

**COURSE SYLLABUS
UNIVERSITY STUDIES**

Department of Foreign Languages
Title of Course: The Art of French Cinema

Course No. FL 205
New

I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours:

A study of artistic elements of French cinema through critical examination of directors, themes and techniques. In English; no knowledge of French required. 3 Cr.

II. Prerequisites:

EN 100 or equivalent.

III. Purposes or Objectives of the Course:

- A. To acquaint students with the importance of French cinema and its contributions to the genre of film studies (University Studies Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).
- B. To introduce students to the contributions of major French directors (University Studies Objectives 3, 4, 5, 6, 8).
- C. To enable students to appreciate and evaluate the artistic components of film (University Studies Objectives 3, 4, 6, 8).
- D. To familiarize students with the cultural and historical context of French films (University Studies Objectives 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9).
- E. To provide students with experience in gathering information and communicating their understanding of the elements of French film in oral discussions and in writing (University Studies Objectives 1, 2, 3,).

IV. Expectations of Students:

- A. To complete readings from the textbook and supplementary sources.
- B. To view outside of class six required films and one additional film of the individual's choosing.
- C. To complete three short papers: two analyses of films viewed by the class and one overview of critical judgments (using library and technology resources) of a French film of the individual's choosing.

- D. To attend class regularly, to view in-class film excerpts attentively, and to participate in class discussions.
- E. To pass two exams and a final exam.

V. Course Outline:

[Films included below are examples; not all will be viewed in one semester.]

- A. Introduction and Background (3 hours)
 - 1. Invention of the cinema
 - 2. Formalism and Realism
 - 3. Film as an art form; basics of film criticism
 - 4. Film in France during the silent era: Napoléon (Abel Gance, 1927).
- B. The elements of film language (6 hours)
 - 1. Mise-en-scène (composition) and its role in film: lighting, decor, camera angle
 - 2. Montage (editing): basic conceptions: Russian montage vs. natural montage
 - 3. Scenario and script:
 - a. Film contrasted with theater and novel;
 - b. Role of narrative and dialogue;
 - c. The silent and sound cinema (image and language).
- C. Pre-war World War II and wartime French cinema (6 hours)
 - 1. Competition from Hollywood and Germany
 - 2. Effects of World War II on French film production
 - 3. Ideology and occupation: Grande Illusion (Jean Renoir, 1937).
- D. Post-War France: The New Wave (9 hours)
 - 1. Auteur cinema developed by Les Cahiers du Cinéma
 - 2. Autobiography and childhood in the New Wave: Les 400 Coups (François Truffaut, 1958)
 - 3. New Wave and the myth of Hollywood: A bout de souffle (Jean-Luc Godard, 1960)
 - 4. New Wave realism:
 - a. Influence of Italian neo-realism
 - b. Desire for liberation/rebellion
 - 5. Artistic responses to social forces:
 - a. Jules et Jim (François Truffaut, 1961)
 - b. Un Homme et une femme (Claude Lelouch, 1966)
 - c. Pauline à la plage (Eric Rohmer, 1982).
- E. Formalism in French film (6 hours)
 - 1. Surrealism: Belle de Jour (Luis Bunuel, 1967)
 - 2. Fantasy: La Belle et la Bête (Jean Cocteau, 1945).

- F. Heritage cinema (6 hours)
 - 1. Film adaptations of literature
 - 2. Historical films
 - a. Madame Bovary (Claude Chabrol, 1990)
 - b. Les Misérables (Claude Lelouch, 1995)
 - c. La Nuit de Varennes (Ettore Scola, 1982).

- G. Modernist and experimental cinema in France (3 hours): La Jetée (Chris Marker, 1964).

- H. International aspects (6 hours)
 - 1. French remakes in the United States
 - a. La Cage aux folles/Birdcage
 - b. La Femme Nikita/Point of No Return.
 - 2. Francophone cinema outside France
 - a. La Rue Case-Nègres (Martinique; Euzhan Palcy, 1984)
 - b. Rouge (Switzerland; Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1994)
 - c. Jésus de Montréal (Canada; Denys Arcand, 1989)
 - d. Quartier Mozart (Cameroon; Jean-Pierre Bekolo, 1992).

