

## **The Art of Film**

The New School, Schools of Public Engagement  
NFLM 3411, CRN 4568  
Fall 2018, Thursdays, 8:00 PM - 9:50 PM  
Building: 6 East 16th Street, Room: 913

Instructor: Joel Neville Anderson

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (Room: 1621), and by appointment

### **Course Description:**

The Art of Film lays the foundation for understanding the practical techniques, specialized language, and unique aesthetics of motion pictures. We will explore the expressive range of cinematic language and the ways in which complex emotions and ideas are communicated to the viewer. Students analyze the basic elements of cinematic form as seen through essential properties of the medium including editing, cinematography, production design, and sound design and gain an appreciation of film history and for the impact of culture and technology on the development of the cinema. The filmmaking process and the impact of the “industry” on this collaborative art are also studied. While the work of the director is only one aspect studied, we discuss various films by directors including Michelangelo Antonioni, Alfred Hitchcock, Yasujiro Ozu, Agnès Varda, and Orson Welles among many others. Supplemented by readings, students acquire a general familiarity with the range of cinematic expression and become better prepared to form surer and sounder judgments about our own film experiences and to speak and write about those judgments with greater clarity and skill.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student should possess the following abilities and knowledge:

1. An understanding of the communicative elements of the cinema and ability to identify and articulate constituent elements of both form and content.
2. Knowledge of filmmaking as a craft and a collaborative process.
3. A greater fluency in the communicative language of cinema and an ability to reflect critically and speak with confidence about a wide range of films.
4. An appreciation for the ways in which formal aspects of film are grounded within a cultural, historical and/or social context.
5. An appreciation for the technical apparatus of the cinema as well as the industrial complex that surrounds it.
6. An appreciation for modes and aesthetics of filmic expression beyond the conventional narrative.
7. Refined writing and oral presentations skills.

### **Reading and Viewing Assignments:**

All texts assigned for reading are either downloadable as PDFs via Canvas or on reserve at the New School List Center Library (6 East 16th Street, 8th Floor). All films and videos assigned for viewing are available as a DVD on reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library (55 West 13th Street, 2nd Floor) or via online streaming platforms as indicated by the instructor. After completing the weekly reading and viewing assignments, bring your own copies of the relevant readings to class (either as a printed copy or PDF on a laptop or tablet) to reference during lecture and discussion. Whatever device you choose to watch the viewing material on I encourage you to do so in an environment free of distractions so you may concentrate on the creators' work. Texts and film/video offered on weekly basis as "Recommended" sources are optional and meant for students with a particular interest in the topic, possibly for later reference as part of the Final Essay assignment.

### **Required Texts:**

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 10th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012). (Editions 9 through 11 will be acceptable for the course, and students are recommended to acquire a personal copy. Please refer to chapter titles rather than page numbers for assigned readings from the *Film Art* text.)

### **Film Analysis and Reading Responses:**

Each week, students are required to respond to the assigned viewing and reading material, analyzing the form and content of given cinematic works, and incorporating the historical contexts, theories, or arguments of the texts. This is not an informal film review, but an opportunity to demonstrate the modes of analysis we are learning in the course, while offering your own thoughtful observations and questions. Each written response should address at least one film/video and at least one text assigned for that week. Responses will be graded based on the degree to which they analyze and respond to the material together in an integrated and cohesive manner. Printed copies of journal entries are due every week at the start of class, and should be a minimum of 400 words in length (double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with simple citations including author and page number[s] in parentheses). I will return these Film Analysis and Reading Responses to you with comments on a regular basis throughout the semester. Students can miss one response out of the ten total due and still receive full credit. If you miss more than one response please discuss a makeup assignment with me. *Due at the start of class beginning the second week, and due every following week except the day the Shot Breakdown and Scene Segmentation is due, and several weeks before the end of the semester to give students time to work on their Final Essay.*

### **Shot Breakdown and Scene Segmentation:**

Students are required to put their skills of cinematic analysis to intensive use in this assignment, in which they select a film from a list of potential titles, and using extensive application of terminology learned until midway through the semester, create a detailed breakdown of each shot in a scene, as well as an overview of the scenes that compose the film. Students will all work on different films and scenes. This detail-oriented assignment will be good preparation for the

cohesive cinematic analysis required in the Final Essay. *Due at the start of class midway through the semester.*

### **Final Essay:**

Students are required to write a final essay analyzing a cinematic work and topic related to material from the class (10-12 pages, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, Chicago Manual of Style citations). I will distribute a prompt listing potential films/videos and topics, along with further guidelines. Students may consult with me during office hours to choose from the suggested films/videos/topics and discuss their approach, or propose a new one. Students are encouraged to choose which works and theoretical models they engage with, but if you would like to pursue titles and topics outside the list of prompts, it must be discussed with and approved by the instructor in advance. The “Recommended” readings each week will be useful in furthering students’ original research. *Due at the start of the final class meeting.*

### **Grading:**

Attendance/Participation: 25% of final grade  
Film Analysis and Reading Responses: 25%  
Shot Breakdown and Scene Segmentation: 15%  
Final Paper: 35%

