

Lingnan University
Department of Visual Studies
B.A. (Honors) in Visual Studies

Course Title	: Introduction to Film
Course Code	: VIS 2105
Recommended Study Year	: 2 nd Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3 credits
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture/tutorial
Class Contact Hours	: 2 hours lecture; 1 hour tutorial; 2 hours screening
Category in Major Programme	: Required
Prerequisite(s)	: N/A
Co-requisite(s)	: N/A
Restriction(s)	: N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Year 1 Level >> Second Semester

Brief description

In this introductory course, emphasis is placed on cognitive and analytic approaches to the study of film. Attention will be given to “practitioner’s agency,” film form, film policy, and the institutions that support the making and viewing of films. Students are introduced to concepts and terms needed to articulate well-reasoned assessments of the aesthetic, ethical, and social merits and demerits of films. They are also given opportunities to think critically about the cultural diversity of film, the dominance of certain production centres and models, the goals of film training (including film training for children), and the challenges facing filmmakers producing films in minor languages, small nations, and relatively marginalized creative contexts. Reference is made to films from a variety of film traditions and national cinemas, including Hong Kong and Mainland China, Palestine, West Africa, East Africa, Europe and the Nordic region, Latin America, and the United States. Topics to be discussed range from the aesthetic/formal to the social/cultural/political and include: cinematic creativity; silent cinema and screen acting; the fiction/non-fiction distinction; editing and film style; the screenplay; sound/image relations in the cinema; film music; the psychology of film spectatorship; film and society; models and values of film training; film movements; and independent film.

Aims

The course aims to cultivate the ability to reason cogently about film form and to assess specific films in terms of relevant criteria and with reference to classic works and influential movements. A further aim is foster students’ interest in a wide variety of films and to encourage critical reflection about the factors that constitute certain types of film production as central and others as marginal. Finally, the aim is to develop a policy-

oriented capacity to reason effectively about the desirable contributions of films and filmmakers to society and everyday life.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze and evaluate films using the vocabularies of film elements and techniques.
2. Describe standard operating practices , and innovations of film directors, cinematographers, editors and actors.
3. Describe film practice as a commercial and industrial institution
4. Analyze the meaning of ideology, gender and sexual identity implicated in film form and content.

Assessment

Tests 65%
Class Participation and Discussion 15%
Film Log 20%

Measurement of learning

1. Students' ability to recall and explain key film vocabularies and standard operations of filmmakers will be assessed in tutorial discussion via guided Q&A, film logs, and written tests. (LO1, LO2)
2. Students' ability to conduct meaningful analysis of film form and the role of cinema in social practice will be assessed in film logs and written tests. (LO3, LO4).

Indicative Content

1. Film vs. Cinema; Film Elements
2. *Mise-en-scene*
3. Editing 1
4. Editing II
5. Sound
6. Cinematography
7. Film Narration and Narrative I
8. Film Narration and Narrative II
9. Film Industry
10. Field Trip to Hong Kong Film Archive
11. Film Form and Ideology
12. Film Form and Gender/Sexuality

Screenings

The Goddess, dir. Wu Yonggang (China, 1934), 75 minutes
Hugo, dir. Martin Scorsese (USA, 2011), 126 minutes
Although I am Gone, dir. Hu Jie (China, 2007), 68 minutes
Thelma and Louise, dir. Ridley Scott (US, 1991), 129 minutes
Battleship Potemkin, dir. Sergei Eisenstein (Soviet Union, 1925), 80 minutes
Moolaadé, dir. Ousmane Sembène (Senegal, 2004), 124 minutes
The Making of Moolaadé, dir. Samba Gadjigo (2004), 24 minutes
Bicycle Thieves, dir. Vittorio de Sica (Italy, 1948), 93 minutes
Beijing Bicycle, dir. Wang Xiaoshuai (PRC, 2001), 113 minutes
Silence of the Lambs, dir. Jonathan Demme (US, 1991), 118 minutes
Dogville, dir. Lars von Trier (Denmark, 2003), 178 minutes (to be replaced if there is a minor in the class)
Dogville Confessions, dir. Sami Saif (2003), 55 minutes
Italian for Beginners, dir. Lone Scherfig (Denmark, 2003), 118 minutes
A Simple Life, dir. Ann Hui (Hong Kong, 2011), 118 minutes
Amour, Michael Haneke (France, 2013), 127 minutes
In the Mood for Love, dir. Wong Kar-wai (Hong Kong, 2000), 98 minutes