VI. Textbook:

Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. Film Art: An Introduction. 5th Edition. McGraw Hill, 1996.

VII. Basis of Student Evaluation

- A. Two exams - 30%
- B. Final Exam - 20%
- C. Three short papers - 30%
- D. Oral presentation - 10%
- E. Class Participation - 10%
- TOTAL - 100%

VIII. Justification for Inclusion in University Studies Program:

- A. **Demonstrate the ability to locate and gather information.**
 - 1. Emphasis: Significant
 - 2. Content: In addition to film viewings and readings from the text, the course requires the location and use of background material, including film reviews, film scripts, and critical material related to the analysis of film. These must be located by means of a library search or via electronic media.

3. Teaching Strategies: The instructor acquaints students with the major research tools of film analysis. The instructor provides a bibliography of books and periodicals for students (see Appendix A). A class session in a computer classroom introduces students to on-line resources.
4. Student Assignments: Individual students are required to view a film of their choice and to locate background information and critical commentaries on the film by searching library and electronic resources. They complete a short paper presenting the results of their search. For example, a student might choose to view A Bout de souffle (1960) and research its controversial critical reception, or the influence of the depiction of childhood in François Truffaut's first film, Les Quatre Cents Coups (1958).
5. Evaluation of Student Performance: Students are evaluated on the completeness of their library search, on the accuracy of documentation of resources, and on their ability to synthesize information into a short paper.

B. Demonstrate capabilities for critical thinking, reasoning and analyzing.

1. Emphasis: Significant
2. Content: This course requires careful viewing of films and systematic analysis of their elements. Viewing a serious film and expressing a judgment about it requires a logical approach to the work and involves reflection and analysis. Interpretations and judgments about the film must be supported in a coherent manner. Training in the skills of film analysis requires development of an appreciation of ideas not immediately apparent. Critic Tim Bywater notes that "like other forms of modern literature, the films that attract intellectual inquiry appear to hide their deeper meaning, to be puzzling to the casual viewer who needs the guidance of a critic to help in the discovery of the truths lying beneath the surface (An Introduction to Film Criticism)".
3. Teaching Strategies: The instructor helps students develop a systematic approach to film analysis by helping them examine the technical, thematic, and cultural aspects of French films. The instructor provides students with an approach to film analysis and demonstrates the importance of logical presentation of critical ideas.
4. Student Assignments: Students are expected to view films attentively and to reflect upon them, to come to appreciate demanding films and to become informed viewers by developing their critical judgment. They are expected to set aside personal preference to put forth judgments supported by elements of the film. Sample tasks might include an analysis of the issue of family structure in La Cage aux folles, the role of modern communication devices in Rouge, or the updating of a classic myth in Orphée.
5. Evaluation of Student Performance: Student work is judged on the clarity and logic of judgments or interpretations and on the student's ability to support them with details from the films.

C. Demonstrate effective communication skills.

1. Emphasis: Significant
2. Content: A serious consideration of a film requires the student to become an attentive viewer and to express reactions both orally and in writing. To develop oral communication skills, the course offers opportunities for students to become effective speakers and listeners in a variety of situations: extemporaneous discussion, small group discussion, and one prepared presentation based on the film which the individual student has chosen beyond the films required of the group. Written expression is developed in the three required short papers and on essay exams.
3. Teaching Strategies: The instructor leads the class in analysis of techniques and themes of the films which the class views as a whole. The instructor creates opportunities for students to express themselves orally and sets a high standard for oral expression in matters of clarity, relevancy, logic, word choice, tone, grammatical accuracy, and organization, as appropriate. In written communication the instructor emphasizes focus, organization, correctness, and quality of content. If serious problems occur, the instructor supports the student in obtaining help with writing skills.
4. Student Assignments: Students are expected to express themselves effectively in both oral and written forms of communication. They participate in class discussions by expressing a point of view on aspects of a film and by summarizing results of small group discussions in which they are expected to interact with other students. Each student is expected to speak at appropriate times and to participate as an effective listener when others are speaking. Each student also makes a brief oral presentation (8-10 minutes) based on the film chosen for individual viewing. Students are required to write three short analytical or research papers and complete essay exams, demonstrating knowledge and understanding of content and ability to express ideas in writing.
5. Evaluation of Student Performance: Students are evaluated on their skills in expressing themselves and interacting with others in class discussions, in making an oral presentation, in writing short papers, and in completing essay exams, with attention given to quality of content and mastery of the techniques of oral and written communication.

