FREN 4246/6246 French and Francophone Films and Media

**General Information**

**Description**

## This course introduces films from France and/or the Francophone world, delving into the heart of French/Francophone society, and discovering socio-historical, political, economic and cultural issues in France and/or the Francophone world. Correspondingly, the course offers two major sections of investigation.

## First, we will discuss films made both within and outside the mainstream film industry. Films will help providing interesting glimpses into some of France & Francophone world’s most complex and hotly debated cultural issues of today. We will also hone our critical skills by analyzing how directors structure their films’ narrative and visual styles.

No previous training in Film studies is required to attend this course. Student’s analytical and critical skills will be thoroughly solicited. The course is taught in French

**OBJECTIVES**

## Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

## Identify and summarize the key themes of several films directed by contemporary filmmakers in France that examine identity, immigration, and/or differences (cultural or other).

## Recognize and critique cultural assumptions about cinema and differences between U.S. and French/European cinematic traditions.

## Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural, historic, geographic, and political contexts in which the films in question are situated.

## Recognize the relevance of these topics in contemporary France.

## Recognize cinematic tools and techniques (framing, lighting, musical score, mise-en-scene, etc.) employed by filmmakers.

## Develop hypotheses about how, when and why filmmakers adopt specific tools and techniques to obtain particular effects.

## Analyze and discuss the films in question using appropriate vocabulary relating to film analysis (point of view shot, sequence, frame, extra-diegetic music, etc).

## Read and understand scholarly essays on French cinema.

## Use the appropriate vocabulary for film analysis.

## Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

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| --- | --- |
| **ML PERFORMANCE GOAL #1: PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION** | |
| **ML Learning Outcome 1 : Demonstrate oral and aural proficiency in the target language** | - Students will demonstrate by interaction in class a continued development of control of basic language skills.  - Students will express orally and in writing a critique of significant works and authors. |
| **ML Learning Outcome 2:** Demonstrate effective presentation skills in the target language | Students will demonstrate the ability to lead a discussion in class on French literature on assigned topics. |
| **ML Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrate writing proficiency in the target language** | Students will produce simple written critical analysis at the Intermediate High level on the ACTFL scale |
| **ML Learning Outcome 4:**  Demonstrate proficiency in comprehension of authentic written texts in the target Language | - Students will produce writing essays and class discussion that they can be proud of: clear, organized, sophisticated, and polished  - Students will focus on the process of writing as a means of learning and effective communication  - Students will read without direct translation the assigned readings in French. |
| **ML PERFORMANCE GOAL #2: INTERCULTURAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE** | |
| **ML Learning Outcome 5: Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a *specific* target-language country or region** | - To understand the relations between film, culture, and cultural conceptions of gender. |
| **ML Learning Outcome 6:**  Demonstrate the ability to analyze an issue from target-culture perspective(s) | - To understand how meaning is produced in film |
| **ML Learning Outcome 7:**  Demonstrate critical reflection on cultural complexity and context | -  - Students will develop their abilities as an engaged, critical reader of the films studied in class, but also of their own work, and the work of their peers. |

**Course Requirements & Grading**

| Assignment |  | Weight (Percentage, points, etc) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Participation, attendance, in-class discussion |  | 10% |
| Short Film Analysis |  | 15% |
| Group presentation |  | 10% |
| Mid-term exam |  | 15% |
| 8-10 pages essay and 2-page proposal |  | 30% |
| Final Paper |  | 20% |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Nature of Assignment** | **Quantity example** | | **Quality example** | | **Role example** | **Type example** |
| **FREN 4246** | **Two 4-page essays + one 7-page research paper** | **10-min presentation** | **3 of 5 research sources in French or English** | **Present w/notes; evaluated on content and communication clarity** | **Participate in class discussion** | **Research paper 7 pages** |
| **FREN 6246** | **Four 4-page essays + one 15-page research paper** | **40-minute presentation** | **All research sources in French** | **Present w/out notes; evaluated on content, precision, style, engagement** | **Lead class discussion/       teach lesson** | **Research paper 15 pages** |

**Description of Graded Components**

**1. Attendance and participation 10%**

It is expected that students will have completed the assigned readings prior to the beginning of class. You are required to bring the readings to class. Everyone is expected to contribute to class discussions in a consistent and productive manner. I will take into account your overall contributions to class discussion over the course of the semester in my determination of your participation grade. We will work together to make this class a successful and safe learning environment. We will be interested in all claims, arguments, and explanations related to the topic at hand. We expect each other to conform to the standards of scholarly standards of reasoning: clarity, precision, accuracy, relevance, and logic. We will make honest attempts to understand one another’s ideas and will help each other to clarify our ideas.