Selected short films by Shashat (Palestine), Lola Kenya Screen (Kenya), Comunicación Comunitaria, La Matatena A.C., and Juguemos a Grabar (Mexico)

Resource films

The Cutting Edge – The Magic of Movie Editing, dir. Wendy Apple (US, 2005), 98 minutes
The Art of Filmmaking, dir. Peter Hanson (US, 2011), 574 minutes
The Filmmaker Series – Cinematography, dir. Rick Robinson (US, 2011), 48 minutes
The Filmmaker Series – Screenwriting, dir. Frederick Bailey (US, 2011), 44 minutes
The Filmmaker Series – Directing, dir. Frederick Bailey (US, 2011), 44 minutes
The Story of Film – An Odyssey, dir. Mark Cousins (US, 2011), 916 minutes

Podcasts (produced by former students of the course and focusing on Chinese film practitioners; <http://podcast.ln.edu.hk/vodcast/visual-studies>)

Interviews with the following practitioners: Wood Lin, Zhu Rikin, Vincent Chui, Lam Sum, Chan Ho Lun, Bruce Saxway, Rita Hui, Zeng Jinyan, Lo Chun Yip, Zhong Chen, Huiju Hsu, Lifu Hu, Zaixing Zhang, Xueping Zhou, Tammy Cheung, Shu Kei, Hong Kong Film archivist, CNEX curator

FESPACO newsreels (produced by film students at the alternative film school, IMAGINE, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OZCBVi79YA

<http://youtu.be/7Ox2s7I8XUI>

<http://youtu.be/5ATQqWa0SS8>

Required readings

(Selections from)

- Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (McGraw-Hill, 2012)
- Carroll, Noël, *Theorizing the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).
- . and Jinhee Choi, eds., *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).
- Choi, Jinhee., and Mattias Frey, *Cine-Ethics: Ethical Dimensions of Film Theory, Practice, and Spectatorship* (New York: Routledge, 2014).
- Corrigan, Timothy, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film* (Glenview: Pearson, 2012).
- Desheng Zhong, *Hong Kong Film Policy: A Critical Study* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong UP, 2007).
- Eisenstein, Sergei, *Selected Works*, vol. 1 – 3, edited by Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).
- Field, Syd, *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* (New York: Delta, 2005).
- Hjort, Mette, *Lone Scherfig's 'Italian for Beginners'* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010).
- . ed. *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- . ed. *The Education of the Filmmaker in Europe, Australia, and Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- Kozloff, Sarah, *Invisible Storytellers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)
- Man Chan, Joseph., and Anthony Y.H. Fung, Chun Hung Ng, *Politics for the Sustainable Development of the Hong Kong Film Industry* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong UP, 2010).
- Maxwell, Richard., and Toby Miller, *Greening the Media* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012)
- Novrup Redvall, Eva, "Teaching Screenwriting to the Storytelling Blind," *Journal of Screenwriting* 1 (2010): 59-81.
- Pfaff, Françoise, *The Cinema of Ousmane Sembène* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984)
- Plantinga, Carl, and Greg M. Smith, *Passionate Views* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1999).
- Pudovkin, V.I. *Film Technique and Film Acting: The Film Writings of V.I. Pudovkin* (London: Vision Press, 1954).
- Rabiger, Michael, *Directing the Documentary* (Burlington, MA: Elsevier, 2009).
- Smith, Murray, *Engaging Characters: Film, Emotion and the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995).
- Thompson, Kristin, "Realism in the Cinema: *Bicycle Thieves*." In *Breaking the Glass Armor: Neoformalist Film Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).
- Yingjin Zhang and Mary Farquhar, eds., *Chinese Film Stars* (London: Routledge, 2010)
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Further readings

- Bettinson, Gary, *Directory of World Cinema: China* (Bristol: Intellect Press, 2012).
- Bordwell, David., and Kristin Thompson, *Film History: An Introduction* (McGraw-Hill, 2009)..

Cheung, Esther M.K., Gina Marchetti, and Tan See Kam, eds. *Hong Kong Screenscapes: From the New Wave to the Digital Frontier* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong UP, 2010).

Hjort, Mette., and Duncan Petrie, eds. *The Cinema of Small Nations* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008).

MacKenzie, Scott, ed., *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2014).

Pickowicz, Paul G., and Jingjin Zhang, *From Underground to Independent: Alternative Film Culture in Contemporary China* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

Livingston, Paisley, and Carl Plantinga, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2009).

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3* hours of class contact and 6* hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
 - (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
 - (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
 - (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.
- * Numbers of hours are subject to adjustment for individual courses.