

# introduction to cinema studies

**Course #:** CINA 10  
**Instructor:** adam wadenius  
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**Office Hours:** By email or appointment  
**Semester:** Fall 2018  
**Day & Time:** Saturday, 9am - 11:50am  
**Building:** Vjo, Thurston Bldg. #136

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## course description

This course is an introduction to the language of film, and its various forms, styles, and genres. We will be studying a wide variety of film texts (canonic Hollywood films, documentaries, short films, independent and experimental films) as a means toward furthering our understanding of the visual, aural, and narrative conventions by which motion pictures address social and aesthetic experience. Through the class lectures, readings, and films, you will be introduced to the formal and stylistic methods for understanding how films function, conventional and alternative ways of reading a film text, as well as the critical tools necessary for thinking and writing about film both as an art form, and as a medium that reflects popular culture.

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## student learning outcomes

- ~ Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of film as a performing/visual art form.
- ~ Think critically about the significance of film as a reflection of popular culture.
- ~ Identify and explain the various formal and stylistic elements involved in the filmmaking process.
- ~ Articulate the core concepts of narrative storytelling and character development in popular film forms (Hollywood, independent, documentary, and avant-garde filmmaking).
- ~ Identify the various genres and styles of films that have evolved over the course of film history.

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## course requirements

**Class Lectures & Screenings:** You are responsible for attending the class lecture every week. Please email me if you know you cannot make it to section on a given day. There is no talking/discussion during the films, audio recordings or clips. I will dismiss you from the course if you become a disruption during the lectures. Your enrollment in this class is your responsibility. It is incumbent upon you to double-check your enrollment status periodically throughout the semester, as I do not maintain my rosters after the census has been processed. If at any time you decide that you do not wish to continue with the course, it is your responsibility to drop, as I do not take it upon myself to drop anyone from the course at any time.

I encourage you to use your personal computer, iPad, or other learning tool during class time if you are using it appropriately (viewing class slides, taking notes), however, be sure to turn off any noisemaking functions on those and any other electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, etc. Please keep the brightness levels on all LED screens at low intensity. There is no food allowed in class at any time (drinks are okay). Copies of all the lectures are available on the course website for download and review. If you require any additional accommodations such as a note taker, testing services, captions, or special chairs/desks, please speak with me personally, or provide the proper authorization letter from the Disability Resources Department.

**Readings:** It is incumbent upon you to be prepared, and you should come to class each session having read the reading assignment posted on the schedule. We will be spending as much time discussing the readings as the films, and a firm understanding of them will benefit your overall understanding/interpretation of the film texts. All readings are located on the course website.

**Discussion:** You are encouraged to be actively involved in the class discussions, as your participation is key to your success in this course. My goal is to aid in the development of your analytical/critical skills, and I expect everyone to maintain an open mind, and take a creative approach to the material. Be respectful of your fellow classmates when addressing and critiquing conflicting viewpoints.

**Short-Answer Quiz and Self-Analysis:** There will be one short-answer quiz this semester, due by the time class starts on the assigned date. The quiz will assess your comprehension of the *Film Form & Aesthetics* section, and consists of four short-answer questions that will ask you to watch and analyze specific clips. Each quiz is due by the time class starts on the assigned date, and no late quizzes will be accepted. I do not accept physical papers, so please email your quiz to me at [adam@apwadenius.com](mailto:adam@apwadenius.com). All emergency situations leading to late quizzes will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. There will be no opportunity for making-up a missed quiz. You are required to visit the course website to view the quiz questions and the clips, as there are additional writing and formatting guidelines for you to review, along with information about the Self-Analysis portion of the assignment.

**Group Study Session:** There will be one group study session this semester. The format will echo that of the individual short answer-quizzes, and is discussed in further detail in class.

**Film Analysis Essay:** You will be required to write one 1000-1250 word essay this semester, due by the time class starts on the assigned date. No late papers will be accepted. I do not accept physical papers, so please email your essay to me at [adam@apwadenius.com](mailto:adam@apwadenius.com). All emergency situations leading to late papers will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. There will be no opportunity for re-writes after grading, as good writing skills are a must in this course. Each of the essay questions, as well as an example of an *A* paper are located on the course website. It is required that you visit the website to view the example paper, as it details additional guidelines for writing successfully in this course.

**\*\* NOTE \*\*** *Plagiarism and other issues concerning academic integrity will not be tolerated, and are grounds for an automatic failure in the course. Acknowledge all reading and research sources with appropriate footnotes and bibliography.* Keep all copies of your quizzes and notes until you have received a final grade for this class.

**Film Notes & Participation:** Your attendance is expected at each of the film screenings, and missing or leaving the film screenings early will result in a lowered participation grade. To compliment any notes you may be taking on the lectures and discussions, you will be required to keep a separate notebook with your notes on each of the films (one page per each film). This is a good habit to practice when watching and analyzing films, as it will help you to remember important narrative and stylistic elements to be used as supportive examples in your writing. This notebook will be checked on the final session of the semester (Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>), and must be submitted in one of two ways:

- 1) as an electronic document (word, pdf, text, pages, etc.)
- 2) as a packet of individual sheets of paper, assembled and stapled together

Do not turn in any three-ring binders or spiral/binded notebooks with your notes in them, as they will not be accepted.

