Degree Applicable
Effective Quarter: Fall 2007

I. Catalog Information

ELIT 1  Introduction to Film  4 Unit(s)

(See general education pages for the requirement this course meets.)

Advisory: English Writing 1A or English as a Second Language 5.

Four hours lecture.

(Also listed as Film and Television 1. Student may enroll in either department, but not both, for credit.)

An introduction to the international art of cinema through the techniques and procedures of filmmaking, including screenwriting, cinematography, directing, editing, and sound; through the formal properties of film, such as mise-en-scene, structure, and style; through the relationships between film and society, and through the critical analysis of works of film art.

II. Course Objectives

A. Identify, examine, and evaluate the discipline and methods of film studies, the analysis of motion pictures as a distinct art form, involving both affective/aesthetic problems of materials, methods, and formal properties; and cognitive/contextual problems of technology and sociology.

B. Identify and examine the constituent techniques of filmmaking, including producing, screenwriting, cinematography, directing, acting, editing, sound design and special effects; procedures or phases, including pre-production, production, and post-production; and production systems, including the studio system and independent system.

C. Analyze the formal properties of motion picture art, including the narrative, visual and aural elements, and style.

D. Examine, compare, and contrast the relationships, psychological, economic, ideological, and mythic, between cinema and modern societies around the world, including investigations of the issues surrounding class, race, and gender.

E. Analyze and interpret motion pictures using such critical and theoretical approaches to film analysis as neoformalism, genre study, authorship/auteurism, psychological criticism (Freudianism, cognitive psychology) and ideological criticism (Marxism, feminism, queer and cultural studies).

F. Appraise issues of evaluating a highly collaborative process and art form.

G. Examine extrafilmic elements such as marketing, mass media, and reception issues.

III. Essential Student Materials

None

IV. Essential College Facilities

Lecture room with 16mm film screening facilities in projection booth, laser disc/DVD deck, 1/2 inch VHS tape deck, 3/4 inch U-Matic video cassette deck, document camera, computer with Internet connection, and video projection system

V. Expanded Description: Content and Form

A. Identify, examine, and evaluate the discipline and methods of film studies, the analysis of motion pictures as a distinct art form, involving both affective/aesthetic problems of materials, methods, and formal properties; and cognitive/contextual problems of technology and sociology.

1. Film study - the study and analysis of motion pictures as a distinct art form, with its unique properties and historical evolution

2. Methods of film study
   a. The study of largely affective/aesthetic problems, including formal units and properties, methods and techniques of production, phases and collaboration in filmmaking
   b. The study of largely cognitive/contextual problems, such as the relationships between popular arts and society in an age of mass culture

B. Identify and examine the constituent techniques of filmmaking, including producing, screenwriting, cinematography, directing, acting, editing, sound design, and special effects; procedures or phases, including pre-production, production, and post-production; and production systems, including the studio system and independent system.
1. Producing: financing, developing or acquiring the package (script, director, stars), supervising the production process (schedule, budget) and negotiating distribution deals

2. Screenwriting: crafting characters, setting, point of view, dialogue, story and plot, structure, suspense and/or surprise

3. Cinematography: the manipulation of light and space and their record on photosensitive materials, videotape, or digital video

4. Directing: the interpretation of the script to other creative and performing collaborators, the visualization of the materials, the blocking of scenes into actions and shots

5. Acting: the use of imagination, vocal technique, facial expressions, body language, and an overall knowledge of the filmmaking process to realize, under the director's guidelines, the character created by the screenwriter

6. Editing: the selection and arrangement of images and sounds into a unified experience

7. Sound design: the creation, recording, and mixing of aural ingredients

8. Special effects: any technique or device that creates an illusion of reality in a situation where conventional cinematography could not achieve the same result

9. Film as a modern technological, collaborative, industrial art form

10. Production: the making of the film
   a. Pre-production: the designing, development, planning, and logistics for the show
   b. Production: the recording of principal images and sounds, the performance of the script
   c. Post-production: editing, mixing, and augmenting images and sounds

11. Distribution: conveying and promoting the show to the audience

12. Exhibition: the place and manner in which the show meets the audience

13. Production systems
   a. The Hollywood studio system and studio modes of production in other national cinemas
   b. Independent financing, production, and distribution

