The Film Studies Program

The Program in Film Studies at Barnard College offers a theoretical, historical and practical approach to the study of film. Through this course of studies, students come to understand film as a dominant cultural medium of the twentieth century and its influence on the present, as well as an art form with profound and continuing connections to a range of disciplines that span the humanities and the social sciences.

Mission

The educational goal of the film major is to provide a solid grounding in the history and theory of film and as well as place the study of film in relation to other art forms. Students are introduced to visual storytelling, film technology, and the economic and sociopolitical context of the film industry. The trajectory of the major moves from introductory level courses (primarily surveys) to intermediate level courses (that introduce the mechanics of writing for film as well as film making), to advanced level courses (including two labs and the senior seminar), plus two electives from the approved list. While the course of study is rooted in film history and theory, all majors take workshops in screenwriting and filmmaking and produce a script and a short film. Our place in a premier college for women invites our Program to pay special attention and filmmaking and produce a script and a short film. Our place in a major for women invites our Program to pay special attention to questions of gender, and our home in New York City allows students to connect their study to the city’s vibrant film industry as well as range of film in arts houses and revival theaters.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who graduate in Film Studies will be able to attain the following outcomes:

- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of film history;
- Explain the major concepts or ideas of film theory;
- Communicate in-depth knowledge of film in one other language tradition;
- Write a basic/elementary screenplay;
- Create a short film;
- Demonstrate an understanding of film’s relationship to a range of other disciplines across the humanities and social sciences;
- Conduct original research on a film (usually one film) intensively in the context of a limited enrollment senior seminar.

For questions about Film Studies contact Ross Hamilton (rhamilto@barnard.edu), Director.

The program is supervised by the Barnard Committee on Film Studies:

**Director:** Ross Hamilton (Professor, English)

**Associate Professors:** Kaiama L. Glover (African Studies, French, Women Studies), Erik Grimm (Comparative Literature, European Studies, German)

**Term Professor:** Maura Spiegel (English/Film)

**Professor of Professional Practice:** Meg McLagan (Visiting)

**Adjunct Professors:** Jonathan Beller (English/Women’s Studies), Ben Philippe, Breixo Viejo Vinas,

**Columbia University Faculty:** Annette Insdorf, Milena Jelinek, Christina Kallas, Sandra Luckow, Richard Pena, Andrew Sarris, James Schamus, Maura Spiegel

Requirements for the Major

Please note that Columbia courses have been renumbered and retitled, but content remains the same.

The major requirements are a total of 36 credits, namely twelve 3-point courses. However, only seven classes are required, and five are electives. Moreover, we will no longer separate survey courses into “American” and “International.” Please note that most classes are offered only one semester per academic year.

Two Introductory Level Courses

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FILM BC201</td>
<td>INTRO FILM # MEDIA STUDIES (This is the prerequisite for all further Film courses at Columbia and Barnard. Open to first-year students.)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN1000</td>
<td>Introduction to Film and Media Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
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Two of the Following, One of Which Must Be UN2010 or UN2030

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN2010</td>
<td>Laboratory in Writing Film Criticism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN2020</td>
<td>Cinema History 2: 1930-60</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN2030</td>
<td>Cinema History 3: 1960-90</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN2040</td>
<td>Screenwriting</td>
<td>3</td>
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Labs in Critical/Creative Practice - One Required

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN2110</td>
<td>Laboratory in Writing Film Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN2120</td>
<td>Feature Film Screenwriting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM BC3102</td>
<td>Film Production</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>FILM BC3260</td>
<td>Writing for Television</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>FILM BC3275</td>
<td>Non-Fiction Digital Video Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM BC3301</td>
<td>Advanced Production</td>
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International Cinema Requirement

One course on a non-American cinema (from Film or other departments)

Senior Thesis Seminar

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL BC3997</td>
<td>Senior Seminar: Senior Seminar for Writing Concentrators</td>
<td>4</td>
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Elective Courses - Choose Five