Each student is allowed unexcused 3 absences from class and/or screenings. A fourth absence will result in a lowering of your final grade by 10%. Students who are absent because of participation in approved Institute activities (such as field trips, professional conferences, and athletic events) will be permitted to make up the work missed during their absences. Approval of such activities will be granted by the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, and statements of the approved absence may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar. <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/>

Participation grades will be updated weekly.

10 = high degree of both active participation and preparedness

9 = moderate degree of active participation and high degree of preparedness

8 = moderate degree of both active participation and preparedness

7 = low degree of active participation and preparation

5 = present but barely effective or often shows signs of inattention

**2. Film sequence analysis:** 2 [4246] or 4 [6246] 750-word essays (approximately 4 pages). Due in class. **15%**. Develop an argument about how cinematic strategies (such as mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound design) in your chosen sequence work together to support one of the themes in the film as a whole. More information to follow. The essay will be 4-pages, 12 point font, double-spaced, 1.25 inch left and right margins. Please paginate each page. Your essay will be graded on the following criteria: 1) quality/pertinence of analysis (4); 2) quality of critical thinking (3); 3) pertinence/quality of the information collected (3); 4) grammatical correctness/vocabulary and appropriate use of cinematic terms (3).

**4246 students: 2 4-page essays**

**6246 students: 4 4-page essays**

**3. Individual and Group presentation of assigned film and readings. 10%**

During the semester students will present individually and in groups. Each group will make a presentation to the class on assigned topics. Individual presentations will be on the assigned film and reading. Groups are encouraged to use film clips to support their analyses. See t-square for presentation guidelines.

Powerpoint recommended. All presentations will be graded on the following criteria: 1) quality/pertinence of analysis (4%); 2) quality of critical thinking (2%); 3) pertinence/quality of the information presented (2%); 4) grammatical correctness/vocabulary and appropriate use of cinematic terms (2%).

**4246 students: Individuals will deliver a research presentation on background context of film or text, as selected from a list of topics. Presentations will not exceed 10 minutes and no reading from notes or slides is allowed.**

**6246 students: will deliver a presentation consisting of a 40-minutes class lesson on the text and its message/context.**

**4. Mid-term exam:**. **15%**

**4246 students: Short answers, definitions, one essay question**

**6246 students: will receive a different exam with questions that are geared towards intercultural comparison.**

**5. Final critical essay paper**– One page proposal, and a final 7 [4246] or 15[6246]-pages double-spaced critical essay; rough draft of essay for team critiques uploaded to T-square; final.

Example: Drawing on the issues, theories, and questions discussed in class, you will select a recent film made after 2005 that focuses on a woman character (or set of characters) and write an essay that supports your thesis about how that film positions/portrays/constructs “woman.” In developing an argument that supports your thesis, take into consideration how the story of the film is told, how the woman/women are portrayed, what assumptions about gender are made, and how the film produces meaning about women in contemporary U.S. culture through cinematic strategies.

The essay will be 7 [4246] or 15 pages [6246] (not including Works Cited/Bibliography), 12 point font, double-spaced, 1.25 inch left and right margins. Please paginate each page. A 1-page proposal is due in class for both 4246 and 6246. The proposal must include a thesis statement and a summary of the essay’s main points. Each student in the class will present his research proposal to the class explaining his main research idea (10min max). My evaluation of the final essay will be based on the following criteria:

**Thesis**: Is there a clearly stated thesis? Is the thesis original?  
**Organization**: Does the discussion flow in a logical, coherent manner?  
**Argument**: Is it persuasive? Are the main points well-supported through references to specific scenes and cinematic strategies?  
**Research**: Did the student do the necessary amount of research to respond to the topic? Has the student identified sources properly?  
**Prose style:** Is the writing lucid, error free? Are there major problems of style, syntax, and spelling?  
**Creativity**: Within the parameters of the assignment, has the student shown unusual creativity in the selection and treatment of the topic?

