COM FT 344 (Elective B)
Curating Contemporary European Cinema: Film Festivals and Film Culture

Instructor Information
A. Name Ms Kate Domaille
B. Day and Time [Weekday] [Time]
C. Location [ Room], 43 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JU
D. BU Telephone 020 7244 6255
E. Email kad63@bu.edu
F. Office hours By appointment

Overview
The course commences with an examination of key concepts such as national cinema, transnational cinema; language, subtitling and dubbing; and the European/Hollywood binary. It develops to explore the role of film festivals in acting as alternative sites of distribution for contemporary European cinema and students will have an opportunity to examine how film festivals work as sites of economic, critical and cultural exchange. Across the course students are exploring the commercial, cultural and critical functions of the cinema industry as it works through alternative spaces in Europe, in festivals, through distribution and in nominations for awards. Each case study explores variously the conditions which enable smaller European films to find a wider release onto a larger circuit.

On completion of the course, the successful student will be able to:

- Research, prepare and present on a selected area of the course including reference to a film showing an understanding of wider reading about European cinema and distribution (AE LO2, AE LO3)
- Describe and explain how European cinema moves between national and international contexts through a process of curation and what the role and value of film festivals is in this exchange; (GCIL LO1; AE LO1)
- Demonstrate a close understanding of different data sets around cinema distribution and, what this data reveals about distribution and audience interest in European cinema in the UK context (GCIL LO1)
- Curate a short film festival showing an understanding of how festivals target audiences and covet spaces for the promotion of European cinema (AE LO3)
- Evaluate the issues pertaining to European cinema and relate that knowledge to a wider understanding of national cultures in a globalised world. (GCIL LO1)

Such learning will be demonstrated through a series of assessments that require students:

- to present around a selected film showing both close textual analysis skills and research skills in understanding the film’s creative origins, and distribution
- analyse and interpret a range of film texts as well as the context in which these films were created, circulated and exhibited
to select and retrieve information from a variety of sources and to reference that work appropriately including trade press and survey data
- to write cogently and with some critical distance about the material being studied referencing a wide range of reading
- to be able to create a film festival product and evaluate why it has been conceived as such

Evidence of Hub Outcomes

Evidence of Hub Outcomes in Aesthetic Exploration are evaluated in a range of ways across the course:

| AE LO1 | Across the course students view a range of contemporary European films. They will engage with wider reading and will regularly have the opportunity to voice their observations, ask questions and debate the significance of the examples shown to the ongoing development of Contemporary European cinema. The focus is on cinema that emerges from festivals and achieves a wider release, notably seen in the UK. This outcome will be examined in most sessions through group and class discussions, in end of class presentations and in final assessments e.g. in Assignment 1, and assessed as part of their participation grade. |
| AE LO2 | Students will be guided to use appropriate terminology when analysing a film so that, for example, they are able to evaluate all aspects of the mise-en-scene, identify directorial creative choices, and draw connections between the film and its context. This will primarily be developed through in-class formative assessment and participation in reading and viewing, and examined in summative assessments – 1 (by critical essay), within their overall participation grade, and in Assignment 3 (through the creation of images and copy designed to attract audiences to festivals). |
| AE LO3 | By the end of the course students will have gained a good understanding of many issues pertaining to the movement of European cinema from national origin to a wider audience. The final assignment is designed to encourage students to apply their synthesised knowledge of issues such as form, style, content, artistic merit; as well as an understanding of distribution strategies and exhibition venues, to a task to create a film festival brochure for a weekend festival in London. This is a creative task which enables students to demonstrate their aesthetic appreciation through selection and use of images in their brochures. Students will present their brochure to their peers, take on board feedback and subsequently write a 1000-word evaluation under timed conditions. |

Evidence of Hub Outcomes in Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy

| GCIL LO1 | This course invites comparative analysis of films created in different countries in Europe enabling discussions about the meaning of place, and of European preoccupations, cultural values and film production practices. This is embedded in many of the taught sessions at the beginning of the course when we explore notions of continent vs country, as well as exploring the role and value of transnational institutions such as festivals. Students can examine conditions of exhibition in the UK for European cinema in Assignment 2 formally, as well as drawing on aspects of distribution of European cinema in the UK as one of the markers for a film’s success beyond the festival circuit. |
Methodology
The course will explore all of these issues through advised screenings and with reference to the literature available around those screenings. Through the literature, students will engage with both established debates about national cinemas such as concepts of cultural capital, the importance of maintaining audiences for cinema through careful curation, auteur theory, star theory and the exploration of national themes and preoccupations, alongside new debates about the transnational nature of cinema and the reimagining of what national cinema might mean.

