

Film and Media Studies Courses for Spring 2016



FAMS 101: Introduction to Film & Media Studies

This is a foundational course that introduces students to basic concepts, theories and methods that are central to film and media studies. We will study the histories and genres of cinema and formal techniques such as lighting, editing and sound to develop a critical understanding of film as a dominant mode of representation. We will also study other forms of electronic media to gain a better understanding of the perspectives and practices of emerging technologies and forms of distribution. Through required weekly screenings, readings, writing and regular discussion, we will analyze these various kinds of screen media as they influence our world. Counts as the FAMS F (foundational) course.

Andy Smith

TR 1:15-2:30 PM & T 7:00-10:00 PM

FAMS 201: Making Media I

This hands-on course introduces students to the creative and technical aspects of media production, and models foundational practices in productive collaboration and ethical media making. The course provides a basic understanding of framing, composition, and storytelling through the use of sound and images. Students work with lighting, audio recording, digital video cameras, and non-linear editing through a series of hands-on assignments, readings, screenings, discussion of assigned exercises, and workshops with digital equipment. Prerequisite: FAMS 101 or permission of instructor. Counts as a FAMS P (practice) course.

Nandini Sikand

MW 1:10-4:00 PM

FAMS 202: Making Media 2

This hands-on production course is the second course in the media production sequence begun in FAMS 201 and builds on the fundamentals of lighting, sound, camera, and editing. Students will further develop their digital filmmaking techniques through increasingly complex projects. They will work on individual and collaborative media assignments that will culminate in a public screening at the end of the semester. Prerequisite: FAMS 201 or permission of instructor. Counts as a FAMS P (practice) course.

Adam MacHose

TR 1:15-4:00 PM

FAMS 260—Film Genres

This non-production film course is a tour through cinema via several influential genres. Exploring film pairings within notable cinematic types, we will look closely at the liberations and limitations of working within genre codes, and seek to learn the films' cultural impact and role in cinematic history. How are genres established, stretched, or subverted? Why do accomplished filmmakers seek out genre work? What political or social uses have certain genres served, and what new kinds of cinema emerge when genres combine? Among the possible genres studied are: Horror Film, Film Noir, the Western, the Musical, Screwball Comedy, the Road Movie, the Romance, Animation, Movies About the Movies, the Gangster film, and documentary. Prerequisite: FAMS101 or permission of instructor. Counts as a FAMS H (history) course.

Andy Smith

TR 9:30-12:15 PM

FAMS/ASIA 270: World Cinemas—Contemporary Chinese Cinema

Ever since film was introduced into China at the end of the nineteenth century, it has become a major medium of mass communication, and has played an important role in China's quest for modernity. Despite warfare, censorship, competition from Hollywood, and other obstacles witnessed by over one hundred years of development, the Chinese film industry is currently one of the most vibrant in the world. This course introduces its major developments and genres since 1980 by presenting representative films from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Students will study Chinese films both as a unique form of artistic expression and a powerful social and political discourse. All films have English subtitles. No knowledge of Chinese language necessary. Prerequisite: FAMS101 or permission of instructor. Counts as a FAMS H (history) course.

Li Yang

TR 11:00-12:15 PM & W 7:00-9:00 PM

FAMS/REES 270: Russian Cinema

Russian film has always blurred the line between art and politics. In the early years of the Soviet Union, Sergei Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin brought together avant-garde techniques and revolutionary imagery to create one of the most effective propaganda pieces of all time. The film also showed the world the rich potential of montage as a cinematic device, thus changing the course of film history. This tradition of innovating and politicizing narrative film continues today with Andrey Zvyagintsev's Leviathan, which combines sublime photography with a harsh critique of Putin-era corruption.

In this course, you will watch these and other films, produced between 1925 and today, with the goal of understanding the role of cinema in reflecting and shaping Russian culture. You will explore aesthetic movements, recurring themes and major directors. Our focus will often be on representations of marginalized groups – women, dissidents, and racial, ethnic and religious minorities. Within this sociohistorical context, you will learn the language of Russian film, as well as deepen your broader understanding of cinema, by analyzing how mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound create the system of a film. You will exercise these skills by constructing original and persuasive arguments in class discussion, film reviews and research essays.

Maggie Levantovskaya

MWF 10:00-10:50am (class) & W 7:00-9:50pm (lab)

FAMS 301: Making Media 3

This course extends the hands-on media making of the early production courses and is recommended for students hoping to 1) do a production-based capstone project in their senior year, and/or 2) sharpen their media work into a coherent, presentable portfolio. Students will practice advanced camera and sound techniques and learn to operate AVID and Premiere editing software on several complex assignments that will result in a diverse e-portfolio of finished media. Prerequisite: FAMS 202 or permission of instructor. Counts as a FAMS P (practice) course.

Andy Smith

TR 2:45-4:00 PM & W 1:10-4:00 PM

FAMS 320: The Spectre of Race

Governed by the metaphor of "spectre," this seminar looks at the tangle between race, images and technology. Beginning with early image-making and the birth of cinema, we will examine how ways of seeing, the rise of mass media in modern consumer society, and the relationship between visual culture and power are deeply intertwined to influence and create discourse on racialized difference. Examining race theories ranging from eugenics to discourses of diversity and post-raciality in the United States and beyond, we will study a range of media such as, but not limited to the shadow play of daguerreotypes, the high contrast of early ethnographic films, the gaze of Hollywood cinema and the counter gaze of progressive cinema and media to explore historical constructions of race and ethnicity, how they have influenced racialized difference on screen and how we see ourselves and others. Each student will submit several critical video essays and collaborate to create a peer-reviewed, online film and media, videographic journal. Prerequisite: FAMS/WGS 255 *Women Make Movies/Movies Make Women* or FAMS 270: *Poetics and Politics of Cinema*, or by permission of instructor. Counts as a FAMS T (theory) course.

Nandini Sikand

MF 11:00-12:15 class & W 11:00-12:50 lab

FAMS/PHIL 345: Philosophy of Film

This course is an examination of philosophical questions on the nature, interpretation, and evaluation of film. Topics may include: the distinctive nature of the moving image compared to other forms of representation; the issue of whether film is an art form; film authorship; the essence of film narrative; the role of the imagination in understanding and appreciating film; identification and emotional engagement with characters; film and morality; film and knowledge. Prerequisite: FAMS 101, plus one course in philosophy or permission of instructor. Counts as a FAMS T (theory) course.

Alessandro Giovannelli

MW 11:00-12:15 PM

Additional FAMS-related elective and recommended courses for Spring 2016

ART 155: Digital Photography (Greta Brubaker)		TR	9:30-12:20 PM
ART 255: Digital Photography 2 (Karina Skvirsky)		MW	1:10-4:00 PM
ENG 252: Writing for Television (Alix Ohlin)	W		1:10-4:00 PM
GER 431: Li & Film in Cont. German World (Lamb-Faffelberger)		TR	2:45-4:00 PM
REL 260: Global Muslim Literature and Film (Patel)	M		1:10-4:00 PM