

Program in Cinema and Screen Studies Plan for Writing Across the Curriculum

I. Goals (ends)

Because Cinema and Screen Studies is based in the Humanities, the goals set for student writers are those of the humanities more generally:

1. Students will understand the specialized vocabulary that has evolved over the last century of film and media scholarship and be able to deploy it in their writing.
2. Students will be able to recognize and summarize an argument, rehearse its salient claims, and adduce instances that confirm, contest or complicate the claims made therein.
3. Students will be able to argue their own claims and assertions while conforming to and/or challenging the conventions of film and media scholarship.
4. Students will write clearly, convincingly, and elegantly, adhering to the discursive expectations of prose style in the humanities.
5. Students will strive for originality. Students should manipulate terminology, work against the grain of an argument, play with induction and deduction, parts and wholes, rules and exceptions, draw unexpected conclusions, use esoteric examples, play with words, etc.

II. Objectives (means)

All students in the program take a required, four-course sequence, all of which include substantial amounts of reading and writing. The sequence is developmental both in respect to material, conceptual and contentual, and writing.

1. At the 200-level (introductory), students are introduced to specialized vocabularies and concepts, to the history of cinema, and are expected to integrate these in a variety of writing assignments, from prose essays to essay exams. At this level, students meeting expectations will, at a minimum, understand and use the vocabulary of film grammar, and incorporate this vocabulary into short prose arguments, if only haltingly or mechanically. These courses are taught in both small and large group formats.
2. At the 300-level (intermediate), students are expected to extend and deepen their 200-level skills while attending to more complex, theoretical issues and developing their own distinctive styles as writers of humanistic prose. Essays are lengthier and more fully incorporate independent research. At this level, students meeting expectations should demonstrate an easiness with terminology and the ability to manipulate it in increasingly sophisticated and complex writing assignments. These courses are never larger than 35 students per section.

3. At the 400-level (advanced), students are expected to frame, in original and poignant ways, the various horizons in which their written work will come to matter. Students are expected to recognize and signal the political, ethical and aesthetic implications of their research and writing. At this level, students meeting expectations should demonstrate elegance and originality both conceptually and stylistically in a variety of discursive forms. Eng 486 is usually taught in large-instruction format. All other 400-level courses are capped at 19 students.

III. Courses

- A. Eng 286, Introduction to Cinema and Screen Studies
- B. Eng 386, The Cinema
- C. Eng 388, Film Genre
- D. Eng 486, World Cinema
- E. One of the following:
 - a. Eng 220, Modern Culture and Media
 - b. Eng 387, Vision and Textuality
 - c. Eng 389, Documentary Traditions
 - d. Eng 390, Images of Native Americans on Film
 - e. Eng 487, Advance Study in Film Theory
 - f. Eng 488, Auteur Studies
 - g. Eng 489, Women and Screen Studies

IV. Special Circumstances

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the major, transfer students must take all the courses included in the writing plan. But this should prove no additional burden since students will be naturally moving through these courses in the completion of the major. Students are sometimes exempted from introductory filmmaking and screenwriting courses, but these are not included in the writing plan. Double majors will be expected to meet all the requirements of the writing plan in Cinema and Screen Studies. Again, this will prove no additional burden. Undeclared majors or students switching majors are responsible for all courses of the writing plan. These courses, once again, make up the core of the major.