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN2190</td>
<td>Topics in American Cinema</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN2290</td>
<td>Topics in World Cinema: Arab and Africa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN2310</td>
<td>The Documentary Tradition</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>FILM W2400</td>
<td>Script Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN3020</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN3920</td>
<td>Senior Seminar in Screenwriting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM UN3925</td>
<td>Senior Seminar in Screenwriting</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>FILM UN3930</td>
<td>Seminar in International Film</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>FILM BC3245</td>
<td>American Television Drama</td>
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Please note:

1. The prerequisite for all classes is Introduction to the Study and Theory of Film, open to first-year students.
2. The Senior Seminar requirement can be fulfilled at Columbia in the fall or at Barnard in the spring (ENGL BC3998.2 - M. Spiegel).
3. The Film Program does not offer Independent Study.
4. There is no minor in Film Studies.
5. Regrettably, auditors are not allowed in Barnard Film Production or Screenwriting classes.

**FILM BC3119 Screenwriting. 3 points.**
Prerequisites: FILM BC3201 or equivalent. Enrollment limited to 12 students. Priority is given to Film Studies majors/concentrations in order of class seniority.
Corequisites: (Since this is a Film course, it does not count as a writing course for English majors with a Writing Concentration.) Practical workshop in dramatic writing for the screen. Through exercises and games specifically catered to the writing of scenes and concrete scene work, students explore and develop an understanding for the basic principles of screenwriting, learn how to find the right form and structure for each story, and how to achieve thematic richness, emotional depth, and narrative rhythm. By the end of the class students will have written a 10-12 page short and/or have material for the development of a feature screenplay.

**FILM BC3120 Feature Film Screenwriting. 3 points.**
Prerequisites: FILM BC3201 or equivalent. Enrollment limited to 12 students. Priority is given to Film Studies majors/concentrations in order of class seniority.
Corequisites: (Since this is a Film course, it does not count as a writing course for English majors with a Writing Concentration.) Workshop in feature film writing. Students will enter the course with a story idea, ready to start a feature screenplay. Through lectures and workshop discussions, the course will critique the details of character development and scene construction. Analysis of student work will prompt generalized conversations/lectures on the fundamentals of film writing. Emphasis will be placed on character as the engine of story.

**FILM BC3200 Film Production. 3 points.**
Prerequisites: FILM BC3201 or equivalent. Sophomore standing. Interested students MUST attend the first day of class for instructor permission–registering for the course only through myBarnard or SSOL will NOT ensure your enrollment.
This workshop introduces the student to all the cinematic tools necessary to produce their own short narrative work. Using what the student has learned in film studies, we’ll break down shot syntax, mise-en-scene and editing strategies and master them in weekly video exercises. We’ll include casting, working with actors and expressive camera work in our process as we build toward a final video project. By the end of the course, the student will have created a DVD containing a collection of their video pieces and their final project. Priority given to junior and senior film majors.

**FILM BC3201 INTRO FILM # MEDIA STUDIES. 3.00 points.**
Prerequisites: Open to first-year students. Corequisites: Enroll in the required Discussion Section through FILM BC 3204: Discussion Section. We derive much of our information about the world from visual media. Social networks, television, cinema: all shape our aesthetic sensibilities and our political visions. Yet we often lack a basic understanding of what could be called “visual literacy.” This introductory course gives students the critical tools to analyze how film and other visual media really work— in order to appreciate their artistic and social achievements, as well as to guard against their insidious manipulative devices. In the first part of the semester, we focus on film analysis through a detailed study of the different production phases of filmmaking – from screenwriting and mise-en-scène to editing and film scoring. We pay special attention to the way in which certain stylistic and narrative choices have particular ideological effects. The second part of the course looks at film history through a comprehensive, chronological overview of its main movements and periods, including the coming of sound in Hollywood cinema, post-war Italian Neorealism, the emergence of world auteurs, New Waves of the 1960s and 1970s, etc. Students will use the hermeneutical tools learnt in film analysis to intellectually engage with some masterworks of film history. In the third and final part of the semester, we study the major debates of film theory from perspectives such as auteurism, formalism, psychoanalysis, Marxism, feminism, postcolonial and queer studies, etc. Required screenings include Nanook of the North (Flaherty, 1922), Sunrise (Murnau, 1927), Man with a Movie Camera (Vertov, 1929), Casablanca (Curtiz, 1942), Bicycle Thieves (De Sica, 1948), Rashomon (Kurosawa, 1950), Breathless (Godard, 1960), Belle de Jour (Buñuel, 1967), The Hour of the Furnaces (Solanas, 1968), Seven Beauties (Wertmüller, 1974), Blue Velvet (Lynch, 1986), Paris Is Burning (Livingstone, 1990), and Children of Men (Cuarón, 2006).