D. Demonstrate an understanding of human experiences and the ability to relate them to the present.

1. Emphasis: Considerable

2. Content: A film is the artifact of its age and reflects human experience at the time it is produced. Films also dramatize historical situations which portray the reactions of characters in a wide variety of situations and historical periods. Numerous French films deal with experiences in wartime, the colonial period, the postcolonial world, and the age of technology. For example Le Dernier Métro (1980) is set during the German occupation of France (1940-44) and cannot be understood without knowledge of the resistance movement in France during this period. The content of many films educates the viewer as to experiences which have bearing on today's events.
3. Teaching Strategies: The instructor chooses films for historical presentation of real events or for the depiction of fictional events set in a specific historical time period, such as Napoléon (1927) by director Abel Gance. The instructor helps the class understand the historical context portrayed in the film and, in some cases, the historical forces surrounding the production of the film. The instructor leads class discussion as to the themes which are relevant to the present.
4. Student Assignments: Students are expected to consider appropriate historical background for each film they view. When they discuss a film orally or in writing, students are required to demonstrate knowledge of historical conditions which motivate characters or contribute to themes in a film.
5. Evaluation of Student Performance: Students are evaluated for their awareness of the historical and social background of each film, as demonstrated by their performance in class discussions, on exams, and in papers.

E. Demonstrate an understanding of various cultures and their interrelationships.

1. Emphasis: Significant
2. Content: The study of French films requires an understanding of the cultural context and the social environment of France, especially during the past sixty years. Films give a close look at many aspects (both small and large) of a society. Commonly-treated subjects include class and political conflicts, economic situations, and education, frequently against a background of daily routine and family relationships which differ from those found in the United States. Viewing of a foreign film highlights issues of cultural comparison, such as styles of personal interactions and the relative frequency of violent acts in films. Cross-cultural awareness is also emphasized by means of comparison of a French film with an American remake. These invite discussion of cultural issues such as changes made to the plot, characters, or structure to appeal to the American audience.

3. Teaching Strategies: Instructor provides cultural background on France which carries through many French films, including small issues such as personal behavior in greetings and mealtime habits, and larger issues of the status of women and minorities and family relationships.
4. Student Assignments: Students are expected to become aware of the cultural aspects of the films which they view, and to develop an appreciation for cultural situations different from their own. They may be asked to appreciate aspects of a French film, such as Jean de Florette (1986), which would pose problems for an American viewer who does not understand the cultural motivations of the characters.
5. Evaluation of Student Performance: Students are judged for the degree to which they demonstrate an awareness and comprehension of cultural differences. They are expected to demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of cultural background and cultural differences in class discussions, in papers, and on exams.

F. Demonstrate the ability to integrate the breadth and diversity of knowledge and experience.

1. Emphasis: Considerable
2. Content: Many French films explore intellectual concerns of their day, such as the alienation of the individual in modern society, the breakdown of the family, violence, and justice. Films requires students to consider psychological, sociological, political, and aesthetic concepts.
3. Teaching Strategies: The instructor chooses films for their thematic content and includes films which treat a variety of situations. For example, Indochine (1992) shows the French influence in Indochina; Outremer (1991) examines historical, political, and personal relations in a former colony in North Africa. The instructor provides background for Les Misérables du vingtième siècle (1995) by relating historical and political issues needed to understand the film.
4. Student Assignments: Students are expected to consider the social and historical background of each film and the range of issues raised by the film.
5. Evaluation of Student Performance: Students are evaluated for their performance on exams and papers and in class discussions. They are judged for the degree of integration they demonstrate in appreciating the multiple aspects of the film's elements and their ability to comment logically and coherently about them.

