



CIEE Paris, France

Course title:	Contemporary French Cinema (in English)
Course code:	CINE 3101 PAFR (ENG)
Programs offering course:	Arizona State University Global Flex - Course + Internship, Arizona State University Global Flex - 3 Credit, Arizona State University Global Flex - 6 Course Credits, Paris Open Campus Block
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3.00
Contact hours:	45.00
Term:	Spring Block I 2023

Course Description

This course focuses on contemporary French cinema, with an emphasis on film culture in Paris and its area. It also provides an introduction to the practice of film analysis as well as to the main figures and movements in the period considered. In addition, we will examine the importance of cinema in documenting and affecting the social, cultural, and political changes taking place in contemporary France.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- master the terms that are essential for the analysis and interpretation of film, and as a spectator, sharpen their attention to the forms and meanings of images and sounds;
- become more attuned to the social and cultural forces that shape film-making, and which film-making informs in return, through a historical perspective on French cinema (artists, movements, state and private institutions, as well as the practice of cinema-going);
- report on a personal, first-hand experience of film culture in Paris.

Course Prerequisites

None.

Methods of Instruction

The course will be articulated around the understanding of French cinema as a distinct film culture. A comparative approach with the U.S. film industry will occasionally be used to that effect.

The other key aspect of the course will involve *practice*—of film analysis through activities linked to cinephilia (the ciné-club discussion or debate) as well as more academic in nature (writing an essay on film). A particular focus here is the sometimes-uneasy distinction between objective description, interpretation and opinion.

Also, key in experiencing French cinema firsthand is going out to film or film-related events to observe a social ritual and perhaps even *take part* in it...).

Generally, student initiative and autonomy as well as collaboration will be encouraged in all coursework.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Quizzes	20%
2. Film Essay	25%
3. Group Presentation of Field Research on a Film Site/Event	35%
4. Participation	20%
TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

Quizzes

Following lectures on early cinema, the Second World War and the New Wave, respectively, three quizzes assess essential knowledge and understanding of the topics.

Film Essay

Choice of *two* aspects for description and analysis with justification: 5%

Final version: 20%

Drawing on the various terms and notions for description and analysis learned during the course as well as on the films viewed and discussed, each student writes about a French or French-speaking film chosen by the instructor, focusing more specifically on excerpts s/he chooses as representative of the whole work or as turning points in it. The objective is to improve one's thinking about film as well as one's writing by going through important questions and stages, and to better appreciate the practice of the film essay or review.

The assignment progresses through several steps, all discussed in class (gathering and selecting information on the film, offering a synopsis and breaking down its narrative structure/expliciting its discourse, identifying key moments for excerpts, choosing two aspects of the film for description and analysis, putting together an introduction and a conclusion).

Each student submits a 200-word proposal mentioning the two aspects of the film s/he has chosen for analysis, justifying his/her choices. The assignment culminates in a film essay carefully proofread before submission. The length ranges from 1,500 words to 2,000 words.

Group Presentation of Field Research on a Film Site/Event

100-word explanation of choice: 5%

Slideshow or other supporting documents: 10%

Delivery of presentation: 20%

The group presentation is an oral account of an event involving film in any way (attending an exhibition on film, going to a screening in a movie theater or in a different venue, attending a concert of film scores, a film or video festival, attending a shoot, etc.). Each group initially submits a proposal which is subject to the instructor's approval.

If interested in interviewing or just meeting people to add primary material, students should feel free to do so, but it is by no means an obligation. The primary focus is on the following elements, which students should adapt, depending on the subject of their presentation:

- defining the institution, organization or theater they visited, especially through its location, the events it is in charge of, a brief history of its activity, its space(s) and architecture, its visual identity; it should be specific to Paris or another place students are visiting in France during their stay (including the study tour), *and something they could not find in the United States*;
- describing the specific moment or event students took part in (time of the day, day of the week, type of film) and the social/cultural background of other participants, as far as they could tell;
- telling about their own experience of it, and (if applicable) comparing what they noted to what a similar event would have been in the US, sharing it with other students in the group who did not get the chance to attend (and may still want to do so, in some cases).

A selection of events or places to check out in the Paris area or during the study tour will be provided by the instructor. On the day preceding the presentation, students should submit all accompanying documents through Canvas.

Participation

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

For this specific course, participation involves:

- contributions to class discussions showing preparation (mastering the terms for film description and

- analysis, articulating information learned from the readings)
- contributions to post-screening discussions showing attention to the film, from its details to the more general levels of its structure
- online discussions/posts concerning co-curricular activities, before or after they take place
- sharing information about French film discoveries, including films seen, events attended and places visited.

Important: all course assignments must be turned in on time.

While students will not be penalized for submissions up to and including 1 hour late,

- Students submitting work from 1 hour and 1 minute late up to and including 24 hours late will be penalized 15% from the assignment;
- Student work submitted from 24 hours and 1 minute late onward will receive a zero (0%) grade.

Attendance

To encourage engaged learning, regular class attendance is required throughout the program. This includes any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as internship, service-learning, or other required field placement.

An excused absence in a CIEE course will only be considered if approved by a CIEE Center Director/Academic Director (not the Instructor), and:

- it is a self-certified absence for illness (only once per course, requires formal request before or within 24 hours, cannot miss assessment worth more than 5% of final course grade)
- a doctor's note from a local medical professional is provided
- evidence of a family emergency is provided
- it is a pre-approved observance of religious holiday

Unexcused absences include personal travel and/or travel delays, as well as missing more than 25% of a single class period (including tardiness and early departure). Assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be marked as zero. Students with over 10% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff. Students with over 20% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff, receive a formal warning letter (shared with their home institution) and lose 10% of the final course point total (e.g., a final A grade of 93% will be lowered to a B grade of 83%).