**FILM BC3204 Discussion Section. 0 points.**
Enrollment in one of the following sections is required when registering for FILM BC 3201: Introduction to Film and Film Theory.

**FILM BC3225 Independent Cinema. 3 points.**
Prerequisites: FILM BC 3201 or equivalent.
In 1989, the Hollywood studio system was languishing in a creative drought, until Steven Soderbergh’s sex, lies, and videotape blew up the dam. Suddenly, audiences were eager for new, exciting visions free from establishment oversight. The next ten years saw the emergence of directors like Quentin Tarantino, Spike Lee, Kevin Smith, Richard Linklater, Jim Jarmusch, Lisa Cholodenko and many others. This course, arranged chronologically, will look at different filmmakers each week, while exploring the circumstances that allowed this movement to exist; what caused it to thrive, and what lingering effects did it have on today’s cinema.
**FILM BC3250 Adaptation. 3 points.**

In the same way that there can never be a single objective account of an historical event, using one medium to convey a story first told in another is never as straightforward as it might seem. Translating the essence of an existing story to the screen may require making significant changes to the events or characters as they were originally presented.

As a screenwriter faced with such an adaptation, you must understand the idiosyncrasies of your craft well enough to recognize what to keep, what to change, and what to leave behind. This course will explore what makes a screen story work, balancing faithfulness and invention.

**FILM BC3245 American Television Drama. 3 points.**

Between prestige and streaming, the medium of television has never covered a wider breadth of narratives, voices, and concerns. This course will take a closer look at the format of the American Drama and how it has served as a cultural tool since its inception, reflecting the concerns of the time in one form or another. Through theoretical readings and sociological texts, the course will survey and sharpen our understanding of the power of the medium when placed in conversation with the greater American discourse.

**FILM BC3260 Writing for Television. 3 points.**

Corequisites: Please note that since this is a Film course, it does not count as a writing course for English majors with a Writing Concentration. This course will focus on the primary pillar of television production: the teleplay. Through a number of creative exercises, students will learn the intricacies of the unique screenwriting formats that are the half-hour and hour-long teleplays. Together we will cover the differences between an episode arc and a seasonal one, the requirements of A/B/C story plotting, and how to write an effective show bible. We will survey the existing pantheon of great television writing in order to help students narrow in on their individual sensibilities. By the end of the course, students will have a written original pilot.

**FILM BC3278 DIGITAL PRODUCTION. 3 points.**

Digital Production offers visual storytellers an incredible medium to connect and build an audience. It is an inexpensive, accessible platform to launch micro-budget concepts. Developing the storytellers voice inexpensively is critical to the evolution of any student, no matter their starting point. The Digital Series course is intended to take students from story ideation through creation of an independent digital series. Emanating from a writers room setting, all steps of the process will be explored and supported by in-class discussion, examples and workshops. This hands-on class revolves around the TV series production model: breaking story, writing pages, preproduction planning, filming and post-production review. We will emphasize the writers voice, construction of series storytelling, and establishing realistic scopes of production.

**FILM BC3279 Unseen Masterworks of World Cinema. 3 points.**

Not offered during 2020-21 academic year.

