

Introduction to film studies

Course strength – Entry level I
Course duration – 16+2 weeks (term II, 2025)
Medium of instruction: Mandarin / English if needed
Lecture time – 13:10 - 16:00, Tuesday
Venue: R103
Course mode – Theory
Responsible teacher – Dr. CHANG, Shih-Chien
scchang@ccu.edu.tw

Course description and specifications

Course description

This course introduces the film production process, including the fundamental concepts of cinematography, editing, sound and music, scriptwriting, and directing. It also covers cinematic genres, film language, and narrative structures. After studying the relevant concepts and watching representative films for each topic, students will be able to analyse, appreciate, and critically study films. The course also provides a solid foundation for advanced training in audiovisual production.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILO):

After completing the lessons, the student shall

- CILO 1: understand the required components of a film
- CILO 2: learn the film business and industry
- CILO 3: know movie genres and appreciate the best movies of them.
- CILO 4: do film criticism with their learned film theories.

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

- Lecture - 60%
 - The lecturer elaborates the related disciplines, concepts, rules, theories, cases, and operational procedures.
- Seminar - 40%
 - The students are divided into groups to study award-winning films under each subject. Each group will present their study outcome in-class in 30 mins for advanced learning and reflexive thinking.

Assessment

Attendance 10%

Participation: 10%

Mid term essay-individual: 40%

Final project - group: 40%

- **Attendance (10%)**

- This item is based on individual's roll call record. Roll call shall be done in the beginning of each session. A student will have 1 point if s/he enters classroom before the roll call finishes and 0.5 points after it. Sh/e has 0 due to absence. The sum of the points a student has in the semester is his/her attendance marks. The student's absence record can be written off when s/he delivers acceptable certificate for sick leave or compassionate leave.
- **Participation (10%)**
 - The participation is based on the student's performance in and after class. The more a student delivers feedback to the teaching topics, including asking relevant questions and engaging in discussion, the more marks in this part s/he gets.
 - Students are welcomed to have discussions with the lecturer during the office hours when they need further clarification of concepts presented in class, or assistance about the homework assigned. An appointment beforehand via email is necessary for the discussion.
 - Assessment criteria
 - Frequency 70%
 - Relevance 30%
- **Mid-term essay (individual) (40%)**
 - Each student follows instructions to complete the assignment and submit it on time.
 - Late submission penalties:
 - In one week after the deadline: 20% cut off from the original marks.
 - Longer than one week after the deadline will not be accepted.
- **Final project: Presentation and essay (group)- 40%**
 - Final presentation 25%
 - Essay in 2,000 words 15%
 - Each group follows instructions to finalize the essay and submit it on time.
 - Late submission penalties:
 - In one week after the deadline: 20% cut off from the original marks.
 - Longer than one week after the deadline will not be accepted.
 - Assessment criteria
 - Materials (relevance) 40%
 - Organization 40%
 - Presentation expression 10%
 - Reflexive thinking 10%

Required and optional texts

- Required books

Bordwell, D., Thompson, K., & Smith, J. (2019). *Film Art: An Introduction* (12th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Giannetti, L. (2010). 認識電影 (焦雄屏, Trans. 10th ed.). 台北: 遠流. (Chinese)

Giannetti, L. (2013). *Understanding Movies* (13th ed.). New York: Prentice Hall.

- Optional books

Sikov, E. (2009). *Film Studies: An Introduction*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Nelmes, J. (Ed.) (2012). *Introduction to Film Studies* (5th ed.). London: Routledge.

Villarejo, A. (2013). *Film Studies: The Basics* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Davis, G., Dickinson, K., Patti, L., & Villarejo, A. (2015). *Film Studies: A Global Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Ascher, S., & Pincus, E. (2012). *The Filmmaker's Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide for the Digital Age*. New York: Penguin.

Monaco, J., & Lindroth, D. (2009). *How To Read a Film: Movies, Media, and Beyond* (4th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Donald, J., & Renov, M. (Eds.). (2008). *The SAGE Handbook of Film Studies*. London: Sage.

Hayward, S. (2018). *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts* (5th ed.). London: Routledge.

McDonald, P. (2013). *Hollywood Stardom*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Foster, T. C. (2017). *教你看懂電影的20堂課：好電影如何好？* (郭麗娟, Trans.). 台北: 本事出版社.