G. Demonstrate the ability to make informed, intelligent value decisions.

1. Emphasis: Considerable
2. Content: Serious inquiry into the analysis of films encompasses the exploration of moral issues and increases one's moral understanding. In the production of films, directors often express value decisions about what is worthy of an audience's attention. Films also teach the viewer something about the nature of the human experience by presenting characters who must make choices when confronted with moral conflicts. Viewers participate vicariously in the lives of characters whose experiences are very different from theirs, but who confront moral issues everyone can identify with. For example, Au Revoir les enfants (1987) depicts the efforts of students and staff at a boys' boarding school to shelter Jewish students during the German occupation of France. In Le Dernier Métro, (1980), set during the same period, a wife hides her Jewish husband at great risk to herself and others.
3. Teaching Strategies: The instructor guides the students in identifying moral issues and in understanding the choices open to the characters. The instructor provides necessary background material for comprehending the dilemma of the characters.
4. Student Assignments: Students are asked to consider the moral dilemmas of characters in films and to comprehend the options open to the characters in a given situation. They are expected to consider the moral choices made by characters and the values inherent in these choices. In addition, students are expected to consider the cultural and ideological values of the society for which the films are intended.
5. Evaluation of Student Performance: Students are evaluated for the extent to which they comprehend and communicate the moral conflicts faced by characters in films they see. They are expected to analyze the moral dimension of the films in class discussions and on exams.

H. Demonstrate the ability to make informed, sensitive aesthetic responses.

1. Emphasis: Significant
2. Content: France has a long tradition of regarding cinema as a serious art form which offers an experience in human enrichment. This course is designed to allow students to develop sensitivity to film in general and to the artistic traditions of French film in particular. French filmmakers have historically emphasized film as an art form and have encouraged artistic discourse about the creation of film. Critic Colin Crisp, in The Classic French Cinema, 1930-1960, notes that "cinema not only linked the static spatial arts and the narrative temporal arts, it linked the visual and the verbal arts, the performance arts and

the recorded arts, the spoken and the written, the arts of the eye and the arts of the ear."

For the viewer willing to take a more serious look at films, French filmmakers offer an alternative to the Hollywood emphasis on popular entertainment and subservience to commercial interests. The French tradition of "cinéma d'auteur" treats the director as the film's creator, who enjoys a higher degree of artistic control than Hollywood directors have over their films. French films are often characterized by experimentation and innovation, sometimes unsettling to a viewer whose habits are formed by television. For example, in Cet Obscur Objet de désir (1977) a single character is alternately played by two different actresses.

In this attention to the aesthetic dimension of film, the course includes a variety of artistic approaches to film creation, including surrealist and experimental films, such as Belle de Jour (1967) and Delicatessen (1991) which reject the traditional separation between reality and fantasy and L'Année Dernière à Marienbad (1961) which experiments with time and place.

3. Teaching Strategies: The instructor presents an overview of the artistic elements of film analysis and leads discussion of films which the group views. The instructor supplements the textbook with handouts and documentaries about film (such as Cinema Europe, Visions of Light and Lumière and Company) which examine a variety of artistic approaches to film.
 4. Student Assignments: Students are asked throughout the course to give attention to the artistic aspects of French films and to consider the artistic decisions made by directors. Much of the reading students are expected to complete involves theoretical and critical issues which deal; with aesthetic values.
 5. Evaluation of Student Performance: Students are evaluated for their ability to identify and explain the artistic concepts at work in the films they see, and to defend their artistic judgment by analyzing the artistic results in the film. They are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and appreciation of artistic components in class discussions, in papers, and on exams.
- I. **Demonstrate the ability to function responsibly in one's natural, social and political environment.**
1. Emphasis: Some
 2. Content: Serious French films encompass an intellectual dimension; they are aimed at audiences who come to confront the difficulties and problems of modern life, not to escape them. They often treat universal themes common to

all cultures and individuals: personal identity, the status of women and minorities, war and peace, and ethical questions in a variety of situations. These films offer a way to explore contemporary ideas in modern life and to mature in one's environment.