#### assessments

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Film Notes (100 pts.)	A = 422	B- = 359	D+ = 301
Screenings and Participation (140 pts.)	A- = 404	C+ = 346	D = 287
Short-answer quiz and Self-Analysis (40 pts.)	B+ = 391	C = 332	D- = 269
Group Study Session (20 pts.)	B = 377	C- = 314	F = 256
Film Analysis Essay (100 pts.)			

1. All course readings and materials are posted on the course website @ [www.apwadenius.com](http://www.apwadenius.com).
2. All films screened in class, as well as any excerpt screened during the lectures.

*Please remember that if you have any questions about the readings, assignments, or any of the course materials that I am readily available to help answer them. I can be reached through the email address above, the course website, or by placing a note for me in my box in the department office.*

~ *Film Form & Aesthetics* ~

**week #1 ~ (Aug. 18<sup>th</sup>) ~ why do we study films?**

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Discussion: Intro to course | Syllabus | Questions

Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Introduction"

Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 12 - Writing and Speaking About Film"

**week #2 ~ (Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>) ~ film language and editing**

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 1 - Film as a Language," pgs. 29-50

Screening: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, dir. Howard Hawks (1938)

**week #3 ~ (Sep. 1<sup>st</sup>) ~ no class**

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**\*\* Labor day recess \*\***

**week #4 ~ (Sep. 8<sup>th</sup>) ~ cinematography and the image**

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 1 - Film as a Language," pgs. 50-59

Screening: *Being John Malkovich*, dir. Spike Jonze (1999)

**week #5 ~ (Sep. 15<sup>th</sup>) ~ the elements of mise-en-scène**

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 1 - Film as a Language," pgs. 60-64

Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 5 - Three Fundamental Styles," pgs. 176-183

Screening: *City Lights*, dir. Charlie Chaplin (1931)

**week #6 ~ (Sep. 22<sup>nd</sup>) ~ sound and sound design**

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 1 - Film as a Language," pgs. 64-69

Screening: *The Babadook*, dir. Jennifer Kent (2014)

~ Film Narrative & Style ~

**week #7 ~ (Sep. 29<sup>th</sup>) ~ the principles of film narrative**

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 4 - Storytelling and Narrative Fiction Film," pgs. 136-147

Screening: *Some Like It Hot*, dir. Billy Wilder (1959)

**\*\* Short-answer quiz due \*\***

**week #8 ~ (Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>) ~ the classical Hollywood style**

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 4 - Storytelling and Narrative Fiction Film," pgs. 160-172

Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 5 - Three Fundamental Styles," pgs. 181-187

Screening: *Back to the Future*, dir. Robert Zemeckis (1985)

**week #9 ~ (Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>) ~ art cinema narration**

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 4 - Storytelling and Narrative Fiction Film," pgs. 147-160

Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 6 - The Institutional and National Contexts," pgs. 213-216

Screening: *Vivre sa vie*, dir. Jean-Luc Godard (1962)

**\*\* Short answer feedback due \*\***

**week #10 ~ (Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>) ~ documentary film**

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 3 - Documentary Film"

Screening: *Regen*, dir. Joris Ivens (1929)

*Why We Fight: Prelude to War*, dir. Frank Capra (1942)

*Salesman*, dirs. Albert & David Maysles (1968)

*Roger & Me*, dir. Michael Moore (1989)

*Las Hurdes*, dir. Luis Buñuel (1933)

*I Am A Sex Addict*, dir. Caveh Zahedi (2005)

**week #11 ~ (Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>) ~ midterm check-ins**

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**\*\* Group study session \*\***

~ Representing Culture in Film ~

**week #12 ~ (Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>) ~ ideology and cinema**

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 8 - Ideology and the Cinema"

Screening: *The Little Mermaid*, dir. John Musker & Ron Clements (1989)

**week #13 ~ (Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>) ~ representing race and ethnicity**

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 9 - Race and Ethnicity in Film"

Screening: *Do the Right Thing*, dir. Spike Lee (1989)

week #14 ~ (Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>) ~ no class

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**\*\* Instructor conference \*\***

week #15 ~ (Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>) ~ no class

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**\*\* Thanksgiving recess \*\***

week #16 ~ (Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>) ~ sex and gender in film

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 10 - Gender and Masculinity," pgs. 359-388

Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 11 - Feminism and Film," pgs. 395-422

Screening: *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, dir. Amy Heckerling (1982)

week #17 ~ (Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>) ~ Other sexualities in film

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Reading: Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 10 - Gender and Masculinity," pgs. 388-394

Engaging Cinema, "Ch. 11 - Feminism and Film," pgs. 422-431

Screening: *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, dir. John Cameron Mitchell (2001)

week #18 ~ (Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>) ~ finals week

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**\*\* Essay assignment due \*\***

**\*\* Film notebooks due for review \*\***