FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

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The major in Film and Media Studies focuses on the history, theory, criticism, and production of cinema and other moving-image media. Courses examine cinema and the broader landscape of audiovisual media as significant modern art forms, and the contributions of moving-image media as cultural and communicative practices of enduring social significance. As an interdisciplinary program centered in the humanities, Film and Media Studies offers students latitude in defining their course of study within the framework established by the Film and Media Studies Committee. With this freedom comes the responsibility of carefully planning a coherent and well-focused program. Because of the special demands of Film and Media Studies and the diversity of its offerings, potential majors are encouraged to consult the director of undergraduate studies (DUS) early in their academic careers.

PREREQUISITE

Students normally take FILM 150 in their first or second year. This course is useful preparation, and in some cases a prerequisite for other courses in the major.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

The Film and Media Studies major consists of twelve term courses, including the prerequisite and the senior requirement. Students are required to take FILM 160 and FILM 320, preferably by the end of their sophomore year. In addition, students are required to take one upper-level course in the study of representative films from a non-American national cinema (e.g. German expressionist cinema, Italian cinema, or world cinema) and one course in critical studies. Students also must take at least one course on the creative process in film; appropriate courses are listed under "Production Seminars." Courses taken outside the Film and Media Studies department do not count toward the major without the permission of the DUS. Admission to senior-level seminars is at the instructor’s discretion, but the Film and Media Studies program will ensure that every senior major gains admission to the required number of seminars.

The intensive major

Students of substantial accomplishment and commitment to film and media studies are encouraged to pursue the intensive major. Students in the intensive major complete a senior project in production and also write a senior essay. The intensive major in Film and Media Studies is intended for students who are not pursuing two majors. Students must request approval from the Film and Media Studies Committee at the end of their junior year by submitting a proposal that outlines their objectives and general area of study.

Credit/D/Fail

No more than one course taken Credit/D/Fail may be counted toward the major with permission of the DUS.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

During the senior year, each student takes one or two senior-level seminars or the equivalent and submits a senior essay or senior project, which should represent a culmination of work in the major and in Yale College. The senior requirement requires both critical writing and writing in images. Those undertaking creative senior projects should be expected to produce a paper of approximately fifteen pages in which the student discusses such questions as the genre to be used in the project, existing precedents for the topic, and his or her strategy in working on the project. Those undertaking to fulfill the senior requirement by writing a senior essay should additionally take a course in which they are expected to do, minimally, a small production assignment.

Majors graduating in December must submit their senior essays or senior projects to the DUS by Friday, December 6, 2019; those graduating in May, by Friday, April 24, 2020. A second reader assigned by the DUS participates in evaluating the essays and/or projects.

Preparation for a senior project

Those students hoping to produce a film script or video as their senior project should make sure that they have taken enough courses in video production and screenwriting to be accepted into an advanced course in screenwriting or production. Senior creative projects in Film and Media Studies must be produced in conjunction with one such upper-level course. Students often start by completing FILM 161, 162 by the end of their sophomore year, and continue with FILM 355, 356 by the end of their junior year, to prepare for FILM 455, 456 or 483, 484 in their senior year. Those students interested in screenwriting often begin with FILM 350. Students interested in filmmaking should also take courses in screenwriting, and vice versa. Some production courses are available in the summer program in Prague.

Senior project

Students who wish to complete a senior project as an alternative to an essay must petition the Film and Media Studies Committee for approval of their project at the end of the junior year. Projects might include writing a screenplay or producing a video. Students electing such an alternative should note that the project must be undertaken and accomplished over two terms. A limited number of students making films or videos are admitted to either the Advanced Fiction Film Workshop (FILM 483, 484) or the Documentary Film Workshop (FILM 455, 456), and receive three credits for their projects (two credits for FILM 483, 484 or 455, 456, and one for FILM 493 or 494). Such a choice effectively commits students to one extra course in addition to the twelve courses required for the major, because FILM 493 or 494 does not count toward the twelve required courses when taken in conjunction with FILM 483, 484 or 455, 456. Students may undertake a production project outside the workshops if (1) the Film and Media Studies Committee approves their petition, (2) they have found a primary adviser qualified and willing to provide the necessary supervision, and (3) they have identified the equipment necessary to execute the project. Such students may count FILM 493 and 494 toward the twelve courses required for the major.
Preparation for a senior essay  Students in their senior year may prefer to write a senior essay rather than work on a creative project. To prepare, they should take advantage of the variety of courses in film history, media studies, and criticism and theory offered by the program, as well as such topics as American independent cinema, film theory, and African American cinema.