Your essay will be graded on the following criteria: 1) quality/pertinence of analysis 5%; 2) quality of critical thinking 5%; 3) pertinence/quality of the information collected 5%; 4) grammatical correctness/vocabulary and appropriate use of cinematic terms 5%.

**4246 students:** 1 page proposal +7 pages long, **Length: 1750 words ± 10%. At least 3-5 French or English sources.**

**6246 students:** 1 page proposal +15 pages long **Length: 5150 words ± 10%. At least 5 French sources.**

**Grading Scale**

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A 90-100%

B 80-89%

C 70-79%

D 60-69%

F 0-59%

**Course Materials**

**Course Films\***

* Jean-Luc Godard, *A Woman Is A Woman / Une Femme Est Une Femme,* 1961
* Claude Jutra : *Mon oncle Antoine*, 1971
* Sembene Ousmane, *Xala,* 1975
* *Jeanne Dielman, 2300 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*, Chantal Akerman, 1975
* Euzhan Palcy, *Sugar Cane Alley*, 1983
* Claire Denis, *L’intrus*, 1984
* Agnès Varda, *Vagabonde*, 1985
* Denys Arcand, *Le déclin de l'empire américain* 1986
* Léa Pool, *Anne Trister,* 1986
* Claire Denis, *Chocolat,* 1988
* Denys Arcand, *Jésus de Montréal,* 1989
* Claire Denis, *Beau Travail*, 1999
* Yamina Benguigui, *Inch’allah Dimanche*, 2001
* Denys Arcand, *Les invasions barbares.* 2003
* Kechiche, *Games of love and chance*, 2003
* Isabel Coixet, *My Life Without Me*, Isabel Coixet, 2003
* Samira Makmalbaf *At Five In The Afternoon*, 2003
* CRAZY, Jean-Marc Vallée, 2005
* *Vers le Sud, Laurent Cantet,* 2005
* Marjane Satrapi *Persepolis*, 2007
* Agnès Varda, *The Beaches Of Agnès,* 2008
* Claire Denis, *Les Salauds,* 2013
* Xavier Dolan, *It's Only the End of the World* (*Juste la fin du monde*), 2016

*Given that this is a class about movies, the assigned films are central to your understanding of the ideas and theories presented and discussed in class. Attendance will be taken at our Tuesday screenings. Please note that we will not screen a film every Tuesday.*

*\*NOTE: Films will not be shown in class. Only clips from films will be analyzed. You are expected to watch them at home BEFORE class and take notes during the screenings in order to participate to the discussion. Films will be available for viewing at the Georgia Tech Library. They are listed in the course reserve.*

## Additional Materials/Resources:

*Readings will be discussed in class on the day they are listed on the syllabus.*

*Some excerpts of the list bellow.*

* Suzanne Leonard, Turner, Graeme. *“Film Languages”, 2009*
* Chaudhuri, Sonali. *Contemporary World Cinema. Edinburgh University Press, 2005.*
* Vitali, Valentina and Paul Willeman, eds. *Theorising National Cinema. London: BFI, 2006.*
* Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau, eds. *French Films; Texts and Contexts, 2000*
* *La chair du maître, Dany Laferiere,* 1997*.*

*In addition, students will read the following chapters and articles from recent scholarly books and journals:*

