FILM STUDIES

Faculty: Eren, Director; Doering, Jones, Munson, Salins, Teixidor, and Wen.

Film Studies at Randolph-Macon invites students to explore cinema as a dynamic and influential art form—one that shapes and reflects culture, history, and society. Through courses that explore cinematic traditions from around the world and across different time periods, students develop a deep understanding of the artistic, cultural, and sociopolitical dimensions of film. In addition to core classes, students can choose from a wide range of electives covering topics from German film to the works of Alfred Hitchcock, among others. Students also have opportunities to engage with various stages of the filmmaking process through electives in areas like screenwriting, music composition for film, and documentary filmmaking.

The Film Studies program currently offers a minor designed to develop critical thinking, oral and written communication skills, respect for diverse cultures, historical perspective, aesthetic awareness, active learning, and the ability to synthesize and integrate knowledge within a major field. It also provides hands-on experience in film production, offering students both practical tools and creative opportunities.

- Film Studies Minor (https://catalog.rmc.edu/programs/film-studies/film-studies-minor/)

FILM 210 - Introduction to Film (4 Hours)
An introduction to the study of film that teaches the critical tools necessary for the analysis and interpretation of the medium. Students will learn to analyze cinematography, mise-en-scene, editing, sound, and narration while being exposed to the various perspectives of film criticism and theory. Through frequent sequence analyses from sample films and the application of different critical approaches, students will learn to approach the film medium as an art form.
Curriculum: AE,HU

FILM 243 - History of American Film (4 Hours)
This course offers a historical survey of American film, from the silent era to the present, with an emphasis on major American films, directors, styles, and genres. The focus will be on "Hollywood" and feature film-making, but other topics such as documentaries will be discussed. This course will introduce students to the serious study of film by focusing on the critical tools and theoretical perspectives necessary for analysis and interpretation. Students will also consider how changes in media and technology have affected American films and film history. Offered alternate years.
Curriculum: AE,HU

FILM 244 - Introduction to International Film (4 Hours)
This course is one of the basic requirements for the study of film history, with emphasis on major international films, directors, styles, and genres. It is the second course that will introduce students to the study of film by focusing on critical tools and a variety of film/media theories necessary for the analysis and interpretation of film. Moreover, through the discussion of influential international films, students will be introduced to different forms of storytelling. Also, because of the effects of globalization and the movements of people, students will explore topics such as identity, nationality, and multiculturalism to better understand the world today. Offered alternate years.
Curriculum: AE,HU

FILM 252 - History of Documentary Film (4 Hours)
This course critically explores the major aesthetic and intellectual movements and filmmakers in the non-fiction, documentary tradition. The non-fiction classification is indeed a wide one encompassing educational, experimental formalist filmmaking and the rhetorical documentary but also a rich and unique one, pre-dating the commercial narrative cinema by nearly a decade. In 1894 the Lumière brothers in France empowered their camera with a mission to observe and record reality, further developed by Robert Flaherty in the US and Dziga Vertov in the USSR in the 1920s. Grounded in a tradition of realism as opposed to fantasy, the documentary film is endowed with the ability to challenge and illuminate social issues while capturing real people, places and events. Screenings, lectures, assigned readings; paper required. Recommendations: FILM 210, FILM 243, or FILM 253.
Curriculum: AE,HU

FILM 253 - History of American Independent Film (4 Hours)
The History of the American Independent Film traces the evolution of a parallel or second American cinema that developed outside the Hollywood studio system and the Production Code's censors. Comprised of diverse perspectives, alternative production modes, and non-classical story structures, the independent film was able to address subjects—racial, labor, feminist and gay—that Hollywood was reluctant, or unable, to represent. Daily screenings, lectures, readings.
Curriculum: AE,HU

FILM 254 - New Turkish Cinema (4 Hours)
Since the mid-1990s, Turkish cinema has witnessed a revival via commercial and art house films by world-caliber artists such as Ceylan, Ustaoglu, and Akin. These cinema auteurs have won prestigious awards not only at home but also at international film festivals receiving acclaim from critics around the world. This course is designed to offer a coherent overview of the new cinema of Turkey with a selection of films representing a multitude of voices and perspectives. Students will look at the work of key film directors and develop a critical understanding of contemporary issues that Turkey faces today – Ataturk's legacy and the rise of political Islam, Turkey's possible membership in the European Union, issues of identity (national, ethnic, class-based, gender, sexuality), and Turkey's role in the Middle East.
Curriculum: AE,HU,NW,OC