Senior essay  For the student writing a senior essay, several options are possible. First, the student may enroll in two terms of relevant senior-level seminars (usually courses numbered in the 400s) and write a substantial term paper of twenty-five pages, double-spaced, for one of these courses. Second, the student may do independent research on a yearlong senior essay (FILM 491, 492). This option is intended for students with clearly defined topics that do not relate closely to a senior-level seminar. During the first two weeks of the first term of senior year, a petition for permission to do independent research should be submitted to the DUS in the form of a brief prospectus, approved by the proposed faculty adviser to the essay. Such research receives two terms of credit; the product of a two-term research essay is a work of at least fifty pages. Third, the senior requirement may be completed by combining one single-term senior-level seminar with one term of an independent research project (FILM 491 or 492), resulting in a paper of thirty-five pages. Whichever option is chosen, the essay should be written on a topic informed by the student’s previous course work at Yale College. In researching and writing the essay, the student should consult regularly with the seminar instructor, supplying preliminary drafts as appropriate, and may consult with other faculty members as well.

ADVISING

Foreign languages  Study of relevant foreign languages is urged for all Film and Media Studies majors. Students considering graduate work should become proficient in French or another modern language. Those choosing to study film in relation to a foreign culture must have good listening and reading abilities in that language.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Prerequisite  FILM 150

Number of courses  12 term courses (incl prereq and senior req)

Specific courses required  FILM 160 and FILM 320

Distribution of courses  1 upper-level national or world cinema course as specified; 1 production course; 1 critical studies course

Senior requirement  For senior essay—2 terms of senior-level seminars, or 2 terms of senior essay (FILM 491, 492), or 1 term of each; for senior project—2 terms of senior project in FILM 455, 456, or 483, 484, and either FILM 493 or 494, for a total of 13 term courses; or 2 terms of senior project in FILM 493, 494 with approved petition

Intensive major  Both senior project in production and senior essay

FACULTY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM OF FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

Professors  *Dudley Andrew (Comparative Literature, Film & Media Studies), *Francesco Casetti (Humanities, Film & Media Studies), *Katerina Clark (Comparative Literature, Slavic Languages & Literatures), *Aaron Gerow (East Asian Languages & Literatures, Film & Media Studies), Inderpal Grewal (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies), *John MacKay (Film & Media Studies, Slavic Languages & Literatures), *Millicent Marcus (Italian), Kobena Mercer (History of Art, African American Studies), *Charles Musser (American Studies, Film & Media Studies), *John Durham Peters (English, Film & Media Studies), *Brigitte Peucker (German, Film & Media Studies), *Katie Trumpener (Comparative Literature, English), Laura Wexler (American Studies, Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies)

Associate Professors  Moira Fradinger (Comparative Literature), Zareena Grewal (Ethnicity, Race, & Migration), Brian Kane (Music), Brian Walsh (English), *R. John Williams (English)

Assistant Professors  Marijeta Bozovic (Slavic Languages & Literatures, Film & Media Studies, Women’s Gender & Sexuality Studies), Marta Figlerowicz (Comparative Literature, English)

Senior Lecturer  Marc Lapadula (Film & Media Studies)

Lecturers  Jonathan Andrews (Art, Film & Media Studies), James Charney (School of Medicine), Oksana Chefranova (Film & Media Studies), Thomas Allen Harris (Film & Media Studies), Michael Kerbel (American Studies, Film & Media Studies), Camille Thomasson (Film & Media Studies)

Critic  Sandra Luckow (Art)

Senior Lectors  Krystyna Illakowicz (Slavic Languages & Literatures), Karen von Kunes (Slavic Languages & Literatures)

*Member of the Film and Media Studies Advisory Committee.