Taught sessions combine lectures, opportunities for paired/group research tasks; analysis of film texts, and practice of debate and argument.

Formative/Ongoing Assessments
- Weekly, group-based plenary sessions summarising the material covered and identifying key arguments and debates (AE LO1, AE LO2)
- From week 2 class students commence the class with a summary of the ideas encountered in reading and viewing drawing out key issues (AE LO3)
- Student reporting of reading enables the lecturer to assess both the level of engagement with the course material but also the emerging understanding of key concepts and ideas, making adjustments to sessions if required (AE LO1, AE LO2, AE LO3)
- In analysis of films under discussion, students are supported in developing a formal vocabulary for analysing a film through taught approaches to textual analysis using subject specific vocabulary e.g. shot types, framing, mise-en-scene (AE LO2)

Summative/Graded Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Skills Tested</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation – 10% - Students are expected to prepare for class through pre-readings and viewings and to participate actively in discussion and debate</td>
<td>Critical reading, research skills. Independent study skills. (AE LO1, AE LO2)</td>
<td>Ongoing – awarded at the end of the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1 (25%) – 1500 words Essay on a case study film and how it moved from festival to international screens</td>
<td>Critical reading, research skills, and critical writing. (AE LO1, AE LO2)</td>
<td>Usually around week 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2 (25%) Paired/Group Presentation* based on a research task into alternative cinema venues that support European exhibition in London</td>
<td>Data gathering, data reading, summary and analysis. Focus on examining the UK context for European cinema. (GCIL LO1)</td>
<td>Usually around week 5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 3 (40%) – Curating a brochure for a London-based weekend film festival (25%) and written evaluation (15%)</td>
<td>Students will apply understanding of theories of film festivals, curation, and the development of audiences for European cinema in the creation of their brochure. They will do this by clearly identifying micro-markets for their festival e.g. youth audiences or by coveting audience interest in directors, genres or stars, or through themed approaches e.g. an LGBTQ+ festival, showing an understanding of how European cinema is curated and re-curated for audiences. They will apply knowledge of exhibition strategies for European cinema, drawing from Assignment 2. Through critical reading and critical writing they will demonstrate their engagement with wider theory encountered across the course in an evaluation of their festival brochure (AE LO1, AE LO3, GCIL LO1)</td>
<td>Week 10 for the Brochure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please note that whether presentations are paired or group is largely contingent on how many students enrol in the course each semester.

Fuller details of the assignments will be made available in class and posted on Blackboard. Deadlines are strictly adhered to. These will be made clear at the beginning of the course.

**Textbooks/Supplies**
Students are guided to read a range of materials including research reports and data sets as well as book and journal articles. Students can read selected chapters on Blackboard, or have been provided electronic links where appropriate: [http://learn.bu.edu](http://learn.bu.edu).

**Academic Policies & Grading**
It is every student’s responsibility to read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be ‘…expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean.’ You can view the entire Academic Conduct Code here: [http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/).

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for further grading criteria, attendance requirements, and policies on plagiarism.
The following Boston University table explains the grading system that is used by most faculty members on Boston University’s Study Abroad London.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Honour Points</th>
<th>Usual %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>89-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>85-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>81-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>77-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>65-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Unmarked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Criteria**

‘Incomplete’ or I grades are not permitted because of the obvious difficulty in making up missed work once the student has left the country. All work must be completed on time. We also do not allow ‘Audits’ (AU), ‘Withdrawals’ (W), or ‘Pass/Fail’ (P) grades.

The grades reflect the quality of the work. Lecturers and students should use the following criteria for an understanding of what each grade means.

**A** This exceptional grade is assigned only to work that has persistently outstanding quality in both substance and presentation. The student must demonstrate a sustained capacity for independent thought and extensive study, producing rigorous and convincing analyses in well-ordered prose.

**A-** Awarded to work that is clearly focused and analytical, and based on wide reading. The student must cover all the principal points of a question and systematically develop a persuasive overall thesis, allowing for one or two venial omissions or inapt expressions.

