



Teaching Film

"I can connect with whoever I want to connect with in the world. And I can write my own script. I don't have to follow the rules. I can sort of be unconventional."

-Lynn Shelton

Big Ideas

CATHARSIS is a HUMAN need

Shared Stories

Structure

Empathy

Diversity of Voice

Technique

Course Description

For some people the art of Cinema isn't just an entity that exists, but a powerful force that has influenced them all their lives. They may not even know it. Most everyone has cinema/film/movies form an integral part of their lives since before they can remember.

What was the first movie you saw in a theater? Do you remember? What about a film you watched over and over and over again as a child? What are some of your favorite quotes? What are some of your favorite quotes from films you've never seen?

I remember spending countless hours playing Star Wars in the backyard with my brothers and neighbor kids. Then I remember watching children I babysat play Peter Pan and Rufio. Now my own child plays Cars where ever he goes- and yes- he gets to be Lightning McQueen (unless he wants to be Mater).

The cinema industry is such an influence of our everyday lives; it's almost impossible to imagine what life would be like without film. And that's why this course is such a great one to add to your cannon of General Undergraduate Requirements. Because you already understand this thing called Cinema so intimately, and now I'm going to try and give you some tools to be able to interpret that knowledge you already have into analytic discourse about the purpose of catharsis and story and the place those two, ancient, human rights hold in this very modern world. We will also look at technique, style, and form. And hopefully answer a couple questions about what *makes* film such an important part of humanity.

"Cinema is truth, twenty four times a second. And every cut a lie"

-Jean-Luc Godard



Photo Credit: Screenshot from *Les Bonnes Femmes*, Jean-Luc Godard, May 1966

Course Objectives

Participants who successfully complete this course should be able to:

1. Examine and summarize the basic/introductory techniques in filmmaking from the perspective of the designer, director, cinematographer, and screenwriter. (Viewing films with class during lab time)
2. Explain critically some of the historic influences on modern directors and movies. (Read articles, view informative webcasts, and group discussion)
3. Identify and defend or critique modern, non-traditional filmmakers predominantly based in the United States (Lecture and group discussion)
4. Create a short film using a smart phone and free apps (Online learning tools and final project)
5. Discuss and defend the necessity of film creation and distribution (Summary of class objectives through dialogue)



“To be an artist means to never avert one’s eyes.”

-Akira Kurosawa

Photo Credit: Screen shot from *Rashomon*, Akira Kurosawa, December 1951

Topics by Week

Articles about GE and influence on Tim Burton, etc.

Look at Metropolis and Caligari

Class Discussion/Quiz

Film: Edward Scissorhands?

Article by Molly Ringwald, Article about Slumdog Millionaire

Week One: Historical Parallels

1. What is German Expressionism?
2. How was film the best portrayal of this form of resistance?
3. Why is it relevant now and who is most influenced by it?

Week Two: Growing up on the Silver Screen

1. Why are the “Coming of Age” films so important
2. What about genre? How does it define a generation/culture/group?

Week Three: Feeling the Feelings we Feel (Catharsis)

1. Why are some films so moving?
2. What tricks are used to suck us in? (Structure/Design)
3. What defines a “good” film?

Week Four: Story, Narrative, & Plot (Oh my!)

1. How do we tell stories? Is there a formula or a rule?
2. Is the most important part of the story HOW it is told?

Week Five: Documentary

1. Is film truth? Cinema Verité vs. Direct Cinema
2. Children’s Programming

Week Six: The New Turks (Mod)

1. Editing and breaking structures/rules
2. Experimental Film
3. Women as Directors (FINALLY)

Week Seven: Samurai Cinema

1. Why does cinematography matters?
2. The art of beauty (as defined through a lens)

Week Eight: Cell Phone Cinema

1. How to make a film on your phone with free apps.
2. Technology leveling the playing field

Week Nine: Appropriation vs. Inspired By

1. The best steal from the best.
2. When do we acknowledge the inspiration?
3. What is the artists duty to humanity?

Week Ten: The Audience

1. What is the responsibility and expectation of the audience?
2. How do you choose films? How do you watch them?
3. It's okay to just be entertained, right?