For more detail, please consult your CIEE Academic Manual.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment. All students are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness, respect, and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in grade penalties or disciplinary action. See the CIEE Student Academic Manual for further information on academic integrity.

N.B. Course schedule and co-curriculars are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: 1.1 .

- Presentation of the course, the schedule and the breakdown of assignments.
- Discussion on perceptions of French (and European) cinemas.
- A brief guide to film exhibition/distribution and movie-going in Paris/in France. Suggestions of events and places to research and visit for final group presentations.

For next class

- Read sections on aspect ratio, film gauge, framing (terms for film description and analysis) in the Files section on Canvas.
- Complete survey on Canvas on your prior experience with the subject matter of the course.

Class: 1.2 .

- Screening and discussion: Abderrahmane Sissako, *Timbuktu* (2014).

For next class

- Watch *Elle* (Paul Verhoeven, 2016), the film assigned for the film essay, and look up information on the film.
- Read terms for the description and analysis of angles and shot scales as well as mobile framing.

Week 2

Class: 2.1 .

- Screening and discussion: clips from Michel Hazanavicius, *The Artist* (2011).
- Debrief on first viewing of *Elle*; discussion of information found on the film.
- Guest speaker: Emma Cogan, projectionist at movie theater L'Écran (St-Denis, north of Paris).

For next class

- Read terms for the description and analysis of sound.
- Prepare a 100-word synopsis of *Elle*, emphasizing the narrative structure and arc of the film. Add a paragraph on what you would say is the message, or discourse, of the film, being as specific as possible.
- Read Emmanuelle Toulet, *Birth of the Motion Picture*. Ch. 1-3 are required, 4-6 are recommended.

Class: 2.2 .

- Co-curricular outing: visit to the Cinémathèque française.
- French film history: the 'invention' of cinema. Early film = silent film?
- Discussion of the narrative progression of *Elle*. What is the discourse of the film, in your opinion?

For next class

- Read terms for the description and analysis of mise-en-scène.
- Prepare for quiz #1.

Week 3

Class: 5.0 .

Quiz #1: the invention of cinema / early cinema.

Choice of film venue or event for film research presentation due.

- Screening and discussion: Olivier Nakache and Eric Toledano, *Intouchables* (2011). Do film comedies thrive on preconceptions for laughs, or can they lead to questioning of any kind?

For next class

- Read terms for the description and analysis of continuity editing.
- Reading: Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, "From the Blum-Byrnes Agreement to the GATT Affair," parts I and II (required); part III (recommended).

Class: 6.0 .

- Screening and discussion: Noémie Lvovsky, *Camille redouble* (2013).
- French film history: the legacy of the Occupation and postwar eras for French cinema.

For next class

- Read terms for the description and analysis of alternatives to continuity editing.
- Identify three excerpts that represent *Elle*, according to you, and come prepared to justify your choice. Situate the excerpts precisely in the film, with time codes noted for each.

Week 4

Class: 7.0 .

- Screening and discussion: Mathieu Amalric, *On Tour* (2010).
- Discussion of excerpts chosen as representative of *Elle*. Which aspects of film-making, film form, theme do they emphasize?

For next class

- Prepare for quiz #2.

Class: 8.0 .

Quiz #2: French film in the Occupation and the postwar era.

- Screening and discussion: Robert Guédiguian, *La Ville est tranquille* (2000).

For next class

- Reading: Michel Marie, *The French New Wave. An Artistic School*, ch. 1 and 2.

Week 5

Class: 9.0 .

- French film history: the New Wave.
- Guest speaker: Mickaël Berreby, assistant director. To be confirmed.

For next class

- Write outline of the two aspects of *Elle* you plan to describe and analyze.

Class: 10.0 .

Outline of description and analysis of two aspects of *Elle* due.

- Screening and discussion: Claire Denis, *I Can't Sleep* (1994).

For next class

- Prepare for quiz #3.

Class: 11.0 .

Quiz #3: the New Wave.

- Screening and discussion: Agnès Varda and JR, *Faces Places* (2016).
- Discussion: writing a good introduction and conclusion to the essay on *Elle*. How would you summarize the message, or discourse of the film at this stage?
- Course evaluations to be completed.

For next class

- Prepare for the presentation of your field research on a film-related event or site. Send all accompanying documents, including slideshows (Powerpoint, etc) to the instructor no later than 5pm.

Week 6

Class: 12.0 .

Final group presentations of field research on event attended/site visited, followed by Q&A.

Class: 13.0 .

- Discussion: how has the course affected your perception and understanding of French cinema?

Course Materials

Readings

Bibliography

Emmanuelle Toulet, *The Birth of the Motion Picture* (1988; London, New York: Abrams, 1995).

Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, "From the Blum-Byrnes Agreement to the GATT Affair," in *Hollywood and Europe. Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-1995*, eds. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Steven Ricci (London: BFI, 1998).

Michel Marie, *The French New Wave. An Artistic School*, trans. Richard Neupert (1997; Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

Recommended background reading for a general survey of French film history (available on Canvas)

The Oxford History of World Cinema, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1999).