

History of Film Art

School of Film and Media Studies

Purchase College, State University of New York

CIN1030, CRN 47066

Fall 2020, Wednesdays, 3:00 PM - 6:40 PM

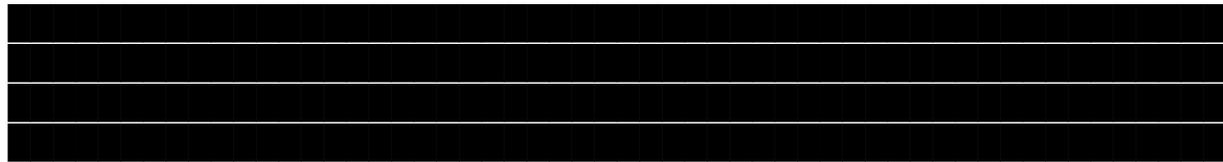
Conducted Remotely

Instructor: Prof. Joel Neville Anderson

Email: joel.anderson@purchase.edu

Office Hours: Schedule a time here: <https://calendly.com/joelnanderson/office-hours>

Zoom link:



Course Description:

An overview of the development of film as an art and as an industry from silent to digital cinema. Students learn the stylistic, narrative, and industrial developments of cinema through the analysis of classic films.

Course Goals/Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of film history from the 1890s to the present.
2. Understand and employ vocabulary terms and concepts corresponding to film form, style, and analysis.
3. Be able to perform analyses of film sequences that describe how aspects of cinematography, editing, mise-en-scène, and sound work together to produce particular meanings and effects.
4. Be prepared to integrate a historically grounded understanding of the relationship between the work of the screenwriter and director into their future creative projects.

Reading and Viewing Assignments:

Readings will be posted on Moodle as PDFs. Films/videos assigned for viewing outside class will be available via online streaming (using the library website or other platforms freely accessible to students), as specified by the instructor. (Whatever devices you choose to use to watch films/videos outside of class, 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 a 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.

Discussion Platform:

Roughly every other week, students will be required to respond to the assigned viewing and reading material while reflecting on your own creative process, 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. Your posts to Moodle should be informal, offering thoughtful observations and questions (300 words minimum) based on a prompt question by the day of class. The following day, students are required to post a response to a classmate's post with further analysis (100 words minimum). Each written response should directly address at least one viewing or reading for the week, and must be constructive and respectful. Students can miss one response out of the seven total due and still receive full credit. *The first post is due by 9 AM on the day of class, and the second post is due by 9 AM two days after class.*

Midterm Project: Shot Breakdown and Scene Description:

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, and then adapt that shot breakdown to scene description that could appear in a script. 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, as well as future screenwriting projects. *Due midway through the semester, submitted via Moodle.*

Final Essay:

Students are required to write a final essay analyzing a cinematic work and topic related to material from the class (7 pages, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, Chicago Manual of Style citations with footnotes and a bibliography: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html). 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, submitted via Moodle.*

Grading:

Participation: 25% of final grade
Discussion Platform Contributions: 20%
Midterm Project: 20%
Final Paper: 35%

Policies and Guidelines:

- Respecting Yourself and Others: You are expected to treat others in the class with respect. This means listening to their words and choosing your own with care.
- 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.
- Attendance: Your attendance at each class is mandatory. A single absence will be excused without question, however repeated absences will result in a lowered letter grade: 2 will result in a B as a maximum possible grade, 3 in a C, and 4 absences will result in automatic failure of the course. 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. Excusing absences will require consultation with the instructor and may require documentation, such as a doctor's note following a medical visit. If you do miss class, please also check with the instructor or your peers to catch up on assignments and handouts—this will be your responsibility.
- Breaks: There will generally be a short break during class. Returning after the class resumes will count as a late arrival. Please only leave the class outside of this set break time in case of emergencies. It is not necessary to ask for the instructor's permission, but please return within five minutes, and do not leave more than once. Inform the instructor at the start of the semester if you require an accommodation.
- Email Correspondence: Please check your university email regularly for announcements and updates to the syllabus and assignments.
- Moodle: Moodle 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, students will be contacted in advance via email or a sign will be posted at the classroom.
- Zoom Usage and Technology Needs:
 - Remain engaged during lectures and discussions conducted via the Zoom video chat platform, and keep your webcam on as much as your situation permits.
 - When attending class via Zoom, please do your best to contribute to a positive and accepting learning environment. As much as possible, create a dedicated space for class time, with ample light. Find a comfortable position and physical posture, feel free to use a virtual background, and use your own best judgment regarding attire, etc.
 - Be prepared to take notes, whether using a desktop app or a notebook and pen/pencil.
 - Do not become distracted by other desktop windows or electronic devices. Please keep mobile phones in a separate location or ensure they are turned off.
 - Please adjust how your name displays on the Zoom interface to reflect how you would like to be addressed (including for example your preferred pronouns).

