

Film Studies-Fall 2019 Courses

UCOR 1300-27 Visual Storytelling: Activist Media

Dr. Alex Johnston

T/Th 10:15-12:20

This course looks at the historical and contemporary role of media arts and technology as a tool for social activism. Through a practice-based approach, we will explore a diverse range of movements—from the Black Panthers to Egypt’s Tahrir Square—and the crucial role that art and media played in these struggles for justice and equality. Central to our inquiry will be the changing nature of activist art and media with the ascendance of digital technologies and participatory media practices. How has the shift to online spaces changed the organization and impact of contemporary social justice movements? How has it changed the aesthetics and strategies of activist media art? Can memes make change? We will engage these questions through readings, screenings, and new media encounters, and through the creation of our own works of media art and activism.



UCOR 1300-26 Visual Storytelling:

Josefina Valenzuela Cerda, M.F.A.

T/Th 8:00-10:05 AM

This course takes a production-based and content creation approach to the art of telling stories through new media, particularly for Virtual Reality. In a world and city where the exploration of new technology has become such an important aspect of engaging the audience, it is important for new creators to learn how to approach and adapt between traditional media and new. Virtual Reality is still a relatively fresh concept and therefore gives us creators a platform to explore and even invent, but it also challenges us to set the standards and think responsibly about what we want to give to the world. In this class, students will be challenged to think about stories set in a 360-degree environment and learn the differences between immersive and interactive, experience and game. As a hands-on class, students will engage in the production of small individual assignments that explore the idea of an immersive environment, and 360 audio and image separately, to, later on, create and



produce in groups a short film for Virtual Reality using a 360 camera. As a class, we will follow the entire process of production for each short film and will learn how to write for 360 degrees, to set up production, edit and upload the content to free platforms. The purpose of this class includes intensive learning through examples and texts, but more so through experimentation, collaboration and the experiences of their peers, while reflecting on the future of storytelling.

UCOR 1400-17 Race in Popular Culture

Dr. Benedict Stork

T/Th 3:45-5:50

This course explores the construction of race in American popular culture, with a particular emphasis on popular visual culture. Taking as its presupposition that racial categories are social and cultural products rather than “natural” givens, the class focuses on the role popular practices and texts play in shaping racial identities in the United States. Because race is socially constructed, this course is also, in part, a history of American popular culture as the source of our



contemporary understanding of racial identities. Through critical analyses that put the past in conversation with the present, the class examines both what has changed in popular representations of race and what persists. In doing so, the course emphasizes the ongoing shifts in media, especially with regard to moving image texts. Finally though “race” in American discourse tends to refer to those marked as “different” or “other,” this course investigates the ways popular representations of racialized “Others” function to define dominant conceptions of whiteness as a nonracial, universal American identity while also considering the specific representation of whiteness in various ways.

UCOR 1400-26 Social Justice Cinema

Dr. John Trafton

T/Th 1:30-3:35

We know that the cinema can work towards producing social change, but to what ends? D.W. Griffith’s fictionalized portrayal of the post-Civil War American south in *Birth of a Nation* (1915) singlehandedly brought about the second rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States. It was a wildly popular film that established the now-familiar trend of the Hollywood blockbuster. Leni Riefenstahl’s depiction of the 1933 Nuremberg Rally in *Triumph of the Will* (1935) worked towards unifying the German people under the



banner of National Socialism. Riefenstahl's filmmaking innovations continue to inform how films are made today.

By contrast, Errol Morris' *The Thin Blue Line* (1988) successfully overturned one convicted man's prison sentence. The success of Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) led to the creation of the USC Shoah Foundation, an institute that holds over 52,000 interviews and

testimonies from survivors of the Holocaust. There are many other examples in the long history of the cinema, where a movie had an immediate and measurable effect on the historical world. But does the cinema of social justice make the claim that it can change the world? If so, what examples can we turn to where the cinema has quantitatively improved the situation of oppressed or marginalized people? What are the problems and possibilities of social justice filmmaking? Does social justice cinema even exist, and if it does, what are the stakes of this kind of filmmaking? And given the advancements of media in the 21st century, what might the social justice cinema of the future look like? We will spend the duration of this course exploring these questions. By closely examining the formal qualities and ideological effects of various "social justice" oriented films, and by placing these films within a broader social and historical context, we will attempt to address these questions in meaningful ways.

Film 3000-01 Introduction to Film Analysis

Dr. John Trafton

T/Th 3:45-5:50

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



Film 3350-01 Screenwriting
Josefina Valenzuela Cerda, M.F.A.
M/W 3:40-5:45

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.