Teaching schedule

1. Introduction: How to study a film

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. The course's aims and proceedings, including teaching methods, learning activities, learning materials, assessments, and in-class disciplines.
 2. The approaches to study a film
3. Learning activities:
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s):
 1. The movies you read/watch/listen?
 2. The most impressive one?
 2. Grouping
4. Home assignment
 1. Watch a movie you like
5. Learning materials (overview)
 1. Syllabus

2. Genre and types of movies

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Types of movies
 2. Genres and their evolution
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s):
 1. What the formula you saw in the movie?
 1. The characters
 2. The relationships between characters
 3. The unseen stories?
4. Home assignment (group)

1. Choose a genre for your group's final project
2. Propose the list of movies under the chosen genre
 1. Each member should cover four (at least) movies which are different from others'.
5. Learning materials

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Ch. 4.

3. Cinema is an art of entertaining

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. The artistic elements
 2. The entertaining purposes
 3. How to balance them? The debate from the classic cultural industry thinking.
 4. Form of a film
 5. The components of form
3. Learning activities:
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s)
 1. The conflict between art and industrial entertainment?
4. Home assignment - individual
 1. Watch the first movie you chose fully
 2. Write a short essay (in 500 words) about how good and bad it is.
5. Learning materials

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Ch. 2.

Bordwell, D., Thompson, K., & Smith, J. (2019). *Film Art: An Introduction* (12th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ch. 1.

4. The story and narratives

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Story structure
 2. Elements of narrative
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
 2. Key issue(s):
 1. The narrative analysis
4. Home assignment - individual
 1. Watch the third movie you chose fully
 2. Write a short essay (in 500 words) about how good and bad it is.
5. Learning materials

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Ch. 3.

Bordwell, D., Thompson, K., & Smith, J. (2019). *Film Art: An Introduction* (12th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ch. 3.

Giannetti, L. (2010). 認識電影 (焦雄屏, Trans. 10th ed.). 台北: 遠流. (Chinese) Ch. 8.

5. Script

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Story structure
 2. Elements of narrative
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s):
 1. The taught concepts in the clip(s) of the demo movie.
4. Home assignment - individual
 1. Watch the fourth movie you chose fully
 2. Write a short essay (in 500 words) about how good and bad it is.
5. Learning materials

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Ch. 3.

Giannetti, L. (2010). 認識電影 (焦雄屏, Trans. 10th ed.). 台北: 遠流. (Chinese) Ch. 9.

6. Film theories

1. Teaching method: Lecture & tutorial
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Auteur theory
 2. Structuralism
 3. Symbolism
 4. Historicalism
3. Learning activities
 1. N/A
4. Home assignment
 1. N/A
5. Learning materials

Giannetti, L. (2010). 認識電影 (焦雄屏, Trans. 10th ed.). 台北: 遠流. (Chinese) Ch. 11.

7. Mise-en-Scène

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Composition of a movie
 2. Production designing
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s)
 1. The taught concepts in the clip(s) of the demo movie.
4. Home assignment - Group
 1. The best movie of the four
 1. Have a meeting for your selection.
 2. Prepare the meeting memo and conclusion in an A4 paper.
5. Learning materials

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Ch. 5.

Giannetti, L. (2010). 認識電影 (焦雄屏, Trans. 10th ed.). 台北: 遠流. (Chinese) Ch. 2.

8. Cinematography I

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Lens
 2. Angles
 3. Light
 4. Color
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s)
 1. The taught concepts in the clip(s) of the demo movie.
4. Home assignment - Group
 1. The impressive mise-en-scene of your best movie
 1. Have a meeting for choosing a clip, which will be used for your final project.
 2. Have reasons for your decision. (Why it impressed you)
 3. Prepare the meeting memo and conclusion in an A4 paper.
5. Learning materials

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Ch. 6.

Giannetti, L. (2010). 認識電影 (焦雄屏, Trans. 10th ed.). 台北: 遠流. (Chinese) Ch. 1.