C. Analyze the formal properties of motion picture art, including the narrative, visual and aural elements, and style.

1. Narrative elements including characters, setting, point of view, dialogue, dramatic structure, and symbolism

2. Visual elements include composition (the shot, its content, tonality, perspective, graphic design, framing, duration), mise en scene (the director's total visualization of the materials, including production design, cinematography, the blocking of actions and scenes for the camera), camerawork (distance, angle, lenses and filters, movement), and editing (the graphic, rhythmic, spatial, and temporal relationships between shots)

3. Aural elements include the sound design (dialogue, music, and effects) and its relation to the companion image

4. Style: the sum of all techniques and formal properties
   a. Continuity or the classical Hollywood style
   b. Soviet montage and formalist styles
   c. Deep focus and realist styles
   d. Modernist and postmodernist styles

D. Examine, compare, and contrast the relationships, psychological, economic, ideological, and mythic, between cinema and modern societies around the world, including investigations of the issues surrounding class, race, and gender.

1. The arts as an aspect of culture-institutions that transmit forms and values

2. Relationships of cinema to society-cause and reflection
   a. Psychological-issues of roles, sex, and violence in media and their effects
   b. Economic-issues of entertainment as mass commodity, funding and economic control of content, commercial versus non-commercial cinema
   c. Ideological-issues of cinema as reflection of cultural values in the depiction of class, race and gender
   d. Mythic-issues of shared narratives or stories within and across cultures, global patterns

3. Problems of mass media and popular culture in modern industrial and electronic eras
   a. Media control-issues of regulation, censorship, ratings or self-regulation
   b. Mass versus alternative media-majority versus segmented audiences
   c. Media access-exclusivity of modern media versus public or alternative access
d. Proliferation and diffusion in the future

E. Analyze and interpret motion pictures using such critical and theoretical approaches to film analysis as neoformalism, genre study, authorship/auteurism, psychological criticism (Freudianism, cognitive psychology) and ideological criticism (Marxism, feminism, queer and cultural studies).
1. Critical and theoretical approaches to film analysis-application of aesthetic/affective criteria to a work of film art-techniques, procedures, and form
2. Application of contextual/cognitive criteria-film and society
3. Survey of critical approaches-thematic, auteurist, genre, neoformalist, socio-economic, psychological, feminist, mythic, queer and others
4. Sample analyses in class

F. Appraise issues of evaluating a highly collaborative process and art form.
1. Evaluate the individual contributions of key players such as the producer screenwriter, director, production designer, cinematographer, actors, editor, sound designer and special effects team
2. Evaluate the process from pre-production to post-production

G. Examine extramural elements such as marketing, mass media, and reception issues.
1. Advertising campaigns, including budgets, publicity strategies, posters and ancillary markets
2. Press reviews, journal commentary, television, radio and Internet coverage on cinema
3. Distribution in domestic and foreign markets
4. Viewer expectations and the impact of gender, class, race/ethnicity and cultural issues

VI. Assignments

A. Assigned readings of approximately 50-70 pages per week
B. Regular group analyses of films in the context of aesthetic, social, cultural, and normative information foregrounding issues of mass/minority audiences, culture, class, race, and gender, in a culturally diverse student population
C. At least 2,500 words of formally evaluated writing, including:
   1. Analytical essay of an outside screening (approximately 1,500 words) synthesizing lecture and textbook readings and demonstrating a critical approach to film. May also include independent research using primary and secondary materials and proper documentation.
   2. The remaining writing will be fulfilled by
      a. In-class critical analyses of films screened during class
      b. Midterm and final essay exams

VII. Methods of Instruction

Lecture and visual aids
Film screenings and facilitated group discussions
In-class essays
Quiz and examination review performed in class
Homework and extended projects
Discussion of assigned reading
In-class exploration of Internet sites
Guest speakers

VIII. Methods of Evaluating Objectives

A. Analytical essay demonstrating a critical approach to film and requiring the application of key technical, procedural, formal, and contextual elements
B. In-class analyses of films screened during class
C. Midterm and final exams (combination of objective questions and critical essays)

IX. Texts and Supporting References

A. Examples of Primary Texts and References

B. Examples of Supporting Texts and References