- Keep track of your Zoom meeting links and passwords. It's helpful to store links in a calendar application with each class or meeting entered into the correct day/time.
- If you encounter any issues with internet connectivity or computer performance, please quit any unnecessary applications or temporarily mute your webcam.
- Please contact the instructor if you have any issues regarding access to the internet or a reliable computer in order to find a solution in coordination with Campus Technology Services (CTS): <https://www.purchase.edu/offices/cts/>
- If any difficulties arise, don't hesitate to inform the instructor in order to discuss potential accommodations. We'll figure it out together.

Academic Integrity Policy:

The Purchase College academic integrity policy explicitly forbids cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another person and the representation of them as one's own original work. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the definition of plagiarism and the acceptable methods of attribution. These are serious matters and you need to be aware of what is and is not permissible. See <https://www.purchase.edu/offices/community-standards/student-code-of-conduct/section-a-academic-integrity/index.php> and related links for more information.

Tutoring Support:

All students at Purchase College can take advantage of tutoring services in the Learning Center. These are free peer-to-peer tutoring sessions in a variety of subjects and in writing across the disciplines. I encourage you to take advantage of this service to help you excel in this class, as well as your other courses. Please visit the Learning Center website for more information: <https://www.purchase.edu/offices/learning-center/>.

Community Health During COVID-19:

To ensure that each of us has a healthy and safe learning experience, all students are required to remain informed and follow Purchase College Policy and/or any departmental, local, state, or federal laws, rules or regulations for attending classes on campus and in a remote learning environment. Within courses that involve in-person contact, all students, faculty members, staff, and visitors are required to adhere to the expectations outlined on the College's COVID-19 website: <https://www.purchase.edu/live/blurbs/2689-social-distancing-and-face-covering-policy>. Failure to comply with requirements (e.g. wearing masks, maintaining social distancing) will result in the request to leave the classroom for that in-person class session. Students may also be referred to the Office of Community Standards: <https://www.purchase.edu/offices/community-standards/>.

Accessibility:

The Office of Disability Resources collaborates directly with students who identify with disabilities to create accommodation plans, including testing accommodations, in order for students to access course content and validly demonstrate learning. For students who may require

accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Resources as soon as possible: (914) 251-6035, ODR@purchase.edu (Student Services Building, 316A), www.purchase.edu/odr.

Counseling:

Help is available at the Counseling Center on campus for difficulties with emotional wellbeing and psychological functioning. If distress is interfering in relationships, academics, work, or daily life, confidential support can be had right away. Contact the Counseling Center at (914) 251-6390 or COU.counseling.center@purchase.edu on M-F, 9 AM - 5 PM. The Counseling Center's website lists after hours emergency resources for mental health crises, sexual assault or interpersonal violence emergencies (Campus Advocacy Services), self-help, and additional coping resources. <https://www.purchase.edu/counseling-center>.

Religious Accommodations:

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

Course Schedule:

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

Week 1 (September 2): Course Overview and Introduction (Early Cinema's Pre-Histories)

Class format: Synchronous via Zoom (link provided at top of syllabus).

In-class screening: *Fred Ott's Sneeze* (Edison Studios, 1894); *Demolition of a Wall* (1895, Auguste and Louis Lumière); *Baby Meal* (1895, Lumière brothers); *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station* (Lumière brothers, 1896); *Mounted Police Charge* (Edison Studios, 1896); *The Vanishing Lady* (Georges Méliès, 1896); *The Gay Shoe Clerk* (Porter, 1903); *Decasia* (Bill Morrison, 2002, excerpt); *Dawson City: Frozen in Time* (Bill Morrison, 2016, excerpt); *Black Drop* (Simon Starling, 2012).

Week 2 (September 9): The Cinema of Attractions

Class format: Asynchronous (no class meeting via Zoom today).

Read by today: Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History* (3rd edition), 1-21; Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction[s]: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde."

Watch by today: *A Trip to the Moon* (Georges Méliès, 1902); *The Great Train Robbery* (Edwin S. Porter, 1903); assorted Lumière brothers shorts; *Making an American Citizen* (Alice Guy-Blaché, 1912); *Falling Leaves* (Alice Guy-Blaché, 1912).

In-class screening: *The Lonely Villa* (D.W. Griffith, 1909); *The Lonedale Operator* (D.W. Griffith, 1911); *Musketeers of Pig Alley* (Griffith, 1912); *Suspense* (Phillips Smalley & Lois Weber, 1913); *A House Divided* (Alice Guy-Blaché, 1913); *Within Our Gates* (Oscar Micheaux, 1915, clip).