9. Cinematography II

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Pan/tilt/dolly shot
 2. Zoom
 3. Cinematographer
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s)
 1. The taught concepts in the clip(s) of the demo movie.
4. Home assignment - Group
 1. The impressive cinematography of your best movie
 1. Have a meeting for choosing a clip, which will be used for your final project.
 2. Have reasons for your decision. (Why it impressed you)
 3. Prepare the meeting memo and conclusion in an A4 paper.
5. Learning materials

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Ch. 6.

Giannetti, L. (2010). 認識電影 (焦雄屏, Trans. 10th ed.). 台北: 遠流. (Chinese) Ch. 3.

10. Editing

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Continuity

2. Transition
3. Editor
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s)
 1. The taught concepts in the clip(s) of the demo movie.
4. Home assignment - Group
 1. The impressive editing of your best movie
 1. Have a meeting for choosing a clip, which will be used for your final project.
 2. Have reasons for your decision. (Why it impressed you)
 3. Prepare the meeting memo and conclusion in an A4 paper.
5. Learning materials

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Ch. 8.

Giannetti, L. (2010). 認識電影 (焦雄屏, Trans. 10th ed.). 台北: 遠流. (Chinese) Ch. 4.

11. Sound and music

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Sound production
 2. Types of film sound
 3. Functions of film sound
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s)
 1. The taught concepts in the clip(s) of the demo movie.
4. Home assignment - Group
 1. The impressive sound of your best movie
 1. Have a meeting for choosing a clip, which will be used for your final project.
 2. Have reasons for your decision. (Why it impressed you)
 3. Prepare the meeting memo and conclusion in an A4 paper.
5. Learning materials

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Ch. 9.

Giannetti, L. (2010). 認識電影 (焦雄屏, Trans. 10th ed.). 台北: 遠流. (Chinese) Ch. 5.

12. Acting

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Casting
 2. Aspects of performance
 3. How filmmaking affects acting
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s)
 1. The taught concepts in the clip(s) of the demo movie.
4. Home assignment - Group

1. The impressive acting of your best movie
 1. Have a meeting for choosing a clip, which will be used for your final project.
 2. Have reasons for your decision. (Why it impressed you)
 3. Prepare the meeting memo and conclusion in an A4 paper.

5. Learning materials

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Ch. 7.

Giannetti, L. (2010). 認識電影 (焦雄屏, Trans. 10th ed.). 台北: 遠流. (Chinese) Ch. 6.

13. Stardom

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Screen icons
 2. Modes of stardom
 3. Three approaches to study stardom
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar - Group presentation
 1. Key issue(s)
 1. The taught concepts in the clip(s) of the demo movie.
 2. The stardom of the director/actors
 1. Collect the background of the director/actors
 2. Describe the backgrounds of them in one A4 paper.
4. Home assignment (group) - first version
 1. Prepare your final project presentation
 1. Organize all the materials you have from previous meetings.
 2. Make your slides ready for final presentation.
5. Learning materials

Nelmes, J. (Ed.) (2012). *Introduction to Film Studies* (5th ed.). London: Routledge. ch. 7.

14. The industrialised film production

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. How a movie is made
 2. The studio system
 3. Financing and marketing
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s):
 1. The director-centered system in Taiwan?
4. Home assignment - individual
 1. Watch the second movie you chose fully
 2. Write a short essay (in 500 words) about how good and bad it is.
5. Learning materials

Nelmes, J. (Ed.) (2012). *Introduction to Film Studies* (5th ed.). London: Routledge. Ch.1.

Bordwell, D., Thompson, K., & Smith, J. (2019). *Film Art: An Introduction* (12th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ch. 1.

Barsam, R., & Monahan, D. (2016). *Looking at Movies* (5th ed.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Ch. 11.

15. National vs. transnational cinema

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Why national cinema?
 2. Transnational cinema rises.
 3. Case study: How to define/locate HK cinema?
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
 1. Key issue(s)
 1. The taught concepts in the clip(s) of the demo movie.
4. Home assignment (group)
 1. Prepare your final project presentation - final version
 1. Organize all the materials you have from previous meetings.
 2. Make your slides ready for final presentation.
5. Learning materials

Zhang, Y. (2004). *Chinese national cinema*. New York: Routledge. Ch. 1.

Monaco, J., & Lindroth, D. (2009). *How To Read a Film: Movies, Media, and Beyond* (4th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 578-598

16. Final presentation -I

17. Final presentation -II

18. Final presentation -III