In 1952, the British Film Institute's prestigious journal Sight & Sound polled the world's leading film critics to compile a list of the best motion pictures of all time. It was one of the first attempts to establish an authoritative film canon at an international scale. Since then, dozens of magazines, cinemathques, and festivals around the globe publish their “best movies” lists every year. These polls tend to reproduce a canonical selection of “classics” that includes Citizen Kane (Welles, 1941), Vertigo (Hitchcock, 1958), The Godfather (Coppola, 1972), and other familiar titles among contemporary film audiences. The canon itself would not be worth bothering with if it hadn't been so influential in academic circles. University film programs often integrate this selection without questioning the ideological motivations behind it. In this class, we study "unseen masterworks" of world cinema that have been usually marginalized in conventional analysis of film. We challenge the standard, anglo-centric, sexist, heteronormative, and racist-by-omission film history in order to articulate a critique of cultural hegemony – and its tendency to depoliticize film as a medium. For that purpose, we look at a series of paradigmatic features in terms of their 1) explorative approach to film style, and 2) politically subversive narrative. In-class screenings include The World of Apu (Ray, 1959), The Exterminating Angel (Buñuel, 1962), Woman in the Dunes (Teshigahara, 1964), Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors (Paradjanov, 1965), The Red and the White (Jancsó, 1967), Mandabi (Sembene, 1968), Johnny Got His Gun (Trumbo, 1971), Oh Lucky Man! (Anderson, 1973), Seven Beauties (Wertmüller, 1975), and ...but the clouds... (Beckett, 1977). Required readings include Amos Vogel's Film as a Subversive Art (1974), seminal texts by film directors, and excerpts from Gilles Deleuze's The Movement Image (1983), The Time-Image (1985), and "The Exhausted" (1992).

**FILM BC3301 Advanced Production. 3 points.**

Prerequisites: FILM BC3201 or equivalent. Sophomore standing. Enrollment limited to 12 students. Attend first class for instructor permission.

Advanced Film Production will teach students how to create a short narrative film; emphasizing the steps taken in pre-production, production and post-production. Through hands-on workshops and theory, students will learn narrative editing, shot progression, camera lenses, lighting and audio equipment. Students will work in teams of four; learning the roles and responsibilities of the different crew members.
FILM BC3610 New Cinemas in Latin America: A (Trans)National Perspective. 3 points.

This seminar will analyze the historical similarities and differences between the two major “New Wave” periods of Latin America cinema. The first part of this course will examine the emergence of the 1960s nuevos cines in Mexico, Brazil, Cuba, Argentina, and Chile through an in-depth analysis of landmark films such as Jomi García Ascot’s On the Empty Balcony (1962), Glauber Rocha’s Black God, White Devil (1964) and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea’s Memories of the Underdevelopment (1968). Some key concepts in Benedict Anderson’s book Imagined Communities will help us to understand why “national identities” played such a primordial role among Latin American film intellectuals in the 1960s and 1970s. Special attention will be paid to the manifestos written by Julio García Espinosa, Fernando Solanas, and Octavio Getino, and to how they confronted Hollywood’s hegemony in order to create an auteurist film tradition in the region. In the second part of the seminar, we will study the global success of the Latin American cinemas of the 2000s from a transnational perspective: features such as Alejandro G. Iñárritu’s Amores Perros (2000), Lucrecia Martel’s The Swamp (2001), and Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund’s City of God (2002) will be examined in relation to the political and aesthetic traditions discussed in part one. We will explore how these contemporary Latin American filmmakers reflect upon gender, race, class, and sexual orientation rather than national or religious identities. The critical interpretation of these films will allow us to redefine the idea of ‘national cinemas’ and to reexamine the historical tensions between state control, commercialism, and independent cinema in Latin America.

FILM BC3702 Women Filmmakers. 4 points.

Traditional film history has consigned a multitude of cinema practices to an inferior position. By accepting Hollywood’s narrative model as central, film scholars have often relegated non-male, non-white, non-Western films to a secondary role. Often described as “marginal” or “peripheral” cinemas, the outcomes of these film practices have been systematically excluded from the canon. Yet... are these motion pictures really “secondary”? In relation to what? And according to whom? This course looks at major films by women filmmakers of the 20th Century within a tradition of political cinema that 1) directly confronts the hegemonic masculinity of the Hollywood film industry, and 2) relocates the so-called “alternative women’s cinema” at the core of film history. Unlike conventional feminist film courses, which tend to be contemporary and anglocentric, this class adopts a historical and worldwide perspective; rather than focusing on female directors working in America today, we trace the origins of women’s cinema in different cities of the world (Berlin, Paris, New York) during the silent period, and, from there, we move forward to study major works by international radical directors such as Lorenza Mazzetti, Agnès Varda, Forough Farrokzad, Věra Chytilová, Chantal Akerman, Liliana Cavani, Barbara Kopple, Larisa Shepitko, and Mira Nair. We analyse how these filmmakers have explored womanhood not only as a source of oppression (critique of patriarchal phallocentrism, challenge to heteronormativity, etc) but, most importantly, as a source of empowerment (defense of matriarchy, equal rights, lesbian love, inter- and transexuality...). Required readings include seminal texts of feminist film theory by Claire Johnston, Laura Mulvey, Ann Kaplan, bell hooks, and Judith Butler. Among the films screened in the classroom are: silent movies – ‘Suspense’ (Lois Weber, 1913), ‘The Smiling Madame Beudet’ (Germaine Dulac, 1922)—, early independent and experimental cinema – ‘Girls in Uniform’ (Leontine Sagan, 1931), ‘Ritual in Transfigured Time’ (Maya Deren, 1946)—, “new wave” films of the 1950s and 1960s – ‘Together’ (Mazzetti, 1956), ‘Cléo from 5 to 7’ (Varda, 1962), ‘Daisies’ (Chytilová, 1966)—, auteur cinema of the 1970s – ‘Jeanne Dieulman’ (Akerman, 1975), ‘The Ascent’ (Shepitko, 1977)—, and documentary films – ‘Harlan County, USA’ (Kopple, 1976), ‘Paris Is Burning’ (Jennie Livingston, 1990).

Cross-Listed Courses

Anthropology (Barnard)

ANTH V3824 Fantasy, Film, and Fiction in Archaeology. 4 points.

BC: Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: Cultures in Comparison (CUL).

Not offered during 2020-21 academic year.

ANTH W4625 Anthropology and Film. 3 points.


Not offered during 2020-21 academic year.

Classics (Barnard)

CLLT V3230 Classics and Film. 3 points.


Considers cinematic representations of the ancient Mediterranean world, from early silent film to movies from the present day. Explores films that purport to represent historical events (such as Gladiator) and cinematic versions of ancient texts (Pausolini’s Medea). Readings include ancient literature and modern criticism.
Comparative Literature (Barnard)

East Asian Languages and Cultures

EAAS W4106 Global Genres and East Asian Cinema. 3 points.
Discussion Section Required
Not offered during 2020-21 academic year.

This course explores East Asian Cinema from the perspective of film genre. In particular, the course examines East Asian genres as active interaction with the circulation of global film genres as well as mass mediated engagement with specific economic, social, and political histories of East Asia. We will study contemporary theories of film genre, examine how the case of East Asian genres complicate existing theories, while paying due attention to the parallel transnational traffics—between East Asian Cinema and global film genre, and across East Asian Cinema in their history of cultural and economic flow as well as political confrontation. We will integrate our investigations of genre-specific questions (industry, style, reception, spectatorship, affect) with those of gender, ethnicity, power as well as nation and transnational/transregional identity.

English (Barnard)

ENGL W4670 American Film Genres. 3 points.
Not offered during 2020-21 academic year.