Recommended reading: Allyson Nadia Field, introduction to *Uplift Cinema: The Emergence of African American Film and the Possibility of Black Modernity*; Jennifer M. Bean, "Toward a Feminist Historiography of Early Cinema."

Recommended viewing: *Body and Soul* (Oscar Micheaux, 1920).

*** Discussion Platform: First post (300 words) is due on Moodle by 9 AM today, with second post (100 words) responding to another student due on Friday, September 11, 9 AM.**

Week 3 (September 16): Labor and Aural Possibilities/Limitations

Class format: Synchronous via Zoom (link provided at top of syllabus).

Read by today: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (12th edition), Chapter 7.

Watch by today: *Illusions* (Julie Dash, 1982); *Modern Times* (Charlie Chaplin, 1936).

Recommended viewing: *À nous la liberté* (René Clair, 1931).

Recommended reading: René Clair, “The Art of Sound”; Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Grigori Alexandrov, “Statement on Sound”; Béla Balázs, “Sound”.

Week 4 (September 23): Mise-en-scène and Realism

Class format: Asynchronous (no class meeting via Zoom today).

Read by today: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (12th edition), Chapter 4.

Watch by today: *Salaam Bombay!* (Mira Nair, 1988).

Recommended viewing: *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948).

Recommended reading: Cesare Zavattini, “Some Ideas on the Cinema”; André Bazin, “An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism”.

*** Discussion Platform: First post (300 words) is due on Moodle by 9 AM today, with second post (100 words) responding to another student due on Friday, September 25, 9 AM.**

Week 5 (September 30): Making Meaning through Montage

Class format: Synchronous via Zoom (link provided at top of syllabus).

Read by today: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (12th edition), Chapter 6; Abé Markus Nornes, “The Riddle of the Vase: Ozu Yasujiro’s *Late Spring* (1949)”.

Watch by today: *Late Spring* (Yasujiro Ozu, 1949).

Recommended viewing: *Daisies* (Vera Chytilová, 1966); *October* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1928).

Recommended reading: Petra Hanáková, “Voices from Another World: Feminine Space and Masculine Intrusion in *Sedmikrásky* and *Vražda ing. Čerta*”; Sergei Eisenstein, “Methods of Montage”.

*** Guidelines for Midterm Project: Shot Breakdown and Scene Description distributed today.**

Week 6 (October 7): Complicating Film Narrative

Class format: Asynchronous (no class meeting via Zoom today).

Read by today: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (12th edition), Chapter 3; André Bazin, “The Evolution of the Language of Cinema”.

Watch by today: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941).

Recommended viewing: *Vagabond* (Agnes Varda, 1985).

Recommended reading: Rick Altman, “Deep-focus sound: Citizen Kane and the radio aesthetic”; Barbara Quart, “Agnes Varda: A Conversation”; David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (12th edition), Chapter 8.

- * **Discussion Platform: First post (300 words) is due on Moodle by 9 AM today, with second post (100 words) responding to another student due on Friday, October 9, 9 AM.**
- * **Schedule one-on-one meeting with instructor this week to discuss Midterm Project: Shot Breakdown and Scene Description: <https://calendly.com/joelnanderson/office-hours>**

Week 7 (October 14): Modes of Documentary

Class format: Synchronous via Zoom (link provided at top of syllabus).

Read by today: Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (2nd edition), “Chapter 6: How Can We Differentiate Among Documentaries? Categories, Models, and Expository and Poetic Modes of Documentary Film” and “Chapter 7: How Can We Describe the Observational, Participatory, Reflexive, and Performative Modes of Documentary Film?”

Watch by today: *The Infiltrators* (Cristina Ibarra and Alex Rivera, 2019).

Recommended viewing: *Nanook of the North* (Robert Flaherty, 1922); *Housing Problems* (Arthur Elton and Edgar Anstey, 1935); *Democracy Now!* segment on *The Infiltrators* (2019).

Recommended reading: Fatimah Tobing Rony, “Taxidermy and Romantic Ethnography: Robert Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North*.”

Week 8 (October 21): Illusion Machines

Class format: Asynchronous (no class meeting via Zoom today).

Read by today: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (12th edition), Chapter 1.

Watch by today: *This Is Not a Film* (Jafar Panahi and Mojtaba Mirtahmasb, 2011).

Recommended viewing: *Holy Motors* (Leos Carax, 2012).

- * **Discussion Platform: First post (300 words) is due on Moodle by 9 AM today, with second post (100 words) responding to another student due on Friday, October 23, 9 AM.**

Week 9 (October 28): Writing Workshop for Final Essay with Guest from Learning Center

Class format: Synchronous via Zoom (link provided at top of syllabus).