* *Abel, Richard. French Film Theory and Criticism: A History/Anthology 1907-1939, 1988.*
* *---. French Cinema, The First Wave, 1915-1929.*
* *Armes, Roy. French Cinema, 1985.*
* *Billard, Pierre. L’âge classique du cinéma français. Du cinéma parlant à la Nouvelle Vague,*
* *1995.*
* *Boggs, Joseph M. The Art of Watching Films: A Guide to Film Analysis, 1978.*
* *Bordwell, David. Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema,*
* *1989.*
* *---, and Kristin Thompson. Film Art: An Introduction.*
* *Brunette, Peter. Screen/play: Derrida and Film Theory, 1989.*
* *Buss, Robin. French Film Noir, 1994.*
* *Corrigan, Timothy. A Short Guide to Writing About Film, 1994.*
* *Dudley, Andrew James. André Bazin, 1990.*
* *Dyer, Richard and Ginette Vincendeau, eds. Popular European Cinema, 1992.*
* *Forbes, Jill. The Cinema in France after the New Wave, 1992.*
* *Graham, Peter. The New Wave. Critical Landmarks, 1968.*
* *Hayward, Susan. French National Cinema. 2nd. Ed. NY: Routledge, 2005.*
* *Lewis, Brian. Jean Mitry and the Aesthetics of the Cinema, 1984.*
* *Mayne, Judith. Cinema and spectatorship, 1993.*
* *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies. Fenwick Ref.*
* *Penley, Constance, ed. Feminism and Film Theory, 1988.*
* *Sadoul, Georges. Dictionnaire des cinéastes, 1965 et Dictionnaire des films, 1983.*
* *Sherzer, Dina. Classic French Cinema, 1930-1960 , 1993.*
* *Williams, Alan. Republic of Images. A History of French Filmmaking. Cambridge, MA: Harvard*

*UP, 1992.*

* *Zants, Emily. Creative Encounters with French Films, 1993.*

## Course Website and Other Classroom Management Tools

Documents posted on T-square.

**Course Expectations & Guidelines**

## Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit [http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/](http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/%20) or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/> .

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

## Attendance and/or Participation

## You are required to attend class M-W-F each week.

## Remember that regular attendance is required. Absences will be recorded and unexcused absences or repeated tardiness will have a decidedly negative effect on your final grade.

## Each absence after the third absence will result in an automatic reduction of your final grade. Regular lateness will also result in the reduction of your final grade. Please arrive to class on time. Being late twice is understandable, but for each additional occurrence of lateness you will have half a point off deducted from your final grade. If I already called the roll, you will be marked absent, unless you tell me after class, in which case you will be marked late. SO: do make sure you arrive on time. Not only do you lose points for coming in late, but also, you lose participation points!

## If you know that you cannot come to class, email me before class convenes and you won't lose points on the assignment. If you are going to have to miss a class due to a college-sanctioned activity, you are responsible for telling me in advance, completing assignments and taking exams ahead of time.

## Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/> for an articulation of some basic expectation that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

## Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

## Please, turn your cell phones off while in class and do not text. This is a question of respect for your classmates and your professor. Thanks.

## Additional Course Policies

No food or drink in the classroom.

**Course Schedule: Focus on women in French/Francophone films**

Week 1 Introduction: Cinema and realism: **AGNES VARDA**

**Film***: The Beaches of Agnès,* 2008 + *Vagabonde*, 1985

**Readings:** Alison Butler, Introduction to *Women’s Cinema*

Claire Johnston, “Women’s Cinema as Counter Cinema” in Kaplan

Patricia White, “Feminism and Film”; Richard Neupert, “Agnès Varda’s Elegant Realism,” (from Chapter 2), 56–72;

and “Agnès Varda: ‘*Cinécriture*,’” (from Chapter 8), 330–54.

Week 2 French Counter Cinema**: JEAN-LUC GODARD**

**Film***: A Woman Is A Woman / Une Femme Est Une Femme,* 1961

**Excerpts:** And God created Woman (1956)

**Readings:** Wollen, Peter. “Godard and Counter Cinema: *Vent d’est*,” 418–26Nicholas Paige, “Bardot and Godard in 1963 (Historicizing the Postmodern Image),” 1–25

Week 3 Women’s Cinema: Counter Claims **CHANTAL AKERMAN**

**Film***: Jeanne Dielman, 2300 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*, 1975

**Readings:** Alison Butler, *Women’s Cinema*, ch. 2

Teresa de Lauretis, “Rethinking Women’s Cinema,” *Technologies of Gender*

Kaja Silverman, “The Female Authorial Voice,” *The Acoustic Mirror* (optional)

Judith Mayne, *The Woman at the Keyhole* (introduction and chs. 3 & 4, optional)

Elizabeth Cowie, “Woman as Sign” in Kaplan (optional)

