

FILM STUDIES and SPECIAL TOPICS:
Department of Film and Television
Fall 2016

COM FT 201: Screen Language

Day/Time: A1-M/W 1-2:30p ; B1- M/W 9-10:30a; C1-Tu/Thu 9:30-11a

Instructor: Merzbacher, TBA

Traditional education has stressed the “three R’s” — Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic. But what about the fourth R, the R in “scReen?” Today everyone— certainly everyone who works in fields related to film and television— needs to understand how to communicate effectively through a wide range of screen-based media. This course dives into the fundamentals of how to frame, record, edit and distribute your message on screens, large and small.

COM FT401/705: Classical Hollywood Romantic Comedy and Melodrama

Day/Time: Tu/Thu 11:30-2p

Instructor: Warren

This course will take a close look at many of the best and most famous American films of the 1930s and 1940s (“It Happened One Night,” “The Philadelphia Story,” “His Girl Friday,” “Stella Dallas,” “Gaslight,” “Now, Voyager” and others), films made when the studio system was at its height and the American film audience was larger than before or since. Great screenwriters (Robert Riskin, Ruth Gordon), directors (Howard Hawks, George Cukor, Frank Capra, Max Ophuls), and stars (Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn, Bette Davis) contributed to and feature in this work. The films focus on the relations between men and women, possibilities for serious conversation and equality in relationships, and fears and consequences of human isolation. The course will consider the films in the context of American cultural history and the evolution of the status of women, and will look at the relevant theoretical/critical work of Stanley Cavell and others.

COM FT503: TV to Tablets

Day/Time: Fri 10-1p

Instructor: Luber

This course examines how film and television companies are racing to catch up to, keep pace with, and monetize emerging new media technology. From tablet apps to daily Tweets to Facebook fan pages and more, major networks and studios have been forced to create transmedia content and multiple social media outposts to keep consumers engaged and demonstrate their own proactive initiatives to stay on top of rapidly-changing media consumption patterns.

COM FT520 A1: TV Theory and Criticism

Day/Time: M/W 10a-12p

Instructor: Jaramillo

As an omnipresent site of entertainment and information, "reality" and fantasy, "quality" and "trash," and commerce and the public interest, television requires an active, critical analysis of its texts, uses, and production of meaning. Students in this class will engage in such analysis, confronting television as a serious site of culture, politics, ideology, and signs. This course will set aside evaluative considerations of TV in favor of theoretical and critical approaches that challenge widespread assumptions about the medium and expand our understanding of its role in our lives.

COM FT533/723 A1: American Independent Film

Day/Time: Fri 2-6p

Instructor: Carney

The course will consider cinematic alternatives to Hollywood "entertainment," "pop culture," and "issue-oriented" filmmaking. It will explore two theoretical concerns: 1) the stylistic differences between "artistic" filmmaking and mainstream, pop culture, entertainment, or issue-oriented filmmaking; 2) the status of the serious cinematic work of art in a culture devoted to corporate forms of expression designed to make money by selling certain kinds of emotional and intellectual experiences to viewers. Filmmakers whose work is discussed change from year to year, but include: Mary Bronstein, Su Friedrich, So Yong Kim, Andrew Bujalski, Mark and Jay Duplass, Caveh Zahedi, Todd Haynes, Jay Rosenblatt, Barbara Loden, Elaine May, Harmony Korine, Lena Dunham, Vince Gallo, Kelly Reichardt, and others. No prerequisites. No permission required.

COM FT548 A1: Antonioni and Bergman

Day/Time: Wed 2-6p

Instructor: Warren

This course will view and discuss the work of two of the most important and influential filmmakers of the second half of the twentieth century, Michelangelo Antonioni and Ingmar Bergman. We will take up such crucial films as Antonioni's "L'Avventura," "Eclipse," "Red Desert," and "Blow-Up" and Bergman's "The Seventh Seal," "Wild Strawberries," "Persona," and "Scenes from a Marriage." In their very different ways these two filmmakers developed new and powerful narrative and visual approaches to human sexuality and personal interaction, the modern sense of alienation, ecological and political crises of their era, and philosophical issues film had never ventured into. There is wonderful development of screen personality and great acting in this work, much anguish and turmoil, and much beauty. These films—even now—push boundaries and open up new possibilities for the medium of film.

COM FT552 A1: Prod Writing the Short (for Prod I, II & III)

Day/Time: Wed 2-5p

Instructor: Weinberg

While working in a collaborative writers' room environment, participants will develop, write, and rework three short scripts that are suitable for production. This is an absolute must for students wishing to shoot their own scripts, and also makes the work eligible for the department's script library. Production III students are encouraged to review the library's submissions for polished scripts which can be turned into films.

COM FT552 C1: Writing the Short Film

Day/Time: Mon 6-9p

Instructor: TBA

While working in a collaborative writers' room environment, participants will develop, write, and rework three short scripts that are suitable for production. This is an absolute must for students wishing to shoot their own scripts, and also makes the work eligible for the department's script library. Production III students are encouraged to review the library's submissions for polished scripts which can be turned into films.

FT552 E1: Animation Basic

Day/Time: Wed 6-9p

Instructor: Polonsky

Pre-Req: FT 353 Production I

From TV shows and feature films to webisodes, 2D animation is more popular than ever, but how is it created? This fun yet intensive hands-on course teaches all the fundamental skills needed to create great 2D character animation the way it is done in the industry, using Adobe Flash and Photoshop. Through progressive lessons and assignments you will learn basic drawing and character design, storytelling, and how to make characters walk, talk and come to life. We will cover acting, timing, and facial expressions; drawing "keys and in-betweens," scene composition, storyboards, color backgrounds, and more. The history of animation and industry trends will also be discussed. You will complete numerous projects, including writing, designing, and creating an animated short film with sound. Many of the valuable skills learned in this class can also be applied to 3D and experimental animation, filmmaking, art and design.

FT552 F1: Advanced Cinematography

Day/Time: Thu 2-6p

Instructor: San Juan

Pre-Req: FT353 Prod 1 and FT593 Cinematography

Advanced Cinematography is an intensive course that brings students a step up from the foundation semester of (FT593) Cinematography. Students will get to learn the Cinematographer's responsibilities from pre-production to post production. Students can expect a more in-depth study into the technical aspects of equipment handling and preparation. They will also be challenged to frame and light for real-life situations and complete entire scenes with the tools they learn along the way. This course is designed to encourage students to develop their own visual style and lighting abilities and to achieve enough skillsets to function both as a Cinematographer and a Gaffer. Permission Required, Grads & Ugrads

COM FT 554 A1: TV and Diversity

Day/Time: M/W 12-2pm

Instructor: TBA

Diversity is a term that is both incredibly important and woefully limiting in contemporary television. In many ways, television is much better at representing difference than the other major audiovisual medium: films, but much of television still suffers from the same incremental advances behind the camera and above the line. With diversity as an increasingly necessary commercial strategy on Television, it is important to examine the history, limitations, containment, and strategies of representing difference on Television, looking both at what is on television and those who work to create it. This course will discuss difference in a variety of modes—race, class, gender identity, sexuality, religion, etc.—across a variety of historical moments of change as well as the reassertion of that which is considered “normal,” culminating in an extended exploration of the current moment of diversity on television and within its industry.

COM FT 554 B1: TV Genre Fandom

Day/Time: M/W 6-8pm

Instructor: TBA

TV fandoms have long histories. Fans of Star Trek wrote thousands of letters to NBC to ensure a third season of the sci-fi series decades before fans of Roswell sent hundreds of bottles of Tabasco sauce to the WB or fans of Chuck organized marches to Subway sandwich shops to support the show’s sponsor. Daytime soap opera fans spawned a cottage industry of digests and magazines well before the current boom in live-tweeting primetime soap operas. Both fantastic genres and melodramatic genres remain the core of how we have and continue to understand the idea of the TV “fan” even as many fan practices have been adapted to mainstream television audience practices and realistic genres. This class uses fan studies and genre studies approaches to critically analyze both the ways that fan practices have been adapted, defanged, normalized, and monetized by the television industry as well as how fans have used their position to challenge, subvert, or initiate political change the norms of television and the wider culture.

COM FT554 C1: Writing Film Criticism

Day/Time: Tue, Thu 930-11a

Instructor: Hall

This course give students a chance to write film and television criticism, as practiced in a variety of mass media. Students will write a series of reviews and thinkpieces on current films and scripted TV shows that blend insightful analysis with an engaging voice, similar to popular reviews seen in the New York Times, on vulture.com, and elsewhere. The course will also cover the history of film and television criticism, ranging from key film critics like James Agee, Andrew Sarris, and Pauline Kael to Roger Ebert and Manohla Dargis; Matt Zoller Seitz and Emily Nussbaum will be some of the TV critics studied. FT250 or FT303 or an equivalent course in media criticism/analysis is a prerequisite.

COM FT 554 E1: Queer Cinema

Day/Time: Thu 2-6p

Instructor: Grundmann

This course introduces students to contemporary queer cinema, its representations and its cultural as well as political concerns. Surveying a cross-section of recent American and global queer cinema, the course tracks shifting representations of queerness in their cultural, subcultural, national, and transnational contexts. We investigate the relation between various forms of queerness and older, more established forms of sexual and gender identity and explore the richness of cinematic interventions in the struggle against white heteronormative patriarchal society. The course covers both embodiments and critiques of recent phenomena such as pink washing, homonationalism, and imperial feminism. The course emphasizes narrative cinema but includes some experimental/avant-garde works. Titles include Brokeback Mountain, Keep the Lights On, Carol, Fire, The Bubble, Yossi and Jagger, Blue Is The Warmest Color, O Fantasma!, Serbis, La Vie en Rose, and Madame Sata. Many of the films in this course include sexually explicit content.

COM FT 554 F1: Broadcast Horror

Day/Time: M/W 2-4p

Instructor: Jaramillo

Pre-Req: FT 303 Understanding TV

The horror genre has recently exploded on Television, but broadcasting has engaged with horror in multiple ways throughout its history. This class will explore the various manifestations of horror in early radio, early and contemporary Television, and podcasting. As we familiarize ourselves with horror programs each week, we will study the following topics: the censorship of horror; horror's relation to sound; the visual aesthetics of TV horror; horror and genre mixing; serialized vs. episodic horror; broadcast vs. cable horror; and the violence of horror.