FILM 256 - Film Genres (4 Hours)
This course offers an analysis of the development and evolution of Hollywood's most prominent narrative forms—commonly referred to as genres. These include the Western, melodrama, gangster film, screwball comedy, hardboiled detective story, horror, science fiction, as well as the outlying forms such as film noir and black comedy. Each form will be analyzed by definition, origin and function, via screenings, lectures and assigned readings. Additional emphasis given to specific directors as "genre directors", and Hollywood's genre cinema as an aspect of the "classical worldview". Students will examine several film genres and develop their reading, speaking, and writing skills through close film analysis. Offered alternate years.
Curriculum: AE,HU

FILM 260 - Algerian Cinema (3 Hours)
This course will focus on Algerian films produced in the 1970s and 1980s, but mostly between 1994 and the present. Students will also be introduced to the history of Algiers and the struggles that Algerian citizens and filmmakers have faced over time since the access to Independence and throughout the Black Decade. Through film analysis, students will develop their own interpretation and critique of a body of works and genres. In addition to weekly film screenings, students will read about Algerian cinema, research filmmakers and historical events, give class presentations, write critical analysis of films and a final paper. Students will develop an understanding of issues related to gender, identity, nationalism, violence, terror, terrorism, and power among others. An additional hour for French minors will be dedicated to additional films, readings and discussions in the target language. Prerequisites for French credit: FREN 232, FREN 240, and one additional 200-level FREN course. Cross taught with FREN 360. Three hours for FILM 260 and four hours for FREN 360. Teixidor

FILM 261 - Writing for Film (3 Hours)
An introduction to screenwriting as a narrative and literary art form. This course examines the principles of storytelling, including structure, genre, character development, dialogue, and theme, within comedic and dramatic traditions. Students analyze representative screenplays and films while exploring the creative and developmental stages of script construction. Emphasis is placed on narrative theory, aesthetic form, and the cultural contexts that shape cinematic storytelling. Offered yearly.
Curriculum: AE,HU

FILM 262 - Filmmaking (3 Hours)
An introduction to filmmaking as an artistic and cultural practice. The course examines visual and auditory language of cinema, including composition, mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound, with attention to how these elements shape meaning and audience interpretation. Through the study of selected films and guided creative projects, students explore the collaborative and interpretative dimensions of film production. In addition, the course places emphasis on the interaction and coordination among such elements as scene construction, frame composition, lens selection, lighting, camera placement or movement, and film coverage and ratios. These technical components are considered within broader aesthetic, historical, cultural frameworks consistent with humanities inquiry. Offered yearly.
Curriculum: AE,HU

FILM 263 - Documentary Filmmaking (3 Hours)
Documentary films provide a window into the complexities of our world. They depict real individuals and situations, yet there is a powerful tension between reality and the perspective of the filmmaker. This course explores documentary film as a form of historical, ethical, and artistic inquiry. Through screenings, readings, and discussion, students examine the development of the genre and its varied styles, from observational to socially engaged forms. Particular attention is given to discussion surrounding truth, representation, authorship, and the relationship between filmmaker and subject. Students analyze documentary films within broader cultural, political, and philosophical contexts, considering how documentary shapes and reflects public understanding and discourse.
Curriculum: AE,HU

FILM 275 - Cinemas of Francophone Africa (3 Hours)
This course will examine iconic African films from Francophone filmmakers produced from the 1960s to today from a variety of West African countries like Senegal, Cameroun, Mali, and North Africa like Algeria and Tunisia. It will look at how they engage with discourses of gender, politics, and aesthetics and how they deal with the trauma of their conflicted history with France. Students will learn the historical background of each country and study the socio-economic and often political struggles that citizens and filmmakers face in their community to create Art. Through film analysis and study of film theory (including postcolonial and critical race theory), students will develop their own interpretation and critique of the body of works examined in class and contrast and compare how race, gender, violence, terror, and cultural identity among other things are portrayed by each filmmaker in their respective countries. In English. Students may not receive credit for both FILM 275 and FREN 378.
Curriculum: HC,HU,NW,WA