### **Policies and Guidelines:**

- Attendance: Your attendance at each class is mandatory, and repeated absences will result in a lowered grade. Please clear any expected absences with me in advance, and provide appropriate documentation (such as record of a medical visit). If you do miss class, please check with me or your peers to catch up on assignments and handouts. Arriving to class after the start time on two occasions will be recorded as one absence. Arriving more than 20 minutes after the start time will be considered an absence.
- Preparation and Participation: Approximately two to three hours of screening material, in addition to one to two articles or book chapters will be assigned each week. Students are expected to review the material in detail, and come prepared to participate in discussion. Your thoughts are valuable to me and your fellow students. Students are responsible for all assignments, even if they are absent, unless otherwise discussed.
- Classroom Technology: Laptops or tablets may be used during class for note-taking and referring to class readings only, unless otherwise discussed. Laptops or tablets may also be used during class presentations. Use of mobile phones is not permitted, and will result in students being asked to leave the classroom and a lowered participation score.
- Email Correspondence: Please check your university email regularly for announcements and updates to the syllabus and assignments.
- Canvas: Canvas will be an important resource for this class, and students should check it regularly for announcements.
- Instructor Delay: In rare instances, the instructor may be delayed arriving to class due to an emergency. If the instructor has not arrived by the time class is scheduled to start, students

must wait a minimum of thirty minutes for the instructor's arrival before leaving. In the event that the instructor will miss class entirely, a sign will be posted at the classroom.

### **Academic Honesty and Integrity:**

- Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university.
- Students are responsible for understanding the University's policy on academic honesty and integrity and must make use of proper citations of sources for writing papers, creating, presenting, and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research. It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures specific to their discipline for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others. The full text of the policy, including adjudication procedures, is found at <http://www.newschool.edu/policies/>.
- Resources regarding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it can be found on the Learning Center's website: <http://www.newschool.edu/university-learning-center/student-resources/>
- Intellectual Property Rights: <http://www.newschool.edu/provost/accreditation-policies/>
- Grade Policies: <http://www.newschool.edu/registrar/academic-policies/>

### **Resources:**

The university provides many resources to help students achieve academic and artistic excellence. These resources include:

- University Libraries: <http://library.newschool.edu/>
- University Learning Center: <http://www.newschool.edu/learning-center/>
- University Disabilities Service: [www.newschool.edu/student-disability-services/](http://www.newschool.edu/student-disability-services/)

In keeping with the university's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to contact Student Disability Service (SDS). SDS will conduct an intake and, if appropriate, the Director will provide an academic accommodation notification letter for you to bring to me. At that point, I will review the letter with you and discuss these accommodations in relation to this course.

### **Religious Accommodations:**

If you require academic accommodations for a religious observance, please speak with me as soon as possible to consider a reasonable modification.

### **Certificate Students:**

This course may count as an elective toward the Certificate in Film Production. If you are a non-credit student planning to pursue the Certificate, make sure you are registered as a Certificate student (before the second week of class). Students must be registered as a Certificate Student in order to count this class towards their requirements and students must complete all assignments and do minimally the equivalent of "B" work for the class to earn an AP (approved) grade.

Simply turning in a final project is not enough. For more information please contact: [mediastudiesadvising@newschool.edu](mailto:mediastudiesadvising@newschool.edu).

### **CT Labs:**

The CT lab is a critical course designation for continuing education, non-credit courses to account for the myriad activities, projects, and work that happens outside the NFLM and NSRW coursework. In each enrolled NFLM or NSRW course, students will be assigned projects that include an average of three hours a week of outside commitment. These projects and assignments can include but are not limited to:

- Weekly independent screenings of full length and short form films and videos.
- Group oriented film shootings that take place outside of class time at locations on campus and away from The New School, usually on weekends.
- Planning and attending group production meetings (including pre production and post production project meetings) outside of scheduled class time.
- Scheduling independent and group sessions to edit projects in designated on-campus labs outside of class.
- Attending events such as film festivals, screenings, lectures, and symposiums both on campus and in the NYC region that relate to your course material.
- Visiting museums, places of business, and cultural centers in the NYC region that relate to your course materials.

Please refer to your course syllabus for how these projects, events, and tasks fold into your assignments and impact your grading.

### **Student Course Ratings:**

During the last two weeks of the semester, students are asked to provide feedback for each of their courses through an online survey. They cannot view grades until providing feedback or officially declining to do so. Course evaluations are a vital space where students can speak about the learning experience. It is an important process which provides valuable data about the successful delivery and support of a course or topic to both the faculty and administrators. Instructors rely on course rating surveys for feedback on the course and teaching methods, so they can understand what aspects of the class are most successful in teaching students, and what aspects might be improved or changed in future. Without this information, it can be difficult for an instructor to reflect upon and improve teaching methods and course design. In addition, program/department chairs and other administrators review course surveys. Instructions are available online at <http://www.newschool.edu/provost/course-evaluations-student-instructions.pdf>.

### **Course Schedule:**

(Note: all readings/screenings should be completed *before* the class for which they are assigned)

### **Week 1 (August 30): Course Overview and Introduction (between Lumière and Méliès)**

### **Week 2 (September 6): Art, Technology, and Economy**

Watch: *Perfumed Nightmare* (Kidlat Tahimik, 1977), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.