3. Teaching Strategies: The instructor highlights issues in films which are related to today's concerns, and guides the students in discussions to examine the complexities portrayed in the films.
4. Student Assignments: No student assignments address this objective directly, although it is a secondary consideration in all assignments completed by the student.
5. Evaluation of Student Performance: This objective will not be a major factor in the evaluation of student performance.

IX. Background: Instructor must have a thorough knowledge of French cinema and French culture.

X. Class size: 25 students.

XI. APPENDIX A

A. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrew, Dudley. Concepts in Film Theory. New York: Oxford UP, 1984.

Andrew, Dudley. Major Film Theories. New York: Oxford UP, 1976.

Armes, Roy. French Cinema. Secker and Warburg, 1985.

Bandy, Mary Lea, ed. Rediscovering French Film. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1983.

Biggs, Melissa. French Films, 1945-1993: A Critical Filmography of the 400 Most Important Releases. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc.

Bluestone, George. Novels into Films. Berkeley: California UP, 1966.

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B. Selected Periodicals in Kent Library Collection:

Film Comment. New York: Film Society of Lincoln Center.

Film Quarterly. Berkeley: University of California Press

Literature Film Quarterly. Salisbury. MD: Salisbury State College.

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Sight and Sound. London: British Film Institute.

XII. APPENDIX B

French Films (with English subtitles) on Video in Kent Library Collection (97 Titles)

<u>Title, director and date of release</u>	<u>Call number: VC</u>
A bout de souffle , Jean-Luc Godard, 1960	6213
L'Amie de mon amie , Eric Rohmer, 1989	3190
L'Année dernière à Marienbad , Alain Resnais, 1961	685
Argent de poche , François Truffaut, 1976	203
Ascenseur pour l'échafaud , Louis Malle, 1958	6171
Augustin , Jean-Marie Dreujou, 1995	7048
Au revoir les enfants , Louis Malle, 1987	1812
Aux champs , Christian Chivot, 1986	1599
Le Beau Mariage , Eric Rohmer, 1986	1059
La Belle et la bête , Jean Cocteau, 1945	560
La Belle Noiseuse , Jacques Rivette, 1990	6835-6836
Betty Blue , Jean-Jacques Beineix, 1986	3433
La Boum , Claude Brasseur, 1980	1811
Buffet froid , Bertrand Blier, 1980	1610
La Cage aux folles , Edouard Molinaro, 1979	7049
Cet obscur objet de désir , Luis Buñuel, 1977	1075
Champ d'honneur , Jean-Pierre Denis, 1987	3469
Le Charme discret de la bourgeoisie , Luis Buñuel, 1972	581
Le Château de ma mère , Yves Robert, 1991	3192
Le Cheval d'orgueil , Claude Chabrol, 1980	4583
Le Chien andalou , Luis Buñuel, 1929	683
Chocolat , Claire Denis, 1989	3070
Cléo de Cinq à Sept , Agnès Varda, 1961	6347
Le Colonel Chabert , Yves Angelo, 1992	6159
Les Compères , Francis Veber, 1984	934
Coup de grâce , Volker Schlöndorff, 1983	931
Le Crabe tambour , Pierre Schoendoerffer, 1977	2980
Cyrano de Bergerac , Jean-Paul Rappeneau, 1990	3072
Danton , Andrzej Wajda, 1982	805
Delicatessen , Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, 1991	3407

