

Course: FILM 325 and FILM 425 "Experimental Filmmaking"

Winter 2022-2023: Thursday 1:30pm – 4:45pm

Classroom location: 14 E. Jackson Room LL105 (In Person)

Professor Yin (she, her, hers)

See Faculty Profile

Contact: email preferred cyin1@depaul.edu

Office: CDM 465 | Phone: 312-362-5841

Office hours: Tuesday from 1 pm to 4 pm. Schedule Zoom appointments via BlueStar

Course Description

Experimental or avant-garde Cinema is a genre of filmmaking that uses film art, video art, and new media to challenge traditional Cinema. The goal of making experimental Cinema is to foster intellectual work, create meaningful forms and content, and engage critical film studies. Assignments emphasize readings, discussions, and debates about the history, theory and aesthetics of film art. These encompass non-narrative treatments in multiple forms, including single and multi-use monitors and projection, installation, and performance for the camera. You will produce your own short film by using a non-linear editing system.

Course Objectives

Media literacy is an important component of contemporary life. Experimental film and video are mediums with varied interpretive levels that can force us to think critically about our choices of interpretation and about the relationship between form and meaning. The art of Cinema is a visual language that involves describing and interpreting the media culture around us and our relationship to it. Therefore, experimental film and video can be excellent devices to foster the objectives of constant learning, thinking critically and enhancing knowledge about ourselves and the world around us.

In addition, at the end of the course, you shall expect to learn the following skills in filmmaking:

- To develop writing and communication skills on describing and analyzing experimental films
- To explore history and aesthetics in moving image and sound art
- To explore editing in moving images and sound by understanding the film language
- To explore alternative forms and methods for making experimental Cinema

Course Structure

Class assignments include **studio projects, weekly reflection papers (1 page per week), and their pre-production proposals (1 page each).**

Students will draw upon the history, theory, and aesthetics of experimental Cinema within their creative practice. In addition to their studio assignments, students should expect to spend three hours outside of class time dedicated to watching assigned films and videos, reading assigned articles and writing paper assignments.

After students receive feedback on their work, they will revise and resubmit their projects. Throughout the course, students have an opportunity to improve their work by resubmitting them by a designated due date. This way, students have time to contextualize and communicate their ideas clearly in oral, written, visual and audio form. Class time will be divided between lectures, discussions, critiques, film viewings, and presentations. As part of the class structure and schedule, assignments and projects will overlap.

Assignments or projects will be introduced two weeks prior to a lab day to help you prepare your shooting plan before the lab time starts. Active participation in critiques is required.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to analyze work through film language and contextual-based critique.
- Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a work of the experimental film is about and/or how it was produced.
- Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in work.
- Students will be able to assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.
- Students will be able to understand the language of experimental Cinema through film analysis and theory.
- Students will be able to examine experimental film's history and connections to the evolution of all forms of motion-picture media.
- Students will be able to utilize non-traditional cinematic concepts and techniques to produce experimental films.

Content & Schedule Changes

The syllabus is subject to change depending on class progress, time constraints, or material availability. The overall workload, however, will not change. Make sure you pace yourself accordingly. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

Advising and Office Hours

Schedule Zoom appointments via BlueStar. To access BlueStar, click on the BlueStar Student Support link from your Student Center in [Campus Connect](#). If BlueStar fails, please email me and request the appointment at cyinl@depaul.edu.

Learning-Related questions

I am available 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after class. If you need assistance regarding your assignments or class-related questions, feel free to catch up with me before or after class time.

Course Management System: D2L

The course materials for this course, such as the syllabus, announcements, course documents, and assignments, will be available to you through the D2L site at <https://d2l.depaul.edu/>. You should be able to log in with your [Campus Connect](#) credentials.

