

**Semester at Sea Course Syllabus  
Colorado State University, Academic Partner**

**Voyage:** Fall 2017  
**Discipline:** Communication Studies  
**Course Number and Title:** SPCM 350 Evaluating Contemporary Film  
**Division:** Upper  
**Faculty Name:** Dr. Rachel Raimist  
**Semester Credit Hours:** 3

**Meeting:** A Day 1230-1350, Kino  
**Prerequisites:** None

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores narrative and documentary cinematic traditions, aesthetic forms of artistic practice, and transcultural modes of storytelling across the globe. Students learn theoretical approaches to understanding film as world cinema, international cinema, and third world film. Lectures and screenings will examine cinematic movements and genres from African film that explores social and political themes to the Hong Kong pop and action genres that illuminate how types of filmmaking converge with theories of globalization and migration of culture across regions. Student will learn film grammar and develop a vocabulary to analyze production and enable critical discussions of texts. This approach includes close readings of images, story, and the cultural and historical specificity of filmic productions from Europe, Africa, and Asia. This study of contemporary cinema will expose students to modes of filmmaking outside of “Hollywood” traditions and encourage understanding beyond Western traditions.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate key terminology and engage in critical discussions about theory and practices of film that demonstrate an understanding of theory, criticism and filmic production
- Develop critical viewing strategies and ways of “reading” film as text through critical lenses cognizant of gender, race, sexuality, religion, nationality, citizenship and power
- Understand and appreciate film styles, aesthetics and production values of many genres
- Engage a variety of themes and social issues through screenings, readings and discussion
- Connect our viewing of global cinema with our in port experiences and examine strategies for film as propaganda purposes, education, entertainment, social protest, historical and cultural documentation, and as experimental art

- Consider the ways that filmmakers from around the world lens stories and culture and draw comparisons to larger cinematic frameworks across geographical locations
- Write creatively and critically about different perspectives and cinematic styles

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Timothy Corrigan  
 TITLE: Short Guide to Writing about Film, 9th Edition  
 PUBLISHER: Pearson  
 ISBN: 9780321965240  
 DATE/EDITION: 9th edition (July 23, 2014)

AUTHOR: Patricia Aufderheide  
 TITLE: Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction  
 PUBLISHER: Oxford University Press  
 ISBN: 978-0195182705  
 DATE/EDITION: 1st edition (November 28, 2007)

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Depart Bremerhaven, Germany – September 9

DAY	DATE	TOPIC OF STUDY	ASSIGNMENTS (due by next class meeting) Assignment Screenings will show on CCTV
A1	September 11	Course Introduction: critical reading & understanding context, content, film form and production considerations	Reading (due next class): <i>The Short Guide to Writing About Film</i> (1-4)
A2	September 13	Defining the Narrative Film using: - Key Production Terminology - Theoretical Frameworks - Viewing Strategies - Critical Viewing Form Prepare for Field Class in Girona (9/15)	Reading: <i>The Short Guide to Writing About Film</i> (5-7)
<b>Friday, September 15 - REQUIRED FIELD CLASS in Barcelona // Travel to Girona, Spain</b>			
<b>September 15-18: Barcelona and Valencia, Spain</b>			
A3	September 19	Documentary Film: Styles of Storytelling Ethical Considerations	Reading: <i>Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction</i> (entire text -- 3 chapters) Bio & site - Akousa Adoma Owusu (pdf)

A4	September 21	Screening: BRONI BA (MY WHITE BABY), Akousa Adoma Owusu (short)	Reading: HipLife in Ghana: West African Indigenization of Hip-Hop, Intro/Ch1 (pdf)
<b>September 23: No Class</b>			
A5	September 24	Screening: <i>HOMEGROWN HipLife in Ghana</i> , Eli Jacobs-Fantuazzi (58 mins)	Reading: Popular Ghanaian Cinema and 'African heritage' (pdf)
A6	September 26	Comparative Discussion on the films Preparation for visit to Ghana	Prepare for visit to Ghana. Can you see the videos for sale on the street as our reading suggest? How/where do you see film?  <b>Essay #1:</b> Ghanaian Film (due 10/3)
<b>September 27-30: Tema and Takoradi, Ghana</b>			
<b>October 2: No Class</b>			
A7	October 3	Film Review vs. Critical Analysis	<b>Screening:</b> <i>District 9</i> (N.Z./U.S./S.A., Neill Blomkamp, 2009)
A8	October 5	Representation of South Africa	<b>Screening:</b> <i>Totsi</i> (U.K./S.A., Gavin Hood, 2005)
<b>October 7-12: Cape Town, South Africa</b>			
A9	October 13	Discussion of two screenings: nation of origin of filmmakers and representational politics of S.A.	Reading: Wiki page for <i>The Help</i> (pdf)
A10	October 15	International Co-productions and the challenge of financing feature films Screening: <i>The Help</i> (Bollywood Horror)	
<b>October 16: No Class</b>			
A11	October 18	Finish screening <i>The Help</i> & discuss Conventions of the horror genre, Hindi film and Bollywood Cinema (filmed on location in Mumbai and Mauritius)	Tentative screening: <i>The Breakup Guru</i> (Chinese), if DVD can be obtained  <b>Essay #2 DUE:</b> Filming Mauritius (10/21)
<b>October 19: Port Louis, Mauritius</b>			
A12	October 21	Screening: <i>Born Into Brothels</i>	<b>Reading:</b> <i>Born Into Brothels</i> Curriculum Guide (pdf) & read online reviews (pdf)

