

Film Studies Minor

Proposal Fall 2018

Rationale

Film is one of the most influential and globally recognized languages today, instrumental in shaping our cultures and self-understandings, and transforming viewers' opinions and worldviews. Film introduces viewers to new worlds, insights, and perspectives, provoking local or national debates around ideas that matter. Film provides a common experience that can shape how we see ourselves, one another, the world, and God.

The Film Studies Minor provides an integrated liberal arts foundation that emphasizes the intersections of culture, film, and Christian faith. The minor examines film as one of the most influential communication and art forms today, evoking religious, aesthetic, ethical, and epistemological questions that are foundational to Christian liberal arts education. Combining coursework from the departments of Art, Communication Studies, English, Theater Arts, and Religious Studies, Film Studies minors explore film as a force in societies and cultures, both nationally and transnationally.

The Film Studies Minor is grounded in and reflective of Christian liberal arts as it combines theoretical learning with practice and production as well as exposure to film theory, criticism, and perspectives across multