

FIS 110 LANGUAGE OF FILM

Course Description: This is an introductory examination to the elements of cinema, specifically on its structure, terminology and meaning. We will ask the questions on what constitutes the language of cinema as a communication tool within contemporary times; relating to entertainment, globalization and geopolitics. To further clarify, the objective is to ponder the main questions: what is the meaning of cinema and how do we understand it through its language? Moreover, what is this language? And how does it affect culture and reality around one's self. Through the semester we will examine elements of what makes cinema a unique art form through textual and contextual analysis. The course will concentrate on the synthesis of the technical and aesthetic as well as the grammar and vocabulary of cinema.

Outcome and Assessment:

1. Develop a vocabulary of technical and aesthetic terminology.
2. Experience cinema from other regions and countries, i.e. the Global South, Europe, etc.
3. Develop analytical abilities to criticize and evaluate cinema and media in general.
4. Articulate the critical difference between cinema as a capital enterprise and its role in globalization.
5. Articulate the central conventions of genre.
6. Identify key narrative components of media in general.
7. Differentiate textual points that construct the language of cinema, i.e., cinematography, narrative, editing, mise-en-scène, etc.
8. Analyze film themes through contextual and ideological interpretations.
9. Develop a deep-rooted critical and aesthetic interpretation of cinema and its role in globalized media in general.
10. At the end of the semester, the student should have the in-depth capability to understand what the aesthetic, economic and cultural aspects of cinematic media are. The student will be able to differentiate the textual meanings of cinema and its conduct in relation to economic class, state control and regulation, neoliberal globalization and the digital realm.

SPECIAL NOTE: THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. HOWEVER, YOU WILL BE MADE AWARE OF ANY CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES IN ADVANCE, SHOULD THE NEED ARISE.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR FILM MAJORS ONLY: as a Film major, you will have opportunities to work on film productions and/or class or student projects. You are encouraged to participate, but not at the expense of your attendance and work for this class. Working on ANY production, at the university or professional, including the 48 HOUR or SPRING FLICKS, is not an acceptable excuse for missing class. You will be marked absent for the day and responsible for any assignment due.

SCREENING CONTENT:

Some of the screenings included in this course might contain sexually explicit and violent sequences.

All of which will be discussed in an intellectually responsible manner. Such material In detail will be flagged in advance of individual screenings.

You are not required to sit through a film or discussion that offends, disturbs or upsets you in any way. Please leave the room and inform the instructor of your situation. Your grade will not be affected.

The ideas and rhetoric expressed in any given material or discourse does not necessarily reflect the views of the instructor, the UNLV Film Department, the College of Fine Arts, or UNLV. Course lectures, materials and films are selected as an example of stylistic and/or rhetorical strategies and techniques of the subject of the class. The films, lectures and discussions are meant to be examined in the context of intellectual inquiry of the sort encountered in an academic setting.

CLASS METHDOLOGY

There will be no “traditional” final examination in this class. The pedagogical stake here will be on how you, as the student, will accumulate the knowledge attained and express it in your performance (i.e., readings, discussion, attendance), midterm and group project.

Let me reiterate, by “performance”, performance in class is being active; reading the materials for the week, participate in discussion, being physically in class and attentive. One can still be in class and not attentive, thus effecting your “performance”. This is the sort who never speak in class, arrive late constantly and are constantly overserving social media on their phone or laptop lost in other business. If you would rather be on your phone or on your laptop in social media during class, while the instructor is lecturing, it begs the question, “What are you doing here anyway?” “Why are you spending so much money to be somewhere else in class?”. It might benefit your process to take a class on-line.

My pedagogy is based on the class being active. Taken from academic-theorist Bell Hooks, I want to make you into active participants within the process, not passive consumers of the media and discussion. Within the discourse, you and I learn. Since discourse is the curriculum. In other words, I don’t want you just to sit there just watching the movies, documentaries, and listen to discussion only consuming. I want all students to be active reading the texts and discussing ideas—to have you—become a successful student that takes difficult themes and delicate issues to make better sense of reality and lead a better life.

Be aware, a successful grade at the end of the semester is contingent on your performance.

Therefore, your final grade is heavily dependent on your performance throughout the semester—*beginning from day one*. Let me reiterate again, good performance is arriving to class on time, participating in class discourse, raising your hand for a comment frequently, leading discussion, all is equally important toward a solid final grade. Moreover, it will better suit you if your final grade lies at the border between a letter grade (for example, 89.5%).

GRADING BREAKDOWN & ASSIGNMENTS

Participation in class discussion 15% Midterm 20% Quizzes: 15%
Final Group Project: 40% Attendance: 10%

Structure of Class

Discussion of the week's previous film will commence at the beginning of class after any announcements. A break will be given before the main film for the week is screened. You can leave class after the film is over (exception will be on the last class period). The theory here is that the media will still meddle and stir in your subconscious throughout the week. Thus, no discussion after each piece of media of the period. **YOU ARE REQUIRED TO WATCH THE MEDIA IN CLASS.**

You are required to write a quick and short reaction paragraph on a separate sheet of paper at the end of each screening. A quick, short paragraph with your immediate thoughts of the media. Write your name and turn it in before you leave. Everybody wants to leave class; I understand that though **do not write while the film is being presented nor come in with a prepared sheet.** These short paragraphs are vital. They are the proof you were in class on the day. **And it will help dictate discussion the next period.** If a film ends 30 minutes before the scheduled time to end class, please write your reaction sheet. We will not stay till the designated end time of class. At times, class will end at 4:55 pm; some days, it will at 4:10 pm, etc.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

You, as the student, will have sources of text you must read every week. You are responsible to keep up with each reading assignment. Please read the assignments after you have seen the media for you will have a fresh rendering of it in your subconscious. In order to fully get the most out of your experience with the curriculum, purchase/rent the book and read the chapters indicated. It will reflect on your grade with the discourse in class.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

FILM ART

Kristen Thompson and David Bordwell, 11th EDITION
MCG
ISBN: 9781259534959

Quizzes

Quizzes are unannounced and will happen on any class period after the first two weeks of class. No make-up quizzes will be allowed. If you are absent in a day there is a quiz, you can supplement the points in another manner, i.e., performance, essay, etc. Quizzes will be on the material assigned and viewed in class. It will consist of three to four short essay questions. An average of 4 to 7 quizzes will be given through the semester.

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCES AND TARDINESS WILL AFFECT YOUR 10% OF YOUR GRADE. Please be on time. There will be no tolerance for students who are late to class consistently. You will be given a time to be back from break after discussion. Please come back from break on time as well. Your attendance during the screening is observed. If you arrive toward the end of class, miss the entire period, write up a quick reaction paper and turn it in, you will be considered absent. With a “loose” curriculum as it is in this class, it is easy to become lax in your attitude. This applies to tardiness as well. Remember, every point is important toward your final grade.

Participation and Discussion

Your participation grade will depend on your willingness to state your ideas during the discussion and lecture from watching the films and reading the assigned papers and chapters. It would be best to continue to have a process of participation so the instructor could “place a name with a face” throughout the semester. The participation grade will be divided into two parts, one for the first half of the semester and the second. Here is a discussion rubric for your viewing.

	Grade = A	Grade = B	Grade = C	Grade = F
Discussion	Student takes an active role in classroom discussions, contributing relevant and insightful comments as well as posing thoughtful questions. Almost like stepping into a leadership position in class. Student comments reflect a deep understanding of the topic being discussed. It is evident, the student touches on topics, well thought out, in the reading scheduled for the week. Thus, it is clear, they did the reading. Student listens carefully to others, waits patiently for a turn to speak, and is respectful of other points of view. Never or rarely on phone in class; or concentrating on social media in class. Always on time and rarely absent. Keeps communication with instructor if any problematics arise.	Student willingly participates in classroom discussions, offering useful and relevant comments. Student comments indicate good understanding of the topic being discussed. Touches on reading, though not thorough. Rarely on phones at times or distracted through activities in laptop. Respectful to other students' views and comments. Is tardy and absent on occasion.	Student responds to instructor during classroom discussions, but seldom volunteers. Comments are sometimes not relevant to the discussion. It is evident did not clearly and attentively read chapters or essays scheduled for week. Is on phone occasionally, swiping through social media. Or on social media on laptop. Quickly turns page as soon as instructor passes by. During screenings, has phone or laptop on low brightness. Continues to be on social media. Student comments indicate less than clear understanding of the topic being discussed. Constantly tardy and absent.	Student may or may not willingly respond to instructor during classroom discussions, and never volunteers. Comments are seldom relevant to the discussion. Never raises hand to add to discussion. Never reads the chapters or essays scheduled. When asked a question, has no idea or gives a blank stare. Student always on phone constantly, swiping on social media, is distracted because of it; laughing, smiling, as if on another conversation in class. Distant within the class discourse. Student on laptop doing other work from another class. During screenings, always on phone or laptop on low screen brightness. Evident there is no interest on the topic at hand. Tardy to every class. Consistently absent to many of the periods throughout the semester.

Final Group Project

Instead of a “final exam”, you are to present a paper/presentation at the end of the semester with a colleague in class. Please begin the process of finding a student colleague in class by the third week. If you have not found a group by the third week of class, please inform the instructor. It is your responsibility. Each group will be required to inform the instructor of its members by the end of February. Groups are made of pairs because of total of students in class, though not be more than three individuals if necessary.

No narratives or “short films” will be allowed or receive any credit. A rubric is attached for your consideration and will also be posted in Canvas. Any questions about a topic or any ideas you can explore within your presentation, please inform the instructor.

What will we need to present and what are you (as the Instructor) expecting?

A presentation can be comprised of a critical rendering of a film or a series of films seen in class, a critical view on a topic or figure. Each presentation must have a clear thesis or argument. Do not let your presentation be a re-narration of the film or historical episode. Explore the themes and texts we have discussed through the semester—or branch off of them— within your own ideas. It would behoove you to explore another thesis than the one expounded in your essay.

Students can also prepare a response to an essay assigned or chapter in a book, to her or his choosing. It is really what interests you and your group to determine what to present and apply a division of labor within to tackle a *thesis* that is whole and agreeable to its vision.

Each student in a group can also read a paper each have composed. One might want to present their own ideas within the collective of the group by reading their short essay.

Students can read their papers in front of class, for you do not have to “memorize” your presentation if you wish. Each group presentation must at least be ten minutes and no more than fifteen in time. Please take the time and rehearse for your presentation.

Remember. This is a presentation. Everything counts. Your oratorical skills, dress and rhetoric do have a significant effect on the grade

Some examples of topics to present:

- The rendering of color in cinema.
- What is art? What is art in cinema? And why does or doesn't sell to the masses?
- Space and time in the films of Orson Wells or any other filmmaker.
- Mise-en-scène in the films of Almodóvar.
- The consummation of cuisine within the films and its affect.
- The idea of beauty and the body in cinema.
- Sex and the commodification of it in cinema.
- Neoliberal economics or transnational globalism in the industry of cinema and its narratives.
- A comparative cultural analysis on Kon Satoshi's influence on directors.

Class Conduct

If you have to text, view social media or make or take a call on your smartphone, please step outside and conduct your business.

You will forget this by the second week. Therefore, I will be reminding the class throughout the semester. It is explicitly disrespectful to any professor, if your attention is on your phone or consistently on your laptop on social media. This is part of your performance grade. It will affect your final grade. Let me reiterate, if you have to use your phone, view a text or answer a call, please step outside and conduct your business.

DO NOT SLEEP IN CLASS. If you are tired and feel like you'll sleep during a film, lecture and discussion, do not attend class. Snoring out loud is disrespectful to your colleagues. It will affect your performance grade.

During lectures, screenings and discussion, please do not use your smart phone nor Apple Watch. Do not lower the brightness on your smart phone or laptop as well and think you can use it in class during screenings. Allow yourself to step outside and conduct your business.

Laptops are allowed during lecture, please close them during screenings. Do not venture in social media while you have your laptop open.

Doing these actions, you will respect your colleagues and instructor in class to have a pleasant and attentive viewing experience. Please pick up after yourself if you bring in a liquid container or any trash.

Since it is Saturday, parking is free around campus. You can park on any staff, metered or student parking. There is ample staff parking right in front of FDH you can get through the Maryland Parkway and Harmon main entrance. Do not park in any reserved or handicap parking unless you have the proper permission for it.

Caveat

This class operates through discussion and consuming mediated subjects.

You have likely seen all of these films or seen one, or one many times—because it is “your favorite film”—you are inclined to miss class. Moreover, we all know these films are available through distribution/platforms or other means of media transfer. Yet it is important to experience them again in this academic setting. If you miss class because you have seen the film, there will be details your memory will fail at during discussion if you rely on it so. A fresh rendering of the information of the media is suggested. It is important you try and attend class to view these works in this academic environment, in order to focus on the themes and subjects. For it reflects on your participation in class and of course, in your final project.

In sum, the process in consuming media is like re-reading a book, or a better example would be, as time passes, watch the film again, you will thus see the cinema of these artists differently, for you have grown not only intellectually, but mature in nature through the lens of the class. Studying the media of cinema (or any media), is like examining an ancient ruin, it is a plethora of ideas, symbols, meanings, signs full of dust and information that represents the past; tiny details that uncover much bigger revelations; it makes the human experience more empirically thoughtful and will make you a better human being.

Films to be Screened and Reading Assignments

**Note: Films can be changed without notice*

<u>Film Form and Structure</u>	<u>Film</u>	<u>Director</u>	<u>Country & Year</u>
JANUARY 25 th	Film: <i>35 Shots of Rum</i> Reading: Chapter 1	Claire Denis	France 2008
FEBRUARY 1 st	Film: <i>Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance</i>	Godfrey Reggio	US 1983
FEBRUARY 8 th	Film: <i>Passion of Joan of Arc</i> Reading: Chapter 2	Carl Theodor Dreyer	France 1928
FEBRUARY 15 th	Film: <i>Citizen Kane</i> Reading: Chapter 3	Orson Welles	US 1941
Technique			
FEBRUARY 22 rd	***** NO CLASS ON THIS DAY *****		
	Film: <i>Ivan's Childhood</i> Reading: Chapter 4	Andrei Tarkovsky	Russia 1963
FEBRUARY 29 th	Film: <i>Silent Light</i> Reading: Chapter 5	Carlos Reygadas	Mexico 2007
MARCH 7 th	Film: <i>Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner</i> Reading: Chapter 6	Zacharias Kanunk	Canada 2001
MARCH 14 th	Film: <i>All About My Mother</i> Reading: Chapter 7 MIDTERM EXAMINATION	Pedro Almodóvar	Spain 1999
MARCH 16th - MARCH 21st --- SPRING BREAK RECESS			
APRIL 4 th	Film: <i>Millennium Actress</i> Reading: Chapter 8	Satoshi Kon	Japan 2001
Language and Meaning			
APRIL 11 th	Film: <i>Ghost World</i> Reading: Chapter 9	Terry Zwigoff	US 2001
APRIL 18 th	Film: <i>The Headless Woman</i> Reading: Chapter 10	Lucrecia Martel	Argentina 2004
APRIL 25 th	Film: <i>Moolaadé</i> Reading: Chapter 11	Ousmane Sembène	Senegal 2004
MAY 2 nd	Film: <i>A Fantastic Woman</i> Reading: Chapter 12	Sebastián Lelio	Chile 2017
MAY 9 th	Film: <i>Wings of Desire</i>	Wim Wenders	Germany 1987
MAY 16 th	FINAL PRESENTATIONS		

Other UNLV Notices:

Academic Misconduct—Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility, and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical

path. Students enrolling at UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution. An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

Copyright—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you, nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Final Examinations—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

Incomplete Grades—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student's control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving "I" grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Library Resources—Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. Subject librarians for various classes can be found here: https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject. UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students' access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu/>.

Rebelmail—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

Religious Holidays Policy—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

Transparency in Learning and Teaching—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information: <https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>

Tutoring and Coaching—The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of SSC A (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TBE second floor.

UNLV Writing Center—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

Any other class specific information—(e.g., absences, make-up exams, status reporting, extra credit policies, plagiarism/cheating consequences, policy on electronic devices, specialized department or college tutoring programs, bringing children to class, policy on recording classroom lectures, etc.)