			<b>Screening:</b> <i>Water</i> (Canada/India, Deepa Mehta, 2005) & “A director in...” (pdf)
<b>October 22: No Class</b>			
A13	October 24	Finish film <i>and</i> discuss <i>Brothels and Water</i> & the controversies of production in India and film reception	<b>Assignment:</b> write 3-5 page paper on the themes, ethical implications and multiple readings of <i>Born Into Brothels</i> (due Nov2)  <b>Essay #3:</b> Indian Cinema (due 11/2)
<b>October 25-30: Cochin, India</b>			
<b>October 31: No Class</b>			
A14	November 2	Excerpt viewing: <i>They Call it Myanmar</i>	<b>Screening:</b> <i>The Lady</i> (FR/UK, Luc Besson, 2011)
<b>November 4-8: Yangon, Myanmar</b>			
A15	November 9	Genre and Gender in Narrative Cinema	Screening: <i>The Scent of Green Papaya</i> (Tran Anh Hung, France/Vietnam, 1993)
<b>November 11: No Class Meetings</b>			
A16	November 12	Context of <i>Three Season</i> (first American film made in Vietnam)	Screening: <i>Three Seasons</i> (Vietnam/US, Toni Bui, 1999)
<b>November 14-18: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam</b>			
A17	November 19	Chinese Cinema & Filmed Adaptations	Screening: <i>Xiu Xiu The Sent Down Girl</i> (Hong Kong, US, Taiwan, Joan Chen, 2000)
<b>November 21: No Class</b>			
A18	November 22	Discussion of the film & explanation of the group project assignments	Screening: <i>Chung King Express</i> (China, Won Kar Wai, 1994)  <b>Essay #4:</b> Burma &/or Vietnam (11/30)
<b>November 24-29: Shanghai, China</b>			
A19	November 30	Japanese Cinema and Visual Style	Screening: <i>RAN</i> , (Japan, Akira Kurosawa, 1985)  Email Dr. Raimist your group's project topic and a few sources for approval by

			Nov. 31 <b>Essay #5:</b> Chinese or Japanese cinema (12/7)
<b>December 2-6: Kobe, Japan</b>			
A20	December 7	Discussion of projects & themes	Prepare your group presentations
A21	December 9	Group Project Presentations 1 & 2	
A22	December 11	Group Project Presentations 3 & 4	
A23	December 13	Group Project Presentations 5 & 6	Study for exam on key concepts & terms
A24	December 15	Exam Review	
<b>December 16: Honolulu, Hawaii</b>			
A25	December 18	Final Exam	
<b>December 23: San Diego, California</b>			

### FIELD WORK

Semester at Sea field experiences allow for an unparalleled opportunity to compare, contrast, and synthesize the different cultures and countries encountered over the course of the voyage. In addition to the one field class, students will complete independent field assignments that span multiple countries.

**Field Class attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field class.** Field Classes constitute at least 20% of the contact hours for each course, and are developed and led by the instructor.

### Field Class & Assignment

The Field Class for this course will take place on Friday, 15 September, in Barcelona, Spain.

