

MAJORS

# Cinema and Media Studies

## Sample Courses

### French Cinema, 1920s-1930s

This course tracks the rise of the poetic realist style from the culture of experimentation that was alive in both the French film industry and its surrounding artistic and literary landscape.

### China's New Documentary Cinema

This course examines the styles and functions of China's "new documentary" over the last fifteen years, paying particular attention to the institutional, cultural, economic, and political conditions that underpin its flourishing.

### Women Mystery Writers: From Page to Screen

Many distinguished filmmakers have found inspiration in mystery novels written by women. This course is a reading of novels by Patricia Highsmith (*Strangers on a Train*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *Ripley's Game*) and Ruth Rendell (*Tree of Hands*, *The Bridesmaid*, *Live Flesh*).

### Symbolism and Cinema

This course examines the relationship between symbolism and cinema with particular attention to French and Russian writings and films.

### Introduction to Film Production

This intensive lab introduces 16mm film production, experimenting with various film stocks and basic lighting designs. The class is organized around a series of production situations with students working in crews. The final project is an in-camera edit.



The interdisciplinary nature of the cinema and media studies major allows students to shape their own explorations of how we understand and make meaning from moving images.



**"My Core courses helped me think a lot more liberally about what it means to make images, what it means to communicate something. There is a kind of certainty that comes with that and a confidence that helps one succeed."**

**Ben Kolak**

AB'06

Major: Cinema and media studies

For more than a century, across widely different cultures, film has been the primary medium for storytelling, for depicting and exploring the world, and for engaging and shaping the human senses and emotions, memory, and imagination. Even as it is being transformed by television, video, digital media, and contemporary art, the cinema survives, and these media in turn are giving rise to new forms of moving image culture as well as an expanded range of cinematic experience.

The major in cinema and media studies provides a framework within which students can approach the history of film and related media from a variety of historical, critical, and theoretical perspectives. Focusing on the study of the moving image (and its sound accompaniments), the major enables students to analyze how cinema creates meanings through particular forms, techniques, and styles; how industrial organization affects the way films

are produced and received; and how the social context in which they are made and consumed influences the way we understand and make meaning of films.

At the same time, the goal is to situate the cinema and related media in such broader contexts as the formation of visual culture and the history of the senses; modernity, modernism, and the avant-garde; narrative theory, poetics, and rhetoric; commercial



entertainment forms and leisure and consumer culture; sexuality and gender; constructions of ethnic, racial, and national identities; and transnational media production and circulation, and the emergence of global media publics.

### Curriculum

There are four required courses for cinema and media studies majors: Introduction to Film Analysis, History of International Cinema I and II, and the Senior Colloquium. Like the University of Chicago as a whole, the Department of Cinema and Media Studies strives to cultivate an intellectual environment that encourages collaboration and conversation among different disciplines and methodologies. Thus, while these required courses ensure that students fully understand the history of cinema and are well-versed in the processes of film analysis, the major in cinema and media studies truly allows students an interdisciplinary framework.

Courses are taught by a faculty with a wide range of research interests, and many faculty hold joint appointments with such other departments as English Language and Literature, Romance Languages and Literatures, Slavic Languages and Literatures, Art History, and Visual Arts. Students therefore take a wide range of courses cross-listed with other departments. Recent offerings have included studies of Czech, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, French, and Soviet cinemas, as well as courses that approach cinema from a variety of disciplines, such as history, gender studies, and music.

Recent courses have included French Cinema of the 1920s and 1930s, Women Mystery Writers: From Page to Screen, Chicago Film History, Neorealism, Japanese New Wave Cinema, Introduction to Film Production, and Horror Film and the History of Monstrosity.

In addition to the four required courses, five self-chosen cinema and media studies courses,

and three interdisciplinary elective courses, majors are required to write a senior thesis paper. Undergraduates may also choose to take graduate-level courses in visual arts and have the opportunity to pursue a master of fine arts at the University.

### Resources

The University of Chicago Library system is home to more than 8.5 million printed volumes and boasts an impressive array of electronic resources. Students in cinema and media studies will also find a wealth of material particular to the discipline, such as archived scripts, reviews, early film journals, and press kits, as well as collections of box office statistics, film stills, and other relevant materials.

Students will also use the Film Studies Center, the support facility and research center for the department. The Film Studies Center houses a large collection of 35mm and 16mm films, video, and DVD materials and includes holdings from the Library of Congress Paper Print collection and Black Images collection. It also provides teaching and screening spaces and individual viewing facilities, and presents a rich program of special screening events, lectures, and guests, as well as workshops and film series. Recent events at the Film Studies Center have included a conference on the legacy of Hollis Frampton, a screening and lecture by animator Yuri Norstein, a symposium on the films of Belgian conceptual artist Marcel Broodthaers, and an international conference devoted to digital cinema.

### Extracurricular Activities

Film culture on campus and in the city of Chicago is particularly vibrant. In addition to the Film Studies Center, the University is home to Doc Films, the longest continuously running student film society in the nation, as well as the student filmmaking group Fire Escape Films. Such organizations as the Hindi Film Society

show screenings each week as well. In Chicago, students can attend lectures, screenings, workshops, and other events at the Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago Filmmakers, and other venues, and they will find valuable resources at the Video Data Bank and Facets Multimedia. The city also hosts a number of festivals, including the Chicago Underground Film Festival, the Chicago International Film Festival, the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, and the Onion City Experimental Film Festival.

The Department of Cinema and Media Studies itself hosts a number of distinguished guest lecturers and visiting faculty. Past lecturers have included Linda Williams and Kristine Harris, while such scholars as Laura Mulvey and Ismail Xavier have served as visiting faculty.

### After Graduation

Students graduating with a cinema and media studies major will be trained in critical, formal, theoretical, and historical thinking and analysis. The major aims to develop an ability to understand forms of cultural production in relation to wider contexts, as well as to foster discussion and writing skills. Students will gain the tools to approach today's media environment from a historical and international perspective, and will thus be able to work within a changing mediascape. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the program, students are able to apply their acquired education in a number of fields.

ADM 12 002



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**CHICAGO**

**College  
Admissions**

1101 East 58th Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60637-5416  
T 773.702.8650  
F 773.702.4199

[collegeadmissions.uchicago.edu](http://collegeadmissions.uchicago.edu)