Le Dernier Métro , François Truffaut, 1980	5644
Les Diaboliques , H.G. Clouzot, 1955	4369
Diva , Jean-Jacques Beineix, 1981	6185
Entre nous , Diane Jurys, 1984	1764
Le Fantome de la liberté , Luis Buñuel, 1974	6845
La Femme Nikita , Luc Besson, 1991	2704
La Femme rompue , Françoise Verny, 1986	1600
Fort Saganne , Alain Corneau, 1984	6839-6840
Germinal , Claude Berri, 1993	6157-6158
La Gloire de mon père , Yves Robert, 1991	3191
Grain de sable , Pomme Meffre, 1984	3468
Le Grand Chemin , Jean-Loup Hubert, 1987	3193
Grande Illusion , Jean Renoir, 1937	826
Hiroshima mon amour , Alain Resnais, 1959	823
L'Histoire d'Adèle H. , François Truffaut, 1975	2701
Indochine , Régis Wargnier, 1992	6173
Jean de Florette , Claude Berri, 1987	1624
Jésus de Montréal , Denys Arcand, 1989	2723
La Jetée , Chris Marker, 1964	6344
Les Jeux interdits , René Clément, 1952	2702
Jour de fête , Jacques Tati, 1949	933
Le Journal d'un curé de campagne , Robert Bresson, 1951	976
Jules et Jim , François Truffaut, 1961	6326
La Lectrice , Michel Deville, 1988	3408
Les Liaisons dangereuses 1960 , Roger Vadim	1717
Le Livre de Marie , Anne-Marie Mieville, 1985	930
Madame Bovary , Claude Chabrol, 1990	3071
Madame Rosa , Moshe Mizrahi, 1977	5463
Marie Antoinette , Caroline Huppert, 1989	3675
La Mariée était en noir , François Truffaut, 1960	6169
Masculin féminin , Jean-Luc Godard, 1966	6170
Le Mépris , Carlo Ponti, 1964	3524
Milou en mai , Louis Malle, 1990	3678
Les Misérables , Jean-Paul le Chanois, 1957	5415
Les Misérables du 20e siècle , Claude Lelouch, 1995	6155-6156
Nelly et Monsieur Arnaud , Claude Sautet, 1995	6833
Noeud de vipères , Jean Chatenet, 1980	4201
Noirs et blancs en couleur. , Jean-Jacques Annaud, 1976	3338
La Nuit de Varennes , Ettore Scola, 1982	806
Les Nuits de la pleine lune , Eric Rohmer, 1984	1060
Mon Oncle d'Amérique , Alain Resnais, 1980	2806
Orphée , Jean Cocteau, 1950	998
Outremer , Brigitte Rouan, 1991	3676
Les Parapluies de Cherbourg , Jacques Demy, 1964	1011

Pauline à la plage , Eric Rohmer, 1982	1061
Pierrot le fou , Jean-Luc Godard, 1965	2986
Quartier Mozart , Jean-Pierre Bekolo, 1992	3962
Les 4 Aventures de Reinette et Mirabelle , Rohmer, 1986	3194
Les Quatre Cents Coups , François Truffaut, 1959	6174
La Règle du jeu , Jean Renoir, 1939	414
La Reine Margot , Patrice Chereau, 1994	6167
La Religieuse , Jacques Rivette, 1965	2705
Les Rendez-vous de Paris , Eric Rohmer, 1997	6834
Le Retour de Martin Guerre , Daniel Vigne, 1982	593
Ridicule , Patrice Leconte, 1997	6844
Les Ripoux , Claude Zidi, 1985	937
Le Rouge et le noir , Claude Autant-Lara, 1957	1359
La Rue Cases-nègres , Euzham Palcy, 1984	935
Sans toit ni loi , Agnès Varda, 1985	3677
Sous le soleil de Satan , Maurice Pialat, 1987	3333
Tatie Danielle , Etienne Chatiliez, 1991	6168
Tirez sur le pianiste , François Truffaut, 1960	146
Trois couleurs: Blanc , Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1995	6217
Trois couleurs: Bleu , Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1993	6218
Trois couleurs: Rouge , Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1994	6219
La Vieille qui marchait dans la mer , L.Heynemann, 1991	6842
Weekend , Jean-Luc Godard, 1967	3069