(Lecture). Some critics contend that all Hollywood film is either melodrama or morality play, no matter what its claims to the contrary; others see it as purely wish-fulfillment fantasy. This course will examine a range of genres in Hollywood film, while also scrutinizing and questioning the formation and usefulness of genre distinctions. Our orientation will be formal as well as social and historical, as we examine codes and conventions of generic illusion and verisimilitude; the look and sound of different genres; genre and acting style; the rise and fall of specific genres (the Western, the slasher film, etc.), increasing self-reflexiveness in especially such genres as noir, the musical, romantic comedy, genre-bending and postmodernity; and genre as projection and organization of public sentiment. We will also explore why certain genres are linked to political parties, as are specific styles of heroism. Genres will include: the combat movie, romantic comedy, horror, action, animation, musicals and "independent" films.

French (Barnard)

FREN BC3062 Women in French Cinema since the 60s. 3 points.
Not offered during 2020-21 academic year.

This course traces the evolving nature of the relationship between women and society in French cinema from the New Wave of the 60’s to the present. Attitudes of women and towards women will be examined in the light of the changing social, political, and intellectual context. FREN BC1204: French Intermediate II or the equivalent level is required.

FREN BC3064 France on Film. 3 points.
Not offered during 2020-21 academic year.

Films on and of the period from the 1930s to the present, focusing on the interplay between history, ideology, and culture. FREN BC1204: French Intermediate II or the equivalent level is required.

FREN BC3065 Surrealism. 3 points.
Not offered during 2020-21 academic year.

An examination of the relationship between traditional & avant-garde literature and visual culture; the use of word-play & language games as tools of artistic expression; the thermalization of the unconscious and dreams; the vexed relationship between aesthetics & politics; the poetics and politics of sexuality & gender. Authors and artists will include Andre Breton, Louis Aragon, Man Ray, Dorothea Tanning, and Salvador Dali. FREN BC1204: French Intermediate II or the equivalent level is required.

FREN BC3073 Africa in Cinema. 3 points.
Not offered during 2020-21 academic year.


French and Romance Philology

CLFR UN3830 French Film. 3 points.
A study of landmarks of French cinema from its origins to the 1970s. We will pay particular attention to the relation between cinema and social and political events in France. We will study films by Jean Vigo, Jean Renoir, Rene Clair, Alain Resnais, Francois Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard. In English.

Italian (Barnard)

ITAL UG3642 Road Trips: Travel in Italian Cinema. 3 points.
Corequisites: Cap at 25.

Explores the representation of national identity in Italian cinema from the Fascist era to the present. Examines how both geography and history are used to construct an image of Italy and the Italians. Special focus on the cinematic representation of travel and journeys between North and South. Films by major neo-realist directors (Rossellini, De Sica, Visconti) as well as by leading contemporaries (Moretti, Amelio).

Religion (Barnard)

RELI V3610 Religion in American Film. 3 points.

Exploration of relationships between religion and popular film with particular attention to the way religious narratives and symbols in film uphold and critique norms of race, class and gender in the formation of American societal institutions (political structures, economy, family and community organization).

Spanish and Latin American Cultures (Barnard)

SPAN BC3151 Spanish Film: Cinematic Representation of Spain. 3 points.

Prerequisites: Third-year bridge course (W3300), and introductory surveys (W3349, W3350).

Examination of Spanish film in both theoretical and historical terms. Considers political and ideological changes through the 20th century and their repercussions in cinematic representation. Topics include: surrealism and Bunuel's legacy; representations of Franco and the civil war; censorship and self-censorship; gender, sexualities, and national identities; film, literature relations.
Latin American and Iberian Cultures
SPAN W3520 Dirty Realism in Latin America. 3 points.
Not offered during 2020-21 academic year.

Prerequisites: SPAN W3349 or SPAN W3350 or the instructor’s permission.
The course will examine recent texts and films from Latin America and
the United States to analyze the many configurations of the genre of
dirty realism. The class gives a culturally and historically specific context
for what has been a major trend in the film and book market of the last
fifteen years.