I. Catalog Information

F/TV 76  Special Topics in Film Studies  0 1/2 Unit(s)

F/TV 76W  1 Unit(s)
F/TV 76X  2 Unit(s)

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

(Any combination of Film/Television 76, 76W, and 76X may be taken up to six times for credit as long as topics/projects are different each time.)

One hour lecture for each unit of credit.

Concentrated investigation of an influential film artist, studio, national cinema, genre, movement, or historical period. The topic studied is different for each section of this course and may include Bay Area film festival and nonprofit-organization screenings and events (see course note in class schedule).

II. Course Objectives

A. Analyze important films created by a major film artist or studio, or key films within a specific national cinema, genre, movement, or historical period.

B. Apply one or more critical methodologies to assess the thematic, narrative and stylistic elements of the films screened.

C. Examine the art and scope of film through direct contact with creative and technical film artists, screenings of various film forms, and first-hand involvement with film study, production, and exhibition facilities. Attend specific film screenings and events that demonstrate the diversity of the film experience available in the Bay Area and offer unique Film Studies opportunities.

D. Appraise the extent to which films reflect the social attitudes and political issues of the filmmakers, cultures, and time periods in which they are produced.

E. Discuss and analyze the representation of race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and socio-economic class issues in the films screened.

F. Discuss the film artist's contribution to the evolution of narrative form and cinematic vocabulary, placing that contribution within the context of film history.

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

III. Essential Student Materials

Additional fees may be required for film/event admission.

IV. Essential College Facilities

16mm sound screening facilities, 1/2 inch VHS tape deck, large color video monitor, laserdisc/DVD deck, and video projector (special purposes facility/smart classroom).

V. Expanded Description: Content and Form

A. Analyze important films created by a major film artist or studio, or key films within a specific national cinema, genre, movement, or historical period.

1. Film artist (directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, Akira Kurosawa, Jane Campion, Abbas Kiarostami, and emerging directors; screenwriters such as Nunnally Johnson, Ernest Lehman, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, etc.; cinematographers such as Karl Freund, James Wong Howe, Gregg Toland, Gabriel Figueroa, Ernest Dickerson, etc.).

2. Studio (UFA, MGM, Paramount, Disney, RKO, DreamWorks, etc.).

3. National cinema (America, China, France, England, Japan, Mexico, Senegal, Morocco, etc.).

4. Genre (Western, gangster, musical, horror, science fiction, comedy, etc.).

5. Movement/style (German expressionism, Film Noir, French New Wave, Dogma 95).

6. Period (Silent comedy, Hollywood blacklist, current international cinema, etc.).
B. Apply one or more critical methodologies to assess the thematic, narrative and stylistic elements of the films screened.
   1. Neoformalist.
   2. Socio-Historical.
   4. Auteur.
   5. Genre.
   6. Feminist.
   7. Queer.
   8. Spectatorship.

C. Examine the art and scope of film through direct contact with creative and technical film artists, screenings of various film forms, and first-hand involvement with film study, production, and exhibition facilities. Attend specific film screenings and events that demonstrate the diversity of the film experience available in the Bay Area and offer unique Film Studies opportunities.
   1. Listen to renowned film historians, film critics, film artists, and those involved in the business of film production, distribution and exhibition; view their representative works; and interact with them in discussion sessions.
   2. Screen various types of films (classics, foreign, underground, documentary, contemporary, etc.) in Bay Area venues hosting film festivals, such as the San Jose Cinequest Film Festival and the San Francisco International Film Festival, or in theaters offering specialized programming, such as the non-profit Stanford Theatre in Palo Alto or the Pacific Film Archive Theater in Berkeley.
   3. Visit professional production facilities.
   4. Visit film research institutions such as the Pacific Film Archives. Thus, the outings will encompass film history-criticism, production, distribution, exhibition, and research.

D. Appraise the extent to which films reflect the social attitudes and political issues of the filmmakers, cultures, and time periods in which they are produced.
   1. Examine how films, especially newsreels and documentaries, preserve audiovisual information gathered through the lens.
   2. Analyze how fiction films, especially popular ones, comprise a record of the aspirations, obsessions, and frustrations of those spending time and money making or viewing them.
   3. Appraise how cinema mirrors and shapes a society.
      a. Record the frequency with which various social types crop up in the movies of a particular time and place.
      b. Interpret the way groups are depicted and, therefore, valued.
      c. Question how domestic and export cinema become the mechanism for massive dissemination of significant cultural values.
   4. Recognize how government policies, including funding and censorship, affect popular expression.
   5. Debate issues of objectivity and interpretation.

E. Discuss and analyze the representation of race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and socio-economic class issues in the films screened.
   1. Examine the filmic representations and cinematic histories of specific groups.
   2. Identify and analyze stereotypical images, tracing the emergence of important issues about representation and difference, the power structure and labor practices of the industry, spectatorship and identification, and the relationship between film and culture.
   3. Compare the relationship of stereotypes to broad historical and political processes.

F. Discuss the film artist's contribution to the evolution of narrative form and cinematic vocabulary, placing that contribution within the context of film history.
   1. Identify how the film artist uses the language and tools of film for expression.
   2. Compare the film artist's themes, style, and modes of production to the work of other film artists within the independent and mainstream film industry, within the respective national and international cinema, and within an aesthetic, economic, technological and historical context.

G. Examine extrafilmic elements such as marketing, mass media, and spectator-reception issues.
   1. Examine advertising campaigns, including budgets, publicity and marketing strategies, posters, and ancillary markets.
   2. Examine press reviews, journal articles, television, radio, Web sites, blogs, and vlogs on cinema.
3. Compare distribution in domestic and foreign markets.
4. Discuss viewer expectations and the consideration of gender, class, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, and cultural issues.

VI. Assignments
A. Viewing films and listening to film artists discuss their work.
B. Reading of assigned materials.
C. Writing critiques of films screened.

VII. Methods of Instruction
Lecture and visual aids
Discussion of assigned reading
Discussion and problem solving performed in class
In-class essays
In-class exploration of Internet sites
Field observation and field trips
Guest speakers
Collaborative projects

VIII. Methods of Evaluating Objectives
A. Written assignment varies according to the topic.
B. Class participation in group film discussions and critiques.
C. Final exam essay will test comprehension of formal concepts and fundamental issues.

IX. Texts and Supporting References
A. Examples of Primary Texts and References
   1. Varied, depending upon the films and experiences to be analyzed. Photocopied handouts are more feasible than full texts in the one or two weekend format.
B. Examples of Supporting Texts and References
   1. A list of recommended reading will be distributed at each section of this course. As above, the exact titles of the texts will depend on the specific focus.