Dutch Film history, film historiography, film studies, cinema studies, film analysis, screen/visual culture.

This course aims at introducing the field of film history and audiovisual (screen) culture, emphasizing the history of film aesthetics and film historiography. Although this course focuses upon the development and history of film aesthetics and film as a specific communicative language, we argue that film as an art form, a means of expression and communication should be looked at from a broader social context. This implies the influence of technological, political, sociocultural and economic factors. This course, which is inspired by recent developments in film and cinema studies (cf. 'New Cinema History'), focuses on movie aesthetics and meaning, as well as on issues related to the production, distribution and societal reception of films. Rather than aiming at giving an exhaustive overview of the history of cinema, this course focuses upon a series of case studies and exemplary movies (some of which are shown as part of a film club experience).

This course consists of a series of lectures, self-reliant study activities and group discussions with viewing sessions.

The first part of the series of lectures illustrates the multiple historical importance of film, with a focus upon different kinds of film history (film as art, as an industry, as a political, cultural and societal phenomenon). This part also deals with the issue of film historiography; here the course critically looks at the main problems and pitfalls of film historiographical practices.

The second part is an introduction to the analysis of film and audiovisua language, with a focus upon different models and a vocabulary for doing film analysis.

The third and most extensive part deals with the history of film aesthetics, mainly looked at from a case study perspective. This part presents some of the major or canonical film schools, including the period of pre-cinema, early cinema, the international expansion of film before the First World War, the German Weimar cinema, soviet cinema during the interwar period, French interwar cinema, the development of Hollywood cinema, Italian neo-realism, the French New Wave, New European Authors,...
Where necessary, insights of film theory will be used (e.g., montage theories within soviet cinema, theories in relation to classical and alternative film style), while a great number of film excerpts will be shown. During these lectures recent trends in film historiography are fully applied, mainly those known as ‘New Cinema History’, where new film historiographic methods, concepts and trends on film history are used. As a self-reliant study activity students are expected to watch canonical works in the history and read important texts about these. At the start of the semester a list of 10 movies will be put online, all of these films heavily relate to theme’s, authors, styles and developments that prominently feature in this course. Some of the lectures will be organized in the film club tradition, where movies will be shown, analysed and discusses.

Students of the Masters in Communication Sciences write an essay for this course unit in which they analyse a movie (free choice); they make use of the film historiographic and analytical skills offered in this course, and indicate that they can use film-related vocabulary.

Initial competences
None

Final competences
1. Acquire basic knowledge of (parts of) the international film history.
2. Be able to use elements from other sciences, especially sociology, economics, and political science in order to bring better understand the phenomenon of film.
3. Be able to critically look at existing and recent concepts and theories related to the film and audiovisual language.
4. Be able to critically evaluate and apply film/audiovisual sources and production techniques (editing, camera work, mise-en-scene, ...).
5. Be able to form language a judgment and interpret different styles within the audiovisual/film production.
6. Be able to place canonical works of film history within their historic and artistic context.
7. Be able to reflect independently on film as an artistic medium.

Conditions for credit contract
Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract
This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods
Guided self-study, lecture, lecture: plenary exercises

Extra information on the teaching methods
Lectures with (clips from) movies and documentaries. In addition to the development of film language and film aesthetics, these lectures also examine the social and cultural importance, role and influence of film. The lectures also use insights from other sciences, especially sociology, art-science and political-economy. The lectures also try to link up with recent developments within film studies (eg ‘New Cinema History’). At the beginning of the semester students get a list of 10 important movies in the history of the medium. As part of self-reliant study activities students are expected to watch and study these films in their entirety. Furthermore they will have to read core texts on these works. In accordance the exam will feature one separate question devoted to these films and matching writings where students have to put one or more of these film into perspective with the contents of the course. Throughout the semester several of these films will be featured on big screen by the university film club of ‘Film-Plateau’. Leaflets will be made available with more concrete information on screening dates and places. There is a collaboration with the international film festival FilmFest Gent.

The film analytic essay consists of a written paper with a size of approximately 6,000 words.

Learning materials and price
- hand-outs lectures (powerpoint presentations through Ufora)
- textbook: Cook, D.A. (2016) A History of Narrative Film. New York: Norton. (purchase not obligatory; copies will be available in the library)

References

(Approved)
Course content-related study coaching
Lecturer and teaching assistant.

Evaluation methods
end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period
Written examination with open questions

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period
Written examination with open questions

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation
Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation
not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods
Written examination with open questions
Essay (for students of the Master in Communication Sciences)

Calculation of the examination mark
80% Periodical evaluation. Written exam with open questions.
20% NPE (essay).