greatest hopes for the future as well as our darkest fears, all the while precipitating philosophical inquiry into what it means to be human. Over the course of the quarter we will watch five iconic films about artificial intelligence spanning the history of filmmaking and also the evolution of the technology and our conceptualizations of it. Students will both learn the fundamentals of film analysis and allow this analysis to inform their own creative projects later in the quarter. Students will have the opportunity to develop skills in creative thinking and expression; learn to articulate a vision through film and seek to share that vision with others; and learn and apply basic filmmaking techniques.

Visual Storytelling

UCOR 1300-02/03

Craig Downing

TTh 3:45-5:50 & 1:30-3:35

This class is for students who want to start exploring filmmaking. No film experience necessary. Students will develop their knowledge of basic video production, methods and terminology using their smartphones (any model within the last six years will work-Android or iPhone). Through hands-on, small group assignments, students will learn and apply professional film concepts while using their smartphones. With available apps, students will learn how to turn their smartphone into a powerful film tool. Students will understand exposure, framing, audio, lighting, composition and more. The skills in this class are relevant and can be applied if students



want to expand to other film equipment beyond smartphone filmmaking and conceptualizations of it. Students will both learn the fundamentals of film analysis and allow this analysis to inform their own creative projects later in the quarter. Students will have the opportunity to develop skills in creative thinking and expression; learn to articulate a vision through film and seek to share that vision with others; and learn and apply basic filmmaking techniques.

Social Justice Cinema

UCOR 1400-07

Dr. Justine Barda

TTh 3:45-5:50

Since the beginning of the 20th century, movies have been one of the primary ways we learn about the world around us. In the documentary Life Itself, the great American film critic Roger Ebert describes movies as “a machine that generates empathy.” This empathy is generated through the experience of seeing the world through other people’s eyes; learning about their circumstances, understanding their problems, and, in some cases, being moved to take action. This course examines how movies can engage with issues of social justice. By analyzing how movies construct logical arguments, appeal to audiences’ desires, and evoke a variety of



emotional responses, this course traces the methods by which the viewer can be transformed from a passive spectator into an active social participant. Through analysis of both fiction and documentary films that address a variety of social justice issues, students in this course will gain an understanding of how moving images wield the power to catalyze audiences and effect social change.

Representing Animals

UCOR 1400-08

Dr. Benjamin Schultz-Figueroa

TTh 10:15-12:20

What do animals think, feel, and experience? How can we compare their lives to our own? What rights and responsibilities do we owe them as other living beings? This course will examine these questions through an analysis of animal representations in art. We will consider animals as both potent cultural and political symbols, and as living things with radically different senses and cognition from our own. Students will engage with a wide range of material, from *Bambi* to Baudrillard, considering the



cute and the cuddly as well as the strange and the horrific. We will investigate questions like: How do Disney’s animated films shade our thinking about real living animals? Is it possible to use visual art to better understand animal experiences of the world? What impact do images of animals have on the issues of animal rights?

Introduction to FilmAnalysis FILM 3000 X: ENGL 3820-01

Dr. John Trafton
TTh 6pm-8:05pm

This foundation course in film studies is a requirement for all film majors and minors and is recommended as your first film class for all subsequent film electives. It introduces you to the formal building blocks of films: narrative, mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound. We study the operations



of each of these formal parts in detail and then consider how they work together. The course will train you in the specific critical methods necessary to describe, analyze, and appreciate the film text



Crime Cinema FILM 3290 X:CRJS 4910-04

Dr. Kirsten Thompson
TTh 8am-10:05am

How have crime and violence been central concerns in cinema since its beginnings? What kinds of genres and subgenres have formed around the representation of the criminal and violence? What is the relationship of crime cinema to modernity, and how do these films engage with new technologies like the fingerprint, biometrics and DNA that map and profile the body? How does the crime film and television show engage with issues of race, class, gender and nation? From the gangster film, 'whodunnit', film noir and neo-noir, to the heist film, erotic thriller, serial killer film, and the work of filmmakers like Park Chan Wook, Martin Scorsese, Debra Granik and the

Coen Brothers, we'll survey a variety of different generic and narrative types of crime film, from juvenile delinquents on the run to murder amongst friends, to the revenge drama. We'll consider the parallel roles of the detective and the spectator as we ask, who did it? and why? We'll also look at how crime media engages with discourses in criminal law and psychology, including sociopathy, mens rea and actus reus, the insanity defense and the M'Naghton rule. We'll also examine the serial killer in recent cinema, pulp fiction, and television. Films may include clips or screenings of the following: Shallow Grave, Cape Fear, Blood Simple, Heavenly Creatures, Fargo (TV series), The Godfather, Goodfellas, Se7en, Oldboy, Silence of the Lambs, Hannibal, Collateral, Fruitvale Station, Winter's Bone

*This class will meet the Genre requirement for film majors and be an elective for criminal justice majors