Required Supplies (If you don't have the following devices, please let me know):

- Personal Computer / Laptop
- External hard drive - If you use Mac, use the OS platform; if you use a PC, format your hard drive to a PC platform. A hard drive (USB 3, Thunderbolt, SSD, or spinner at least at 7200rpm) is helpful. The University cannot guarantee that media or projects left on lab computers will be safely maintained.
- Video/audio capable devices, e.g., smartphones (android, apple, etc.) and DSLRs
- Computer Programs: Adobe Premiere Pro or other editing software. Please install the software by the second week of the course. DePaul University provides free licenses of Adobe CC (Creative

Cloud) to students in any class requiring Adobe CC. The following link includes the instructions to access Adobe CC: [LINK](https://offices.depaul.edu/information-services/services/Software/Pages/default.aspx)
<https://offices.depaul.edu/information-services/services/Software/Pages/default.aspx>

More Hardware and Software Information

Still and Video Camera, Audio Recording Equipment: Gear is available for checkout from the [CDM Equipment Center](#).

Editing Software: [CDM Computer Labs](#) are available for software use outside of class and offer Adobe Creative Cloud on PC and Mac operating systems.

Information on labs, rooms, production equipment, rules, and guidelines can be found on the [CDM Production Resources website](#).

Equipment Checkout Access

All the equipment in the loop equipment center would be available to your students.

Here's a link to online equipment reservations.

<https://cdmwebcheckout.cdm.depaul.edu/sso/patron#!/>

Vandalism

Treat all equipment with care! Access to the computer labs is limited to only those students who are currently enrolled in a computer class in the Art Department. You cannot allow students into the lab who are not in this class. Only an instructor or lab assistant may do so; abuse of this policy has resulted in theft and loss of equipment, which hurts all students. Abuse of this policy or abuse of any equipment, including keeping equipment overdue, will harm everyone in the class and may result in a lowering of a student's grade.

Grading

Studio Projects (Individual/Groups)	59%
Weekly Reflection Paper (Individual)	21%
Class attendance and Participation	20%

Paper Policy

To do well in this course, you will need to put in work outside of class time (estimate 4 hours of reading and writing per week).

Papers are due on D2L. Any paper submitted after the due date and time will be considered late. Students are responsible for ensuring the digital file format is valid when they submit papers on D2L—using doc and/or PDF. Any files that cannot be opened by a Mac or a PC (despite the fact that the paper is submitted by the deadline) will be marked as late. I will accept late papers, but 1/2 of a letter grade will be deducted from the final grade of that assignment. Late papers will not be accepted more than 7 days past the due date. No exceptions.

Video Project Policy

Videos are due on D2L. Any video submitted after the due date and time will be considered late. Students are responsible for ensuring the digital file format is valid. Please submit your files in mp4 format or submit a link with external video streaming sites (such as Vimeo, YouTube. etc.)

Evaluation (Grading Rubrics available for assignments on D2L)

Students will be evaluated on their efforts to understand the concepts, their participation in class discussions, attendance, and the quality of the work. ****Please note:** Average work merits a “C” in this course. Simply following the requirements of the assignment does not result in an “A”. To achieve an “A” or a “B”, the work must be thoughtful, creative, original, well presented, and go beyond the stated requirements of the assignment. However, I also take overall improvement into account as the course continues.

Grading Scale:

A = 100 – 94, A- = 93 – 90, B+ = 89 – 88, B = 87 – 83, B- = 82 – 80, C+ = 79 – 78, C = 77 – 73, C- = 72 – 70, D+ = 69 – 68, D = 67 – 63, D- = 62 – 60, F = 59 – 0

Standards for Achievement (See rubrics on D2L):

A indicates excellence

B indicates good work

C indicates satisfactory work

D work is unsatisfactory in some respect

F is substantially unsatisfactory work

Please Note: If you feel that you are falling behind in your work or need extra help, come talk to me as soon as possible. Don't wait until the end of the quarter to improve your grade.

Late Work Policy

- All coursework must be done to receive a passing grade.
- Incomplete work will not be accepted.
- Late work will be accepted only up to 1 meeting later than originally due and will be lowered by 1 grade.

Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise, the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. CDM policy requires the student to initiate the request for an incomplete grade before the end of the term in which the course is taken. Prior to submitting the incomplete request, the student must discuss the circumstances with the instructor. Students may initiate the incomplete request process in [MyCDM](https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx).

Drop dates <https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

Attendance Policies

YOUR ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION DURING CLASS, AND INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ARE MANDATORY! PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, AND MATERIALS WILL INCLUDE INFORMATION NOT FOUND ELSEWHERE. If you come to class without the proper required materials to work with or read the articles, I will mark you absent.

Attendance and active participation in every class are extremely important. AS PRESENTATION, DISCUSSIONS, CLASS ASSIGNMENT, AND VIDEO VIEWING WILL INCLUDE INFORMATION NOT FOUND ELSEWHERE, students should arrive promptly to class and avoid absences. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for the material covered during that class and for being prepared for the next class. Review the course schedule and find out before the next class what you will need to prepare or make up. As with any craft, learning comes only through practice.

Any absence, late or leaving early, will affect your grade percentage; that is, 1 absence is 2% off, and one time being late is 1% off your final grade.

Two times being late is considered 1 absence; 3 absences automatically mean that you will receive an F for the class. No more than 2 excuses can be used for medical situations.

If there is a need for absence due to a medical-related issue, please contact the Dean of Students Office. The student absence notification form can be submitted for medical and/or personal crises through the [Dean of Students Office](#).

IMPORTANT: This absence notification does not mean that this student is excused from course material, assignments, or exams. Ultimately, each professors decides what, if any, accommodation can be provided in light of this absence notification, and the student is responsible for following up with their professor about such accommodations.

[Extended Absence Notification](#)

We recognize that students may encounter an unanticipated emergency or other circumstance that may impede their ability to attend courses. **As a service to students, the Dean of Students Office may provide notification to faculty when a student has absences that exceed 2 consecutive class days for a documented medical, mental health, or personal emergency.**

In order for the office to send a notification to faculty, students must submit the extended absence notification form, along with supporting documentation within 2 weeks of the absence.

Please note: Your documentation must include or reference the specific dates you were absent. If you do not have documentation, please reach out to [The Division of Student Affairs](#) office at 773-325-7290 to speak with a staff member. Requests submitted after the term has ended will not be processed.

Class Discussion

Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voices when grading papers. Second, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussions.

Attitude

A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitudes include, but are not limited to, talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting, or using the Internet (whether on a phone or computer). If any issues arise, a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

Computers, cell phones, and ear-pods CAN NOT be used during the class.

Any unsolicited digital device use will affect your participation grade. All phones must be kept silent in your bags. During the screening and discussion session, students used the handwritten notebook for note-taking to avoid distraction to themselves and their peers. Exceptions will be made under two circumstances:

- 1) if you have a documented learning need or disability that requires you to use a laptop (Please let me know prior to the class starting about this information.)
- 2) if the class holds reading discussions that require digital access.

Disability Rights

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a declared disability should contact me privately to discuss specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class); students could also register with [the Center for Students Disabilities](#), where they could provide assistance that directly benefits their academic performance and learning experience. Unless students register with Student Disabilities, extensions for course material/assignments or exams cannot be granted in this course. The Office for Students with Disabilities at 773-325-1677, CSD@depaul.edu.

There are two office locations:

- Loop Campus (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus (773) 325-1677

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gregory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible. Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.

COVID-19 Health and Safety Precautions

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty, and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD).

Respect for Diversity and Inclusion at DePaul University is aligned with our Vincentian Values.

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore "what must be done" in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions, and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives, and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult conversations, and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If, at any time, the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

Civil Discourse

DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be [Socially Responsible Leaders](#). It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

Online Course Evaluations

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continuing to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations

are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in Campus Connect.