Week 4 Questioning identity: **XAVIER DOLAN**

**Film***: It's Only the End of the World* (*Juste la fin du monde*), 2016

**Excerpts:** CRAZY, Jean-Marc Vallée, 2005

**Readings:** Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” in Kaplan

**6246 40-minutes class lesson (1)**

Week 5: Allegories of Gender and Nation: **SAMIRA MAKMALBAF**

**Film***: At Five in the Afternoon*, 2003

**Readings:** Alison Butler, *Women’s Cinema*, ch. 3

Michelle Langford, “Allegory and the Aesthetics of Becoming-Woman in Marziyeh

Meshkini’s *The Day I Became a Woman”;* Angela McRobbie, *The Aftermath of Feminism* (excerpts)

**4146 10 minutes presentation (1)**

Week 6: Post-Third Worldist Film : **YAMINA BENGUIGUI**

**Film***: Inch’allah Dimanche*, 2001

*Bedwin Hacker* (Nadia El Fani, 2003, France/Tunisia, 98 min.) *Caramel* (Nadine Labaki, 2007, Lebanon)

**Readings:** Butler, ch. 3

Ella Shohat, “Post-Third-Worldist Culture: Gender, Nation, and the Cinema” in Ezra

Dorit Namaan, “Woman/Nation: A Postcolonial Look at Female Subjectivity” (X)

Fredric Jameson, “Third World Literature in the Era of Multi-national Capitalism” (X)

Angelica Fenner, “Aural Topographies of Migration in Yamina Benguigui’s *Inch’Allah*

*dimanche*”

**6246 40-minutes class lesson (2)**

Week 7 Heading South: **LAURENT CANTET**

**Film***: Vers le sud,* 2005

**Readings:** *La chair du maître*, Dany Laferiere.

**4146 10 minutes presentation (2)**

Week 8 Class Distinctions: **ABDELLATIF** **KECHICHE**

**Film***: Games of love and chance*, 2003.

**Readings:** Chaudhuri, Sonali. *Contemporary World Cinema*

Paul Willeman, “The National Revisited” in Vitali and Willeman

**6246 40-minutes class lesson (3)**

Week 9 Women’s Rights as Human Rights: **MARJANE SATRAPI**

**Film***: Persepolis*, 2007

**Readings:** Algeria Shohini Chaudhuri, *World Cinema*, ch. 7

Inderpal Grewal, “Women’s Rights as Human Rights”

Nira Yuval-Davis, “Human/Women’s Rights and Feminist Transversal Politics”

Priya Jaikumar, “Translating Silences: A Cinematic Encounter with Incommensurable Differences” in Marciniak, et al.

Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

**4146 10 minutes presentation (3)**

Week 10 Canadian Cinematic Writing: **DENY ARCAND**

**Film***: Le déclin de l'empire américain 1986 + Les invasions barbares.* 2003

**Excerpts:** *Jésus de Montréal,* 1989 **+** Claude Jutra : *Mon oncle Antoine*, 1971

**Readings:** *Mayne, Judith. Cinema and spectatorship, 1993*

Week 11 Filmmaking in the African Diaspora: **EUZHAN PALCY**

**Film***: Sugar Cane Alley*, 1983 +Sembene Ousmane, *Xala,* 1975

**Readings:** *Petty, “Collision of cultures: occulted Caribbean histories in Sugar Cane Alley” “Conversation with Euzhan Palcy”*

Juliane Burton-Carvajal, “Marginal Cinemas and Mainstream Critical Theory”

Mette Hjort, “On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalism”

Week 12 World Cinema and the Francophone Cineaste: **CLAIRE DENIS**

**Film***: Beau Travail*, 1999 + *L’intrus*, 1984

**Readings:** Judith Mayne, *Claire Denis*, selections

Steve Neale, “Art Cinema as an Institution”

Timothy Corrigan, “The Commerce of Auteurism”

**4246/6246 research page proposal presentations**

Week 13 World Cinema and the Francophone Cineaste: **CLAIRE DENIS**

**Film***: Chocolat,* 1988 *+ Les Salauds,* 2013

**Readings:** Rosalind Galt, “Mapping European Cinema in the 1990s”

Martine Danan, “National and Postnational French Cinema” in Vitali and Willeman

Rosanna Maule, “The Dialectics of Transnational Identity and Female Desire in Four Films of Claire Denis”

**4246/6246 research page proposal presentations**

Week 14 Francophone Cinema: Filming existential conflicts: **ISABEL COIXET**

**Film***: My Life Without Me*, 2003

**4246/6246 research page proposal presentations**

Final paper due