Class Title: Visiting Cinema's Past and Present in Girona

**“Visiting Cinema’s Past and Present in Girona”** will bring us to the historic and picturesque charming city of Girona, Spain. After disembarking from the ship we will travel by train from the Sants Station in Barcelona to an area known for Catalan Gothic architecture, statues, fountains, and the River Onyar. In this city that stands between the sea and the mountains, we will experience a guided tour of the Museu del Cine, which houses the collection of Spanish filmmaker, Tomàs Mallol. His collection contains 20,000 objects that date back to pre-cinema. This permanent collection offers scientific, cultural and fun activities to learn about what is behind a film. The museum also features national and international collections that are curated into the museum. Following our tour we will enjoy tapas on the river and have the opportunity to photograph the area. After lunch we will travel to ERAM as part of the University Girona. This program is housed in a former textile factory, the Factoria Cultural Coma Cros de Salt. The space been renewed and equipped with modern infrastructure and facilities, and prepares students for broadcasting, television, filmmaking and careers in interactive media making. We will tour the facility and meet with faculty and students to learn about how media production happens in Spain. One fun fact about our destination is that the city of Girona was used as the location for the sixth season of the popular television show, “Game of Thrones,” so perhaps we can find those locations!

Field Class Learning Objectives:

1. To gain an understanding of the terminology, history and technology of film and the moving image from the Lumière Brothers to current digital media technologies.
2. To learn from an immersive cinematic experience and learn about early cinema’s to present day film production techniques, cameras, styles of filming, and facts on how the star system was born in the U.S. and globally
3. To gain insight in contemporary media production practices through a visit to a local university’s multimedia production program where discussions about contemporary television, media practices in Spain will be gained through conversations with faculty and students.
4. To develop direct connections in understanding the production conditions of the films screened in class and the development of technology used to produce them.

**Questions to frame the visit to the Museu del Cine and to ERAM University facilities:**

1. Why does Girona have a cinema museum?
2. Who is Tomás Mallol and how did he amass this collection of 20,000 pieces? Why is his collection in a museum in Girona? What types of pieces/objects are represented?
3. What collections and exhibits are highlighted in the museum? How are they organized?
4. What from the collection is local, regional and national? What do these items mean when displayed/curated as part of one experience?
5. What is the history and engagement of Spain as part of global cinema framework?
6. What are the connections of science, cinema and history at play in the museum.
7. How did early cinema work, in terms of recording apparatus? What has changed?
8. What do you understand about contemporary filmmaking in Spain? Be specific.
9. What are the contemporary tools, and how are they taught in Girona, Spain?
10. What are the goals of the film/media/broadcast students at the university?
11. What are some similarities or differences to cinema and film school model in the US?

Upon return to the ship, students select to answer the above questions as text-based, mixed media or visual/audio media format response, as follows:

- 5 page reflection paper that addresses the questions informing our visit to Girona
- OR**
- a 2-3 page reflection paper and creative project (images, sounds, video, collage) that engages the questions, **OR** a critically informed short film/video essay (15 min or less)

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING SCALE**

### **GRADING SCALE**

The following Grading Scale is utilized for student evaluation. Pass/Fail is not an option for Semester at Sea coursework. Note that C-, D+ and D- grades are also not assigned on Semester at Sea in accordance with the grading system at Colorado State University (the SAS partner institution).

Pluses and minuses are awarded as follows on a 100% scale:

<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satisfactory/Poor</u>	<u>Failing</u>
97-100%: A+	87-89%: B+	77-79%: C+	Less than 60%:
93-96%: A	83-86%: B	70-76%: C	
90-92%: A-	80-82%: B-	60-69%: D	

### **ASSIGNMENTS / POINTS**

Your grade will be calculated for the assignments as follows:

1. Attendance & Participation in class - 15 points
2. Film Analysis Essays on Screening and Readings (2 pages x 5 essays) - 25 points
3. Field Class Assignment (essay, essay and media, or video essay project) - 20 points
5. Group Presentation on Themes/Genres/Topics - 15 points
6. Final Written Exam - 25 points

### **ATTENDANCE/ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

Attendance in all Semester at Sea classes, including the Field Class, is mandatory. Students must inform their instructors prior to any unanticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion. Instructors must make reasonable efforts to enable students to make up work which must be accomplished under the instructor's supervision (e.g., examinations, laboratories). In the event of a conflict in regard to this policy, individuals may appeal using established CSU procedures.

### **LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS**

Semester at Sea provides academic accommodations for students with diagnosed learning disabilities, in accordance with ADA guidelines. Students who will need accommodations in a class, should contact ISE to discuss their individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation.

A memo from the student's home institution verifying the accommodations received on their home campus is required before any accommodation is provided on the ship. Students must submit this verification of accommodations to [academic@isevoyages.org](mailto:academic@isevoyages.org) as soon as possible, but no later than two months prior to the voyage.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT CODE**

The foundation of a university is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic misconduct. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one's own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the University are affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. All Semester at Sea courses adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct Code.