Recommended reading: Hua Hsu, “A Guide to Thesis-Writing and a Guide to Life”; Zadie Smith, “10 Rules of Writing”.

- * **Midterm Project: Shot Breakdown and Scene Description due today via Moodle.**
- * **Potential films/videos and topics for Final Essay assignment distributed by today.**

Week 10 (November 4): Cinematography, Performance, and Dancing with a Camera

Class format: Asynchronous (no class meeting via Zoom today).

Read by today: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (12th edition), Chapter 5; Usha Iyer, “Dance Musicalization: Proposing a choreomusicological approach to Hindi film song-and-dance sequences”.

Watch by today: *Puppet* (Amiya Chakrabarty and Nitin Bose, 1957).

Recommended viewing: *I Am Cuba* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1964); *Gold Diggers of 1933* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1933).

- * **Discussion Platform: First post (300 words) is due on Moodle by 9 AM today, with second post (100 words) responding to another student due on Friday, November 6, 9 AM.**

*** Schedule one-on-one meeting with instructor this week to discuss Final Essay topic:**
<https://calendly.com/joelnanderson/office-hours>

Week 11 (November 11): Genre and Adaptation

Class format: Synchronous via Zoom (link provided at top of syllabus).

Read by today: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (12th edition), Chapter 9; N. Frank Ukadike, “The Hyena’s Last Laugh: interview with Djibril Diop Mambety”.

Watch by today: *The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun* (Djibril Diop Mambéty, 1999); *Hyenas* (Djibril Diop Mambéty, 1992).

Recommended viewing: *High Noon* (Fred Zinnemann, 1952); *The Grandmaster* (Wong Kar-wai, 2013).

Recommended reading: Beti Ellerson, “Remembering Djibril Diop Mambéty on the 20th Anniversary of His Death”; Jessica Ka Yee Chan, “Anticipating action: The evolving grammar of action and montage in Hong Kong cinema”.

Week 12 (November 18): Redefining Cinematic Language

Class format: Synchronous via Zoom (link provided at top of syllabus).

Read by today: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (12th edition), Chapter 2; bell hooks, “The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators”.

Watch by today: *The Sea is a Stereo, part II: Paris Without a Sea* (Mounira Al Solh, 2007-2008); *Rawane’s Song* (Mounira Al Solh, 2007); *Daughters of the Dust* (Julie Dash, 1991).

Recommended viewing: *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966).

Recommended reading: Manthia Diawara, “Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance”; Sara Kaplan, “Souls at the Crossroads, Africans on the Water: The Politics of Diasporic Melancholia”; Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, “Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World”.

*** Students should have chosen topics for the Final Essay by today and approved with instructor.**

Week 13 (November 25): No class during Autumn Recess—enjoy

Week 14 (December 2): Criticism, Politics, Freedom

Class format: Synchronous via Zoom (link provided at top of syllabus).

Read by today: Stuart Hall, “Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities”; Serge Daney, “The Tracking Shot in Kapo”.

Watch by today: *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Stephen Frears, 1985).

Recommended viewing: *The Stuart Hall Project* (John Akomfrah, 2013).

Recommended reading: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (12th edition), Chapter 12.

Week 15 (December 9): Cinema Vanguard and Experimental Approaches

Class format: Asynchronous (no class meeting via Zoom today).

Read by today: Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”; Julia Erhart, “Performing Memory: Compensation and Redress in Contemporary Feminist First-Person Documentary”.

Watch by today: *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Maya Deren, 1943); *Window Water Baby Moving* (Stan Brakhage, 1959); *Fuses* (Carolee Schneemann (1964-66); *Amy!* (Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, 1979); *The Body Beautiful* (Ngozi Onwurah, 1991); *Abstract* (Hito Steyerl, 2012); *Workers Leaving the Job Site* (Kevin Jerome Everson, 2013); *ABID* (Pramod Pati, 1970); *In My Language* (Mel Baggs, 2007); *Atlantiques* (Mati Diop, 2009); *Dislocation Blues* (Sky Hopinka, 2017); *The Labyrinth* (Laura Huertas Millán, 2018); *Sojourner* (Cauleen Smith, 2018).

Recommended viewing: *Zorns Lemma* (Hollis Frampton, 1970).

Recommended reading: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (12th edition), Chapter 10; Laura Huertas Millán and Eileen Myles interview; Pooja Rangan, “‘Having a Voice’: Toward an Autistic Counterdiscourse of Documentary”.

*** Discussion Platform: First post (300 words) is due on Moodle by 9 AM today, with second post (100 words) responding to another student due on Friday, December 11, 9 AM.**

Week 16 (December 16): Final Class

Class format: Synchronous via Zoom (link provided at top of syllabus).

Watch by today: *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2010).

*** Final Essays due by start of class today via Moodle.**