**B+, B, B-** This range of grades indicates that the student has shown some evidence of original thought and intellectual initiative. The student has cited sources beyond the class materials, and shown a degree of originality in perception and/or approach to the subject. The work will show thoughtful management of material, and a good grasp of the issues. The differences between a B+, a straight B and a B- may reflect poor presentation of the material, or mistakes in punctuation, spelling and grammar.

**C+, C, C-** Work in this grade range is satisfactory, but uninspiring. If the work is simply a recitation of the class materials or discussions, and shows no sign of genuine intellectual engagement with the issues, it cannot deserve a higher grade. Should an essay fail to provide a clear answer to the question as set, or argue a position coherently, the grade will fall within this range.

Quality of presentation can lift such work into the upper levels of this grade range. Work of this quality which is poorly presented, and riddled with errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, will fall into the lower end of the range. To earn a C grade, the work must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the primary course material, be written well enough to be readily understood, be relevant to the assignment, and, of course, be the student’s own work except where properly cited.

**D** A marginal pass can be given where some but not all the elements of the course have been completed satisfactorily.
The failing grade indicates the work is seriously flawed in one or more ways:

- Obvious lack of familiarity with the material
- So poorly written as to defy understanding
- So brief and insubstantial that it fails to properly address the subject
- Material presented is not relevant to the assignment
- Demonstrates evidence of plagiarism (see section in Academic Conduct Code)

**Attendance Policy**

**Classes**
All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, seminar, and field trip in order to fulfill the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme. This may result in the student having to take a medical leave of absence from the programme or withdraw from the programme.

**Authorised Absence**
Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorised Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness for more than one day. In this situation students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor’s note as soon as possible). The Authorised Absence Approval Request Form is available from:  
http://www.bu.edu/london/report-absence/

Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- Illness (first day of sickness): If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office (who will in turn contact the student’s lecturer).
- Illness (multiple days): If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must call in to the Student Affairs Office each day the student is ill. Students must also provide the Student Affairs Office with a completed Authorised Absence Approval Form and sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class.
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

**Unauthorised Absence**
Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a 4% grade penalty to their final grade for the course whose class was missed. This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs Office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a ‘Fail’ in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

**Lateness**
Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to
meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have
his/her final grade penalised.

Religious Holidays
Boston University’s Office of the University Registrar states:
‘The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students
observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who
wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or
for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.’

Special Accommodations
Each student will need to contact Disability and Access Services to request accommodations for
the semester they are abroad. Students are advised by BU-DAS not to expect the same
accommodations as they receive on campus.

BU London can only uphold special accommodations if we have received the appropriate
documentation from BU-DAS. We cannot accept letters from other universities/centres.

All disabilities need to be known to DAS in Boston if they are to be used as a reason for requiring
a change in conditions, i.e. reduced internship hours or special accommodations for the internship
schedule.

Course Content

University Press. Please note this text is available on loan from BU London Library (no need
to purchase)

SESSION 1: Introduction to European Cinema

Students will be introduced to key concepts such as to why European cinema has operated in the
shadow of Hollywood and what might be meant by the concept of national cinema. There will also
be a brief introduction to some of the institutions and structures pertaining to European Cinema
e.g. MEDIA. Students will explore a central question posed by one scholar ‘what idea of Europe
emerges, is represented and constructed by contemporary European cinema?’ (Liz: 2016: p5)

Extracts: Place as selling point: Prizewinning films Clips from Eastern Europe (Loveless, 2018),
Ida (2013); Son of Saul (2016); Body and Soul (2017); A Graduation (2015)

Cinema du Look –Run Lola Run (Germany 1998); Pan’s Labyrinth (Guillermo del Toro, 2006);
Victoria (2015); The Lobster (2015)

Required Reading

Conn Holohan ‘Introduction: Mapping the European Cinematic Studies in European Cinema, 2017
Vol. 14, No 1 pp1-6

Cinema London: Bloomsbury pp 9-29

Recommended Reading
SESSION 2: European Film Festivals: What do they do for European Cinema?

Each semester the selected film for discussion in this session updates to showcase a recent big win at a European film festival. This session will explore the history and politics of film festivals, what it means to compete and to win a festival prize for the wider success of a film.

Lecture: The History and Establishment of European Film Festivals. What is the importance of film festivals in the context of film culture at large?

- How do film festivals work?
- Are film festivals tools of power and prestige that make or break the fate of a film?
- The concept of cultural capital and European cinema
- What, if anything, is wrong with the concept of 'festival films'?

Student Activity

- The session opens with a review of the previous week’s learning. Students tasked to report on the reading here, establishing questions for the session.

- Students explore in groups de Valck’s (2016) methodology for examining film festivals in exploring the distribution of prizes at the main European film festivals over five years.

- Students undertake an aesthetic analysis of the prize-winning film using a formal vocabulary and focused on a selected scene.

Required Reading


Marijke de Valck ‘Film Festivals, Bourdieu and the Economization of Culture’ Canadian Journal of Film Studies, Spring 2014: 23, 1, pp74-85


Recommended Reading


Mark Peranson ‘First you get the power, then you get the money: two models of film festival’ in Iordanova, D. (2013) The Film Festivals Reader. St Andrews University Press pp191-203

SESSION 3 From Prize-Winning to Distribution: [Case Study Selected from Recent Festival Wins] (e.g. in 2018/19 The Favourite (Lanthimos; 22 July (Greengrass); Cold War (Pawelowski)
This session focuses on the winner of a European film festival prize and explore what this fanfare beginning of a film reveals about the potential for wider success? What are the challenges of international distribution? How are contemporary European filmmakers negotiating the issues of language on screen?

**Lecture:** Buying and Selling at European Festivals; and an introduction to the UK film market

**Student Activity**

- The session opens with a review of the previous week’s learning. Students tasked to report on the reading set around film festivals here, establishing questions for the session.
- Students focus on the aesthetic analysis of the selected film through practising a specific vocabulary for analysing film
- A practical task in subtitling and dubbing - in class students explore the ‘affective elements’ in cinema, written about by Flynn as a separate and other language

**Required Reading**


**Session 4 Field Trip: Maintaining an Infrastructure for European Cinema**

**Field Study: Outing to a European Film viewed in a subsidised cinema**

This session involves some guided group independent research exploring the infrastructure for independent cinema in the UK, much of which has been supported with money provided by a pan-European organisation called MEDIA. Groups will investigate and prepare to report next session. *A handout illustrating the expectations will be provided.*

**Required Reading**

BFI Statistical Yearbook 2017 Chapter 5 ‘Specialised Films’

How Film Contributes to the Culture of the UK – A Survey Conducted by the British Film Institute

**SESSION 5 Big Hitters in European Cinema: Auteurs and Stars**

The appearance of stars at film festivals is all part of the contractual obligation to build audiences and communities for cinema. The session will commence by exploring the work of a notable European director e.g. Pedro Almodovar, who has a hallowed place at film festivals and works with big stars, e.g. Penelope Cruz and Antonio Banderas

**Lecture:** *What value is added to cinema by stars and how might this economic system work in the European context?* An overview of Almodovar: Spanishness, Stars and vaunting the European through melodrama.
Student Activity
- The session opens with students presenting their research task from the previous week (Assignment 2)
- Students will analyse the image and value of a European star reporting on how their selected star functions in European and/or transnational contexts.
- To be able to examine the concept of auteur the class will be given responsibility for reporting on different films so as to capture a range of work.

Focus Films: *Dolor y Gloria (2019)* – *References to All About My Mother (1999)* and *Volver (2007)*

Required Reading


Liz Czach ‘Cinephilia, Stars and Film Festivals’ *Cinema Journal 49* No. 2, Winter 2010 pp139-145

Fernanzo Ganzo ‘A Train that derails: does a European star system exist?’ *Cinema, Comparative Cinema, Vol. 5, No. 10, 2017* pp54-64


Recommended Reading


SESSION 6: Festivals as a place to change our minds.

Lecture: How do film festivals become a place to foster innovation and to represent the interests of marginal groups?

Does the festival network offer a safe environment for the vulnerable films in our society, where they can be sheltered from commercial interests and, can they be appreciated on their own cultural and artistic terms? Set this question against Andrew Higson’s arguments about national cinema having a duty to support projects that represent the varieties of identities and narratives lived within nations and this session will explore the core debates around culture, identity, nation and commerce that inform the European cinema project. **Focus Films: Girlhood, (Celine Sciamma, 2014)/ Mustang (2015)**

Student Activity
- Students focus on the aesthetic analysis of both films
- Students explore aspects of film success beyond aesthetics and focus on festivals as a place to foster innovation
- Through critical reading students will explore concepts of both *space* and *time* in the curation of festivals.

Required Reading


Emma Wilson ‘Scenes of Hurt and Rapture in Celine Sciamma’s Girlhood Film Quarterly, Vol.70, Number3, pp.10–22,

**Recommended Reading**

*Sight and Sound June 2015, A French Cinema Special*


**SESSION 7: European Cinema an Art House Cinema?**

The session will continue with a wider discussion about Art House Cinema and a deeper study of *Auteur Theory*. The focus film might be on a director such as Yorgos Lanthimos, who has received acclaim with a suite of festival films from *Dogtooth* (2008); *The Lobster* (2015) to *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* (2017) and *The Favourite* (2018). What does it mean to be an auteur, and what bearing can it have on national significance as well as on international acclaim?

**Student Activity**

- The session continues with students tasked to report on the reading here, establishing questions for the session.
- Students select and present a key scene from a Lanthimos work that illustrates what it means to be an auteur.
- Discussion will focus on concepts of art, art-house and mainstream cinema in the new economics of film festivals.

**Required Reading**


Sarah Cooper ‘Narcissus and The Lobster’ *Studies in European Cinema*, 2016 Vol. 13 No.2 163–176


**SESSION 8 FIELD TRIP**


  - Depending on the screening of European cinema or short film festival activity in London, this session will be an opportunity to see a European film in a specific venue and reflect upon the issues encountered in the course thus far about distribution, marketing and curation.

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


**SESSION 9: European Cinema in the Mainstream?**

**Focus Film: Call Me By Your Name (2017)**

Luca Guadagnino has the rare accolade of distributing better in the US than he does in his home country. How does working with the familiar garner international audiences, and what are the gains and losses for European storytelling in working in this way?

- Short overview lecture on recent Italian cinema success and failure
- Aesthetic, narrative analysis of *Call Me By Your Name* and discussion of internationalisation of European cinema
- The final part of the session will be a chance to explore the critical reading around the concept of curation in detail in preparation for Assignment 3.

**Required Reading**


Thomas Laffly ‘Sensual Summers: Luca Guadagnino *Call Me By Your Name* captures the chemistry of attraction’ [http://www.filmjournal.com/Taxonomy/Term/326](http://www.filmjournal.com/Taxonomy/Term/326)


**Recommended Reading**

Cristiano A (2013) ‘The New Stakes for National Cinemas: A Word on the Case of Italy’ *Californian Italian Studies* 4 (2) [http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1833r8cc](http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1833r8cc)


**SESSION 10**
Students bring their brochures to class to showcase to their peers. A structured evaluation of choices and approaches will be convened.

The Evaluation process involves students in groups taking responsibility for managing response e.g.
  o Student 1: Convenes a set of critical questions through which to view the work
  o Student 2: Develops discussion by making connections with observations and key concepts encountered on the course
  o Student 3: Supports the group to find the critical reading that enables them to evaluate the work produced.
  o Groups report to the whole class and an open discussion takes place regarding the relationship between the created product and the critical concepts of the course. This process will support the written evaluation to take place the following week.

Following the showing of work, students will subsequently be set a 1.5 hour exam to evaluate their brochure in the light of the evaluation they undertook in Session 10. This is an open book exam. Students need to make full use of previous reading on festivals and critical reading around curation in addition to incorporating the feedback given by their peers in session 10.

Course Evaluation.

*Contingency Class Date: [Day and Time]. Students are obligated to keep this date free to attend class should any class dates need to be rescheduled. *

Further Reading
Students are able to access a range of articles and chapter electronically through BU library using their BU email address. Titles listed below in bold are good supplementary texts to develop students’ understanding. These are available in the BU London Library. Please do make use of them.


**Colman, F. (2011). Deleuze and Cinema, the Film Concepts. Oxford: Academic Complete.**


**De Valeck, M. (2007). Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.**


**Dyer, R (1979) Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society London: BFI Publishing**

**Fernanzo Ganzo ‘A Train that derails: does a European star system exist?’ Cinema, Comparative Cinema, Vol. 5, No. 10, 2017 pp54-64**