Depending on the nature of the assignment or exam, the faculty member may require a written declaration of the following honor pledge: "I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment."

## **RESERVE BOOKS AND FILMS FOR THE LIBRARY**

AUTHOR: Timothy Corrigan  
TITLE: Short Guide to Writing about Film, 9th Edition  
PUBLISHER: Pearson  
ISBN: 9780321965240  
DATE/EDITION: 9 edition (July 23, 2014)

AUTHOR: Patricia Aufderheide  
TITLE: Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction  
PUBLISHER: Oxford University Press  
ISBN: 978-0195182705  
DATE/EDITION: 1st edition (November 28, 2007)

### **Films Screened via the ship's intranet and are available on DVD on Reserve:**

*District 9* (South Africa/US/New Zealand/Canada, Neil Blomkamp, 2009)  
*Totsi* (U.K./S.A., Gavin Hood, 2005)  
*Help* (India, Rajeev Virani, 2010)  
*Born Into Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids* (US, Zabriski, Kauffman, 2004)  
*Water* (Canada/India, Deepa Mehta, 2005)  
*They Call it Myanmar: Lifting the Curtain* (US, Robert Lieberman, 2012)  
*The Lady* (France/UK, Luc Besson, 2011)



*The Scent of Green Papaya* (France/Vietnam, Tran Anh Hung, 1993)  
*Three Seasons* (Vietnam/US, Tony Bui, 1999)  
*Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl* (Hong Kong/US/China, Joan Chen, 1998)  
*Chung King Express* (China, Won Kar Wai, 1994)  
*RAN* (Japan, Akira Kurosawa, 1985)

### **ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS**

Assigned readings not included in our textbook are available via pdf files saved on the IntraNet system as indicated by (pdf) on the assignment schedule.

AUTHOR: Halifu Osumare  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Intro & “Making An African Out of the Computer”  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: The HipLife in Ghana: West African Indigenization of Hip Hop  
VOLUME:  
DATE: 2012  
PAGES:1 - 82

AUTHOR: Birgit Meyer  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Ghanaian Popular Cinema and The Magic in Film  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: africanfilmny.org  
VOLUME: <http://www.africanfilmny.org/2011/ghanaian-popular-cinema-and-the-magic-in-and-of-film/>  
DATE:  
PAGES:

AUTHOR: Birgit Meyer  
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Popular Ghanaian Cinema and ‘African heritage’  
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Africa Today  
VOLUME: 46, Number 2  
DATE: Spring 1999  
PAGES: 93-114

*Born Into Brothels* Discussion Guide (pdf)  
<https://www.amnestyusa.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/bornintobrothelscurriculum.pdf>

Selected film reviews of *Born Into Brothels* (pdf), which includes:

Ebert, Robert: <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/born-into-brothels-2005>

Scott, A.O. <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/08/movies/nurturing-the-talents-of-children-in-calcutta.html>

Michel, Fran: <https://www.solidarity-us.org/node/261>

BornIntoBrothelsLies: <http://bornintobrothelslies.blogspot.com/>

Mona, Mukto: [https://mukto-mona.com/Articles/partha\\_ban/born\\_into\\_brothels.htm](https://mukto-mona.com/Articles/partha_ban/born_into_brothels.htm)

Selected articles on controversies in Deepa Mehta’s films (pdf)

NY Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/03/movies/03wate.html>

The Independent (UK): <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/features/deepa-mehta-a-director-in-deep-water-all-over-again-478731.html>

*The Help*, Wikipedia page (pdf)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help\\_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help_(film))

#### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

None needed

## FILM SCREENING NOTES

(Fill out one form for each film screened)

FILM TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTOR: \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR PRODUCED: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION OF FILMING (AND/OR SETTING OF THE FILM):  
\_\_\_\_\_

PICK ONE: STUDIO FILM

INDIE/LOW BUDGET

GRASSROOTS

Estimated BUDGET: Less than \$10,000

Less than \$100k

\$1-2M

Over \$5M

MAIN CHARACTERS:

name(s)

desire(s)

obstacle(s)

PLOT SUMMARY & STORY STRUCTURE NOTES

THEMES OF THE FILM:

SOCIAL ISSUES ADDRESSED, if any: (race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, citizenship, class...)

Notes on the SCRIPT, DIALOG, STORY and PLOT

NOTES on the CINEMATOGRAPHY, VISUALS and LIGHTING

NOTES on the EDITING and PACING

NOTES on the SCORE, MUSIC and soundtrack

NOTES on GENRE/STYLE

NOTES on your REACTION, EMOTION, MOOD, TONE, ETC.