Film 3400-01 Filmmaking 1
Dr. Alex Johnston
T/Th 1:30-3:35



By carefully examining the elements of film form, including composition, cinematography, editing, lighting, and sound, you will gain 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 elements that have historically defined these modes and put our findings into direct practice through a series of audio-visual projects. In addition to the formal elements of filmmaking, we will consider the historical and ideological aspects that inform the art and craft of filmmaking. As we produce work throughout the course, we will conduct regular class critiques, and discuss our findings

Film 3520-01 Women and Cinema

Dr. Justine Barda

T/Th 1:30-3:35



It was not until 2010 that a woman first won the Academy Award for Best Director, but women have been making films since the invention of the camera. This course will constitute a brief overview of films by women directors from the end of the 19th century to the present, from both studio and independent filmmaking, and from around the world. Film texts may include the work of Alice Guy-Blaché, Dorothy Arzner, Maya Deren, Agnes

Varda, Lina Wertmuller, Mira Nair, Julie Dash, Jane Campion, Kimberly Peirce, Deepa Mehta, Kathryn Bigelow, and Ava DuVernay. Our viewing will be informed by influential texts of feminist film theory and criticism of the last four decades, and we'll also pay particular attention to the issues facing women working in the film industry today.

Film 3530-01 African-American Film: Spike Lee

Dr. Benedict Stork

T/Th 6:00-8:05

Spike Lee is almost certainly the most well-known African American film director working today and, perhaps, ever. He has directed over twenty-five feature length films, numerous music videos, television programs, and commercials, and is now pioneering streaming video distribution. For a small man Spike Lee casts an undeniably large shadow over contemporary black cinema. In all of this, Lee's career illustrates the continued challenges, potentials, and complexities of African American film. He and his films are exemplary of the bind of black culture in a white dominated society: mastery of conventional narrative filmmaking *and* a signature aesthetic; appeal to broad audiences *and* represent the specificity of the African American experience; be fiercely independent *and* friendly to corporate capitalism; make political films *and* meet box office expectations; court critical acclaim *but* face repeated "defeats" in major awards.



This course will engage Spike Lee's films in the context of this complexity by screening a selection of his films including *She's Gotta Have It*, *Do the Right Thing*, *Malcolm X*, *Bamboozled*, *When the Levees Broke*, and *Inside Man*. We will also explore the black cinematic tradition from which Lee emerges, as well as his contemporaries and rivals and the critical reception of his films.

Film 3600-01 Introduction to International Film

Dr. Justine Barda

T/Th 10:15-12:20

Of the thousands of films produced every year, nearly ninety percent are made outside the US. But while Hollywood product is dominant on screens around the globe, a relatively tiny number of international films play in the US. In 2011, *New York Times* film critic A.O. Scott drew attention to this phenomenon in an article titled “A Golden Age of Foreign Films, Mostly Unseen.” In it, he describes the important films being made and film movements taking place in countries around the world to which Americans are largely oblivious. In this course, an introductory international survey, we will watch contemporary films from Iran, China, Romania, Mexico, Argentina, India, Turkey, Sweden, Mali, and Korea. Supplementary readings will help us situate those films in their national contexts and cinematic traditions. * Meets International Requirement



Film 3910-01 History of Broadcast Television

Dr. Lara Bradshaw

M/W 6:00-8:05

What does the term “broadcast” mean in the context of the current era of television and digital media? Is Netflix “television” and how do we consume global media in the 21st century? These questions and a few more will help guide us to better understand how television and radio have evolved as a political, cultural, social, and economic force. This course is a critical examination of U.S. and global broadcasting primarily focusing on the ways television shapes culture. We will challenge the perception that television is simply “entertainment” as well as the “quality” debates that instruct the type of programming we consume. By introducing a cultural history of broadcasting, this course aims to help students become critically informed television viewers and media makers.





THINKING ABOUT YOUR FUTURE CAREER?

All Students are recommended to take at least one 5 credit Internship in Spring Quarter before graduating!

Pick up the Internship forms packet from the English Dept Front Desk and speak to a faculty member about supervising your internship

Questions?:
Contact Dr Kirsten Thompson,
Eng. Dept Internship Director
thompski@seattleu.edu

FILM 4950 INTERNSHIP: 2-5 credits (flexible)

Internships are opportunities for Film majors to network and gain valuable professional experience. According to a recent study from Michigan State University, employers go on to offer 50 % of their interns fulltime jobs! Film Internships count towards your major. All internships are pass/fail. 5 credits requires 15 employer hours a week and some academic requirements, but there is flexibility for less than this, depending on individual needs. Register on [Handshake](#) and find an internship there with the assistance of the Career Engagement Office and then see Dr. Thompson, the department internship director for paperwork and instructions on how to register for Winter quarter.