Trigger Warnings

The films, lectures, and discussions in this course may engage deeply with potentially sensitive or traumatizing material, such as violence, sexual assault/rape, sexism, racism, police brutality, transphobia, homophobia, abuse, suicide, blood and body-shaming

Films in "Content" will have triggers identified under the film. If you would like more specific or personalized triggers identified throughout the course (especially ones not named above), please let me know and I will do my best to flag them. If you believe the film may be potentially triggering, I will happily search for a replacement film for you to view and write about.

Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences in race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference on the first day that the class meets so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University-related systems and documents, except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

Academic Integrity

All presentations and footage have to be original! You must be the author of the presented footage that you make during this course period. Any student who uses footage from previous course assignments (self-plagiarism) will fail this class.

Reading Assignments for this course:

- *A History of Experimental Film and Video* by A. L. Rees, British Film Institute
- Michael O'Pray. Chapter 1. *The Avant-Garde Film: Definitions*. In *Avant-Garde Film: Forms, Themes, and Passions* (London: Wallflower, 2003), 1–7.
- Clement Greenberg. *Avant-Garde and Kitsch*. 1939. In *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006), 3–21.
- *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Ed Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. *Film language, Maya Deren*
- MacDonald, Scott. *A Critical Cinema 4: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005. *Stan Brakhage, Shirin Neshat*
- Walter Murch. *In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing*, Silman-James Press
- Meigh-Andrews Chris. *A History of Video Art: The Development of Form and Function*. Berg Press
- Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*. New York: Longman, 2001.

- Hito Steyerl. *In Defense of the Poor Image*, from *In The Wretched of the Screen* (Berlin: Sternberg Press)
- Cahiers du Cinéma; 1960-1968: *New Wave, New Cinema, Reevaluating Hollywood*. Ed. Jim Hillier. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1986.
- Cahiers du Cinéma; The 1950s: *Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave*. Ed. Jim Hillier. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1985.
- Erika Balsom. *After Uniqueness: A History of Film and Video Art in Circulation* (Film and Culture Series), Columbia University Press (March 21, 2017)
- Erika Balsom, *Documentary Across Disciplines*. The MIT Press (April 1, 2016)
- Minh-ha, Trinh T. *The Digital Film Event*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Rush, Michael. *New Media in Late 20th-Century Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1999.
- Paul, Christiane. *Digital Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003.
- Andrey Tarkovsky. *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema* (London: Bodley Head, 1986), 113–124. Discusses His Art. Austin; University of Texas Press, 1987
- Opening Series: *Interview with Phillip Hoffman*, Canadian Filmmaker

Weekly Course Schedule

Week 1

Themes:

1. What are Avant-Garde and Experimental Cinema?
2. How does film history inspire filmmakers?
3. How to "read" experimental films?

Week 2

Discussions on homework:

Film language, from *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Ed Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999

Intro to the First Project

Introduction to the first assignment: Weekly Reflective Journal

Alternative Usage of Mise-en-Scene in experimental cinema

Week 3

Film Terms and Topics for Film Analysis and Writing. New York: Longman, 2001

Lecture: What is alternative cinematography and how to use it meaningfully?

Screening list: See D2L

Week 4

Theme: "Off-screen space" in Experimental Cinema

Screening list: See D2L

Week 5

Theme: Midterm Screenings, "Landscape as the States of Mind"

Students will also verbally share their creative process with the class. Thank you for all the good hard work!

Introduction to Final Project

Week 6

Lecture:

What is the essence of editing? What is the alternative film editing?

Screening list: See D2L

Week 7

Lecture: What about the meaning of using "cut" or without "cut"? How to use split-screen meaningfully?

Screening list: See D2L

Week 8

Lecture: What is the essence of [film sound](#)?

Screening list: See D2L

Week 9

Lecture: What is the psychology of sound usage?

Screening list: See D2L

Week 10 & Final week

Presentations