FILM 281 - T:Special Topics (3 Hours)

FILM 292 - Japanese Film as History:The Works of Kurosawa Akira (3 Hours)
This course serves as a general introduction to postwar Japanese film through close examination of several films of Kurosawa Akira, one of the most celebrated directors in the history of the medium. Classic samurai drama such as "Rashomon," "The Seven Samurai," and other period films will be the focus of the course. Students will be introduced to basic theories and concepts in film studies, as well as topics in Japanese history relevant to both the settings and production of the films. Close attention will also be paid to issues of nationalism, gender, war, and cross-cultural adaptation. Japanese language skills are not required. Offered infrequently.
Cross-list: JAPN 292

Curriculum: GE,HU,NW

FILM 300 - Topics in Film Studies Research (3 Hours)
Students may select a research topic in a specialized area in film studies. Projects are student-designed in consultation with a faculty member. A proposal (including a literature review or bibliography/filmography and a research plan) must be submitted to the faculty member by the end of the second week of the term in which the research is to be completed. The project culminates in a paper presented to the supervising faculty member and perhaps others by the end of that term.
Prerequisite(s): FILM 210 and permission of the program director

FILM 340 - The Cinema of Alfred Hitchcock (4 Hours)
Director Alfred Hitchcock's career spanned five decades--1925-1976--with his popular and critical reputations rising continually during that time, peaking with the release of Psycho in 1960. Where are they today? According to leading film historians his '58 masterpiece Vertigo, was recently voted the "greatest film of all time" by Sight and Sound magazine, displacing Orson Welles' Citizen Kane. Hitchcock's popularity and critical esteem rose with a growing acceptance of the "auteur theory" (i.e. director as author"), his TV moniker as the "Master of Suspense", but also the realization that through cinema's first century, few have rivaled his artistry of style and storytelling. This course is a critical examination of the director's works via screenings, readings, lectures and class discussions.
Prerequisite(s): Any 200-level FILM course

Curriculum: AE,HU

FILM 345 - Major Filmmakers (4 Hours)
A critical survey of nine directors/filmmakers, both living and dead, their backgrounds, their works, and what critics and reviewers say about their films. Although the list may vary from semester to semester, students will be introduced to directors such as Howard Hawks (US), Stanley Kubrick (US/UK), Ingmar Bergman (Sweden), Federico Fellini (Ital), Woody Allen (US), Claire Denis (Fr), Alejandro Inarritu (Mexico), Jim Jarmusch (US), and Kelly Reichardt (US). Students will learn to identify, contrast, and compare the styles and themes of each director's films, and also production techniques in relation to respective domestic and foreign film industries. Students will be able to place the directors and their films in the context of the history of cinema. Offered alternate years.
Prerequisite(s): Any 200-level FILM course

Curriculum: AE,HU

FILM 361 - Writing for Film II (3 Hours)
Writing is a craft. As with most crafts, skills improve with practice. This advanced course in screenwriting builds upon prior study of narrative structure, character development, and dialogue. Students analyze selected screenplays and films while drafting and revising original short scripts. Empasis is placed on storytelling craft, per critique, and the relationship between form, theme, audience interpretation within cinematic narrative traditions. Students will develop an understanding of this artform and have sufficient skills to draft original short and long-form screenplays for commercial production and distribution. The course situates creative practice within broader aesthetic and cultural frameworks, reinforcing screenwriting as a mode of humanities-based inquiry.
Prerequisite(s): Any 200-level FILM course

Curriculum: AE,HU,WA

FILM 381 - Special Topics in Film Studies (3 Hours)
These courses focus on areas of film studies not specifically covered in the general curriculum and are designed to meet the needs of advanced students.

FILM 450 - Internship in Film Studies (Unpaid) (3 Hours)
Open to qualified students who seek an immersion experience in a setting consistent with their goals, preparation, and interests. Students are expected to complete goals agreed upon by themselves, their site supervisor, and their academic supervisor. Application required; see Internship Program. A special fee ($200) is charged for this course.
Prerequisite(s): permission of program director

Curriculum: EL

FILM 455 - Field Study (3 Hours)