

Film Study I is an introductory Film Studies course that is offered through SMA's English department and is available to all students in grades 9 -12. The course focuses on teaching movies as visual narratives, but students analyze and study all of the language systems of film (e.g. photography, editing, sound, acting, story, writing, ideology, etc.). In studying these valuable tools that filmmakers use, students better understand how movies are constructed and appreciate the criteria necessary to make a film. The course is both a film history course and a genre study course, for students to study important film movements as well as the conventions of a genre.

Film Study is not intended to be a course solely for aspiring filmmakers; however, a few creative independent and group projects will challenge students to make their own movies, which will be screened at a student film festival held at the end of the school year. The final presentation and exam grade for the course is a 10 -minute presentation of a 5 -minute clip of a movie chosen by a student that exemplifies excellence in filmmaking. The student will explain the artistic and technical merits of the film based on the skills he or she learned in the course. All students who wish to better appreciate film are encouraged to take the course.

Course Description/Overview

This course provides an introduction to a range of approaches to viewing and analyzing films from various genres, historical moments, and national traditions. We will build a critical vocabulary with which to think, talk, and write about the formal and stylistic features of film (such as narrative structure, mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing and sound). We will study the cinema as a social, historical, cultural, and ideological institution.

Course Objectives and/or Learner Outcomes

Students who have completed all the readings, watched all the films, attended all the lectures, submitted all the assignments, and consistently engaged with the course material should, by the end of the course, be able to:

- Think independently and critically about film, film production, and the study of film.
- Analyze the formal, political, and social issues raised by films and film studies as an institution.
- Read films in a variety of genres critically, and assess their rhetorical, ideological and aesthetic strategies.
- Analyse specific cinematic devices and explain how such devices contribute to the meaning of a film.
- Explain how a film is produced by, and produces, its historical, national, political, and/or cultural contexts.
- Explain the role of film in articulating and creating categories of identity (including race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, etc.).
- Analyse films from a variety of theoretical perspectives.
- Identify and assess the social, political, environmental and ethical themes presented in films.
- Identify the formal and stylistic conventions of a variety of genres, and identify ways in which individual films work within, or expand the definitions of particular genres.
- Write well (grammatically correct, clear, effective prose).
- Write about film using a critical vocabulary.
- Communicate ideas effectively and coherently, in persuasive essays, and a variety of other forms.
- Use library resources to research a topic and use what is discovered to illuminate a critical reading of a cinematic text.