Required Courses

FILM 150, Introduction to Film Studies  John MacKay
A survey of film studies concentrating on theory, analysis, and criticism. Students learn the critical and technical vocabulary of the subject and study important films in weekly screenings. Prerequisite for the major.  WR, HU

FILM 160a / ENGL 196a, Introduction to Media  Robert Williams
Introduction to the long history of media as understood in classical and foundational (and even more recent experimental) theories. Topics involve the technologies of modernity, reproduction, and commodity, as well as questions regarding knowledge,
representation, public spheres, and spectatorship. Special attention given to philosophies of language, visuality, and the environment, including how digital culture continues to shape these realms. WR, HU

* FILM 320a / HSAR 490a, Close Analysis of Film Oksana Chefranova
The goal of this intensive seminar is to develop tools of close analysis of film as a significant art form by learning to identify elements of cinematic representation (mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, sound, and the basic vocabulary associated with each aspect) and to demonstrate how these constituents combine to create meaning. Through developing a deeper understanding of a particular film, we transition from specific instances to broader considerations such as aesthetic and historical context or ideological critique. The course also traces the history of the close analysis method from structural semiotics and neoformalist analysis to digital humanities. We study films ranging from Hollywood and American filmmaking (Alfred Hitchcock and David Lynch) and European modernism (Robert Bresson and Jean-Luc Godard) to films that use expressive codes and cultural conventions less familiar to us (Lars von Trier and Hou Hsiao-hsien). Topics include genre, the digital image, landscape, body and face, gesture and screen performance, and cinematic atmosphere. Prerequisite: FILM 150. HU

National Cinemas

* FILM 243a / MGRK 218a / WGSS 245a, Family in Greek Literature and Film George Syrimis
The structure and multiple appropriations of the family unit, with a focus on the Greek tradition. The influence of aesthetic forms, including folk literature, short stories, novels, and film, and of political ideologies such as nationalism, Marxism, and totalitarianism. Issues related to gender, sibling rivalry, dowries and other economic factors, political allegories, feminism, and sexual and social violence both within and beyond the family. WR, HU TR

* FILM 304a / EALL 281a, Japanese Cinema and Its Others Aaron Gerow
Critical inquiry into the myth of a homogeneous Japan through analysis of how Japanese film and media historically represents "others" of different races, ethnicities, nationalities, genders, and sexualities, including blacks, ethnic Koreans, Okinawans, Ainu, undocumented immigrants, LGBT minorities, the disabled, youth, and monstrous others like ghosts. HU

* FILM 319a / GMAN 273a / LITR 368a, The Third Reich in Postwar German Film, 1945-2007 Jan Hagens
Close study of the intersection of aesthetics and ethics with regard to how German films, since 1945, have dealt with Nazi history. Through the study of German-language films (with subtitles), produced in postwar East, West, and unified Germany through 2007, students consider and challenge perspectives on the Third Reich and postwar Germany, while learning basic categories of film studies. HU

* FILM 362a / LAST 360a / LITR 360a, Radical Cinemas of Latin America Moira Fradinger
Introduction to Latin American cinema, with an emphasis on post–World War II films produced in Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. Examination of each film in its historical and aesthetic aspects, and in light of questions concerning national cinema and "third cinema." Examples from both pre-1945 and contemporary films. Conducted in English; knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese helpful but not required. HU

* FILM 409a / LITR 366a / RSEE 327a / RUSS 327a, The Danube in Literature and Film Marijeta Bozovic
The Danube River in the film, art, and literature of various Danubian cultural traditions, from the late nineteenth century to the present. Geography and history of the region that includes the river’s shores and watershed; physical, historical, and metaphoric uses of the Danube; the region as a contested multilingual, multicultural, and multinational space, and as a quintessential site of cross-cultural engagement. Readings and discussion in English. WR, HU TR

* FILM 416b / FREN 394b / LITR 366b, French Cinema through the New Wave Dudley Andrew
The history of French cinema c. 1930 to 1970, from the onset of sound through the New Wave movement. The New Wave "idea of cinema"; the relation of cinema to national self-perception and state policy in France. HU RP