Screenwriting I

FILM 3350

X: ENGL 3180

Josefina

Valenzuela-Cerda

TTh 6pm-8:05pm



This course takes a content creation approach to the art and craft of telling an audio-visual story through the language of scripts. Students will learn the basic concepts of storytelling with an emphasis on how the core elements of character, conflict and dramatic structure can be used to tell universal stories as well as express one's personal voice and vision. Students will also learn how to apply the Industry Standard for script formatting with an emphasis on how to use the written word to express elements such as sound, cinematography, editing, production design, etc., as well as adding your own voice and vision. In the process, students will develop an eye for script-to-screen translation, and the appreciation of the importance of a well thought and developed script, considering that they are not only a tool for producing a moving picture but also for showing (and selling) the writer's talent and voice. Half of the classes will consist of discussions surrounding the analyses of readings and screenings both in class as well as part of assignments, and the other half will focus on the workshop of students' short film scripts written exclusively for this class. At the end of the quarter, students will have written multiple synopsis and outlines, as well as one wordless 5-minute screenplay and a 10-minute film that collectively demonstrate a working knowledge and practical application of the central topics of this class.

FILMMAKING I

FILM 3400

Dr. Alexander Johnston

TTh 6pm-8:05pm

In this introductory course, we will explore the foundational elements of film form—including cinematography, editing, lighting, and sound—and develop the technical proficiency to put these elements into practice. Through a range of assignments emphasizing imaginative problem-solving, collaboration, visualization, and critical media literacy, we will explore the three primary modes of filmmaking: experimental, documentary, and



narrative. We will examine the formal approaches that have historically defined these modes, put our findings into direct practice through a series of audio-visual projects, and engage in regular critiques of student work.

Special Topics - Intro to Media Studies*

FILM 3910

Dr. Benjamin Schultz-Figueroa | TTh 1:30pm-3:35pm



From smartphones to VR, 3D printing to videogames, Google glass to the Internet of things, recent innovations in digital technology have undeniably had a dramatic effect on our lives. It is a truism that these new media shape the world around us more than ever. But what do we mean by “media” when we make these claims? What exactly is new about our current technological moment as opposed to the media of the past? And, how did we get here? In this course, you will explore these questions and more by surveying a broad range of critical thinking

from the field of media studies. These include the writing of Walter Benjamin, Guy Debord, Marshall McLuhan, Noam Chomsky, Richard Dyer, and bell hooks, among others. You and your peers will think through the sociopolitical effects of such media formats as film, radio, television, newspapers, magazines, computers, cable TV, Netflix, and other online platforms. You will leave this class with a newfound media literacy—capable of analyzing the relationship between sender and receiver, media and message, power and representation, technology and history—which will reframe your daily interactions with our current technological landscape.

* approved as EVST elective

Special Topics

Social Justice Cinema

FILM 3910-02

Dr. Alexander Johnston

MW 6pm-8:05pm

This production/studies hybrid course explores the intersection between documentary film and media, and movements for social and environmental justice. From agit-prop to observational, autobiographical to collective, we will consider a wide range of works, whose structural, thematic, narrative and aesthetic strategies have come to both frame and expand the social justice documentary form. As a “critical practice” course, students will create their own documentary works, in addition to reading, writing and screening assignments. Over the course of the term, you will gain



familiarity with multiple documentary forms, an understanding of the role of documentary media in social and environmental justice movements, and a working knowledge of the basic production techniques needed to produce a documentary about an issue of your choosing.

Special Topics
Philosophy of Film
FILM 4910-01 X:PHIL 3180*

Dr. Jason Wirth
TTh 3:45pm-5:50pm



Although many films merely seek to entertain and distract, there is a body of films from all over the world that invite us to think. How do films "think" and what does it mean for us to think along with them? The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze thought these questions called for the creation of new concepts that are able to engage this new art form on its own terms. And what is philosophy, in the end, that it can engage something like cinema? This is not a course that takes seriously overt films about philosophy, as if cinema was somehow filming philosophy at work. This course begins by respecting the autonomy of great cinema, and attempts to engage it on its own terms and to allow film to reignite philosophy's own creative powers. We will consider directors like Terrence Malick, Andrei Tarkovsky, Akira Kurosawa, and Yasujiro Ozu.

Special Topics
History of Special Effects*
FILM 4910-02

Dr. Kirsten Thompson
TTh 10:15am-12:20pm

This advanced seminar examines the historical, aesthetic and technological aspects of special effects (or mechanical and optical illusions created for the camera) and visual effects (digital illusions created through a variety of means), with a primary focus on Hollywood. We will look at the history of special effects created throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century, from the silent period's earliest trick photography to the Schufftan process in the twenties, stop motion animation, the Slitscan screen, and developments in animatronics, makeup and explosives, among many others. We will then turn to the digital era, tracing the technological development of CGI or computer generated imagery in the eighties and nineties, examining digital sets and environments, performances and sound, including the role of crowd simulation software and mocap. Films or clips will include Metropolis, King Kong, Jason and the Argonauts, 2001



Space Odyssey, Jaws, Star Wars, Aliens, Terminator 2, Jurassic Park, The Matrix, Terminator 2, Avatar, Lord of the Rings trilogy, Gravity, Inception and Black Panther. We will consider how technological changes and new digital tools have transformed the experience of the image as spectacle, and we will trace specific contemporary aesthetic phenomena produced by visual effects like digital multitudes, verticality, swarming and morphing. We will also consider the role that special and visual effects have played in the history of genres like science fiction, action and horror.

* meets Special Topic requirement for all film majors.