Read: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 10th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012), Ch. 1.

**\* Film Analysis and Reading Response due today and all following weeks unless noted.**

### **Week 3 (September 13): Narrative Form**

Watch: *The Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948, streaming at [Kanopy](#)), *Do the Right Thing* (Spike Lee, 1989, on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library).

Read: Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art*, Ch. 2-3.

### **Week 4 (September 20): *Mise-en-scène***

Watch: *Salaam Bombay!* (Mira Nair, 1988), *The Rules of the Game* (Jean Renoir, 1939). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.

Read: *Film Art*, Ch. 4.

### **Week 5 (September 27): Cinematography**

Watch: *Ugetsu* (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1953, streaming at [Kanopy](#)), *Solaris* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972, on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library).

Read: *Film Art*, Ch. 5. Chika Kinoshita, “Choreography of Desire: Analyzing Kinuyo Tanaka’s Acting in Mizoguchi’s Films,” *Screening the Past* (2001).

### **Week 6 (October 4): Editing Continuity and Making Meaning**

Watch: *October* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1928), *Gold Diggers of 1933* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1933). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.

Read: *Film Art*, Ch. 6. Sergei Eisenstein, “Methods of Montage.”

**\* Guidelines for Shot Breakdown and Scene Segmentation assignment distributed today.**

### **Week 7 (October 11): Editing Discontinuity and Generating Dissensus**

Watch: *Late Spring* (Yasujirō Ozu, 1949), *Daisies* (Vera Chytilová, 1966). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.

Read: Abé Markus Nornes, “The Riddle of the Vase: Ozu Yasujirō’s *Late Spring* (1949),” in Alastair Phillips and Julian Stringer (ed.) *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts* (New York: Routledge, 2007). Petra Hanáková, “Voices from Another World: Feminine Space and Masculine Intrusion in *Sedmikrásky* and *Vražda ing. Čerta*” in Anikó Imre (ed.), *East European Cinemas* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 63-80.

### **Week 8 (October 18): Sound**

Watch: *À nous la liberté* (René Clair, 1931), *Modern Times* (Charlie Chaplin, 1936). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.

Read: *Film Art*, Ch. 7.

### **Week 9 (October 25): Realism and the Elements of Film Form and Style**

Watch: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941), *The Gleaners and I* (Agnès Varda, 2000). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.

Read: *Film Art*, Ch. 8-9.

**\* Shot Breakdown and Scene Segmentation assignment due today. (No Film Analysis and Reading Response due.)**

### **Week 10 (November 1): Documentary Exposition and Poetics**

Watch: *Chronicle of a Summer* (Edgar Morin, Jean Rouch, 1961, streaming on [Kanopy](#)), *The Square* (Jehane Noujaim, 2013, on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library).

Read: *Film Art*, Ch. 10. Bill Nichols, “Ch. 6: How Can We Differentiate Among Documentaries? Categories, Models, and Expository and Poetic Modes of Documentary Film,” in *Introduction to Documentary*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 142-171.

**\* Potential films/videos and topics for Final Essay assignment distributed today.**

### **Week 11 (November 8): Documentary Observation and Participation**

Watch: *Salesman* (Albert and David Maysles, 1969, streaming at [Kanopy](#)), *The Emperor’s Naked Army Marches On* (Kazuo Hara, 1987, on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library).

Read: Bill Nichols, “Ch. 7: How Can We Describe the Observational, Participatory, Reflexive, and Performative Modes of Documentary Film?” in *Introduction to Documentary*, 172-211.

### **Week 12 (November 15): The Avant-garde**

Watch: *Il x 14* (James Benning, 1977, on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library), *Cinnamon* (Kevin Jerome Everson, 2006), *Undefeated* (Everson, 2008), both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library on the DVD “Broad Daylight and Other Times: Selected Works of Kevin Jerome Everson.”

Read: Maya Deren, “Cinematography: The Creative Use of Reality.” Scott MacDonald, “Exploring the New West: An Interview with James Benning,” *Film Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 2-15. Claudrena Harold, “A Conversation with Kevin Jerome Everson,” *Callaloo* 37, no. 4, (2014): 802-808.

**\* Last Film Analysis and Reading Response due today.**

**\* Students should have chosen topics for the Final Essay by today.**

### **Week 13 (November 22): No class—enjoy**

### **Week 14 (November 29): Form, Style, and Ideology**

Watch: *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (Chantal Akerman, 1976, on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library).

Read: *Film Art*, Ch. 11. Ivone Margulies, “The Politics of the Singular,” in *Nothing Happens: Chantal Akerman’s Hyperrealist Everyday* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996): 1-20.

### **Week 15 (December 6): “Global” Cinema and Circulation**

Watch: *Chungking Express* (Wong Kar-Wai, 1994), *35 Shots of Rum* (Claire Denis, 2008). Both on DVD reserve at the New School Performing Arts Library.  
Read: *Film Art*, Ch. 12.

**Week 16 (December 13): Conclusion and Final Screening**

**\* Final Essays due at start of class today.**