* FILM 442b / LITR 403b / RUSS 403b, The City in Literature and Film Katerina Clark
Consideration of the architecture, town planning, and symbolic functions of various cities in Europe, Latin America, the United States, and East Asia. Discussion of the representation of these cities in literature and film. Works include older Soviet and Chinese films about Shanghai and contemporary films about Hong Kong and Beijing. HU

* FILM 457b / ITAL 303b / LITR 359b, Italian Film from Postwar to Postmodern Millicent Marcus
A study of important Italian films from World War II to the present. Consideration of works that typify major directors and trends. Topics include neorealism, self-reflexivity and metacinema, fascism and war, and postmodernism. Films by Fellini, Antonioni, Rossellini, De Sica, Visconti, Pasolini, Bertolucci, Wertmuller, Tornatore, and Moretti. Most films in Italian with English subtitles. WR, HU

* FILM 461a / ENGL 384a / LITR 364a / THST 416a, British Cinema Katie Trumpener
Survey of the British film tradition, emphasizing overlap with literature, drama, and art; visual modernism; documentary’s role in defining national identity; "heritage" filmmaking and alternative approaches to tradition; and auteur and actors’ cinema. HU RP

Film Theory, Visual Media, and Special Topics

Survey of Classical Hollywood films. Topics include history of the studio system; origin and development of genres; the film classics of the Classical Hollywood period, and the producers, screenwriters, directors, and cinematographers who created them. WR, HU
* FILM 233a / HUMS 218a, Storytelling and Contemporary TV  Virginia Jewiss
If Shakespeare were alive today, he would be writing for TV. So would Jane Austen. With the advent of cable, DVDs, the internet, and live streaming, TV—once considered a “vast wasteland”—has become the most dynamic and creative medium for storytelling, attracting talented writers, directors, and actors. This course explores the innovative narrative strategies that have transformed that wasteland into fertile terrain and ushered in a new Golden Age of TV. Careful visual and textual analysis of episodes is complemented by critical readings and comparisons to literature and cinema. We also consider technical and business pressures on the creative process behind today’s “complex TV.” The first part of the term focuses on the AMC series Breaking Bad. The second part considers episodes from a range of shows in order to highlight the significance of title sequences, pilots, dialogue, subjective narration, jumbled chronology, and problematic endings. The third part examines the HBO series The Young Pope, which brings narrative and visual effects from cinema to the small screen.  

* FILM 242a / ENGL 308a / HUMS 454a / LITR 398a, Interpreting Film Masterpieces  David Bromwich and Dudley Andrew
Exploration of seven auteurs from Europe and Hollywood, 1937–1967. Assessment of methods that deepen appreciation of the films and the medium.  WR, HU

* FILM 305a / LITR 361a, Animation: Disney and Beyond  Aaron Gerow
Survey of the history of animation, considering both its aesthetics and its social potentials. The focus is on Disney and its many alternatives, with examples from around the world, from various traditions, and from different periods.  HU

* FILM 306b / EALL 270b, Anime and the Posthuman  Seth Jacobowitz
Japanese anime and its conceptions of the posthuman condition made possible by advances in science and technology. The persistence of myth, archetype, and humanist philosophy.  HU

* FILM 344b / GMAN 344b, Landscape, Film, Architecture  Fatima Naqvi
Movement through post-1945 landscapes and cityscapes as a key to understanding them. The use of cameras and other visual-verbal means as a way to expand historical, aesthetic, and sociological inquiries into how these places are inhabited and experienced. Exploration of both real and imaginary spaces in works by filmmakers (Wenders, Herzog, Ottinger, Geyrhalter, Seidl, Ade, Grisebach), architects and sculptors (e.g. Rudofsky, Neutra, Abraham, Hollein, Pichler, Smithson, Wurm, Kienast), photographers (Sander, B. and H. Becher, Gursky, Höfer), and writers (Bachmann, Handke, Bernhard, Jelinek). Additional readings by Certeau, Freytag, J.B. Jackson, L. Burckhardt.  HU

* FILM 411b / LITR 380b, The Films of Alfred Hitchcock  Brigitte Peucker
An examination of Hitchcock’s career as a filmmaker from Blackmail to Frenzy, with close attention to the wide variety of critical and theoretical approaches to his work. Topics include the status of the image; the representation of the feminine and of the body; spectatorship; painterliness and theatricality; generic and psychoanalytic issues.  HU

* FILM 433a / AFAM 216a, Family Narratives/Cultural Shifts  Thomas Allen Harris
This course looks at films that are redefining ideas around family and family narratives in relation to larger social movements. We focus on personal films by filmmakers who consider themselves artists, activists, or agents of change but are united in their use of the nonfiction format to speak truth to power. In different ways, these films use media to build community and build family and ultimately, to build family albums and archives that future generations can use to build their own practices. Just as the family album seeks to unite people across time, space, and difference, the films and texts explored in this course are also journeys that culminate in linkages, helping us understand nuances of identity while illuminating personal relationships to larger cultural, social, and historical movements.  HU

* FILM 445b / LITR 450b, Film and Fiction in Interaction  Dudley Andrew
Study of the dynamic exchange or relay between fiction and film, recognized by theorists just after WWII, while obvious in adaptations, also exists in the evolution of the styles and topics of both forms of cultural production. The French term “écriture,” applied to films after 1948, is newly relevant in today’s open cultural field where writers make films and where many adaptations begin as interpretations. Prerequisite: Advanced course in literary or film studies.  HU  RP

* FILM 453b / AFAM 401b / AMST 416b / ER&M 385b, Introduction to Documentary Studies  Zareena Grewal
An introduction to documentary film, photography, and radio for students interested in doing documentary work, as well as for those who simply wish to study the history of the documentary as a cultural form.    HU  RP

Production Seminars

* FILM 161a / ART 241a, Introductory Film Writing and Directing  Sandra Luckow
Problems and aesthetics of film studied in practice as well as in theory. In addition to exploring movement, image, montage, point of view, and narrative structure, students photograph and edit their own short videotapes. Emphasis on the writing and production of short dramatic scenes. Priority to majors in Art and in Film & Media Studies. Materials fee: $150. Prerequisite for all majors: ART 142; additional prerequisite for Film & Media Studies majors: FILM 150.  RP

* FILM 162a or b / ART 142a or b, Introductory Documentary Filmmaking  Sandra Luckow
The art and craft of documentary filmmaking. Basic technological and creative tools for capturing and editing moving images. The processes of research, planning, interviewing, writing, and gathering of visual elements to tell a compelling story with integrity and responsibility toward the subject. The creation of nonfiction narratives. Issues include creative discipline, ethical questions, space, the recreation of time, and how to represent "the truth." Materials fee: $150.  RP
* FILM 330b, The Screenwriter’s Craft  Camille Thomasson  
A rigorous writer’s workshop. Students conjure, write, rewrite, and study films. Read screenplays, view movie clips, parse films, and develop characters and a scenario for a feature length screenplay. By the end of term, each student will have created a story outline and written a minimum of fifteen pages of an original script. All majors welcome.

* FILM 350a or b, Screenwriting  Marc Lapadula  
A beginning course in screenplay writing. Foundations of the craft introduced through the reading of professional scripts and the analysis of classic films. A series of classroom exercises culminates in intensive scene work. Prerequisite: FILM 150. Not open to freshmen.

FILM 355b / ART 341b, Intermediate Film Writing and Directing  Jonathan Andrews  
In the first half of the term, students write three-scene short films and learn the tools and techniques of staging, lighting, and capturing and editing the dramatic scene. In the second half of the term, students work collaboratively to produce their films. Focus on using the tools of cinema to tell meaningful dramatic stories. Materials fee: $150. Enrollment limited to 8. Priority to majors in Art and in Film & Media Studies. Prerequisites: ART 241.  RP

FILM 356b / ART 342b, Intermediate Documentary Filmmaking  Sandra Luckow  
Students explore the storytelling potential of the film medium by making documentary art. The class concentrates on finding and capturing intriguing, complex scenarios in the world and then adapting them to the film form. Questions of truth, objectivity, style, and the filmmaker’s ethics are considered using examples of students’ work. Exercises in storytelling principles. Materials fee: $150. Limited enrollment. Priority to majors in Art and in Film & Media Studies. Prerequisites: ART 141 or 142, and FILM 150.  HU  RP

* FILM 395b, Intermediate Screenwriting  Marc Lapadula  
A workshop in writing short screenplays. Frequent revisions of each student’s script focus on uniting narrative, well-delineated characters, dramatic action, tone, and dialogue into a polished final screenplay. Prerequisite: FILM 350. Priority to majors in Film & Media Studies.

* FILM 397b / ENGL 423b / THST 228b, Writing about the Performing Arts  Margaret Spillane  
Introduction to journalistic reporting on performances as current events, with attention to writing in newspapers, magazines, and the blogosphere. The idea of the audience explored in relation to both a live act or screening and a piece of writing about such an event. Students attend screenings and live professional performances of plays, music concerts, and dance events. Formerly ENGL 244.  WR, HU

FILM 434b / AFAM 220b, Archive Aesthetics and Community Storytelling  Thomas Allen Harris  
This production course explores strategies of archive aesthetics and community storytelling in film and media. It allows students to create projects that draw from archives—including news sources, personal narratives, and found archives—to produce collaborative community storytelling. Conducted as a production workshop, the course explores the use of archives in constructing real and fictive narratives across a variety of disciplines, such as—participants create and develop autobiographies, biographies, or fiction-based projects, tailored to their own work in film/new media around Natalie Goldberg’s concept that “our lives are at once ordinary and mythical.”  HU

* FILM 455a and FILM 456b / AMST 463a and AMST 464b / EVST 463a and EVST 464b, Documentary Film Workshop  Charles Musser  
A yearlong workshop designed primarily for majors in Film and Media Studies or American Studies who are making documentaries as senior projects. Seniors in other majors admitted as space permits.  RP

* FILM 483a and FILM 484b / ART 442a and ART 443b, Advanced Film Writing and Directing  Jonathan Andrews  
A yearlong workshop designed primarily for majors in Art and in Film & Media Studies making senior projects. Each student writes and directs a short fiction film. The first term focuses on the screenplay, production schedule, storyboards, casting, budget, and locations. In the second term students rehearse, shoot, edit, and screen the film. Materials fee: $150. Enrollment limited to 8. Priority to majors in Art and in Film & Media Studies. Prerequisite: ART 341.  RP

* FILM 487a and FILM 488b, Advanced Screenwriting  Marc Lapadula  
Students write a feature-length screenplay. Emphasis on multiple drafts and revision. Admission in the fall term based on acceptance of a complete step-sheet outline for the story to be written during the coming year. Primarily for Film & Media Studies majors working on senior projects. Prerequisite: FILM 395 or permission of instructor.

Individual Research and Senior Essay Course or Project

* FILM 471a or b, Independent Directed Study  Staff  
For students who wish to explore an aspect of film and media studies not covered by existing courses. The course may be used for research or directed readings and should include a lengthy essay or several short ones as well as regular meetings with the adviser. To apply, students should present a prospectus, a bibliography for the work proposed, and a letter of support from the adviser to the director of undergraduate studies. Term credit for independent research or reading may be granted and applied to any of the requisite areas upon application and approval by the director of undergraduate studies.

* FILM 491a and FILM 492b, The Senior Essay  Charles Musser  
An independent writing and research project. A prospectus signed by the student’s adviser must be submitted to the director of undergraduate studies by the end of the second week of the term in which the essay project is to commence. A rough draft must be submitted to the adviser and the director of undergraduate studies approximately one month before the final draft is due. Essays are normally thirty-five pages long (one term) or fifty pages (two terms).
* FILM 493a and FILM 494b, The Senior Project  
Charles Musser

For students making a film or video, either fiction or nonfiction, as their senior project. Senior projects require the approval of the Film and Media Studies Committee and are based on proposals submitted at the end of the junior year. An interim project review takes place at the end of the fall term, and permission to complete the senior project can be withdrawn if satisfactory progress has not been made. For guidelines, consult the director of undergraduate studies. Does not count toward the fourteen courses required for the major when taken in conjunction with FILM 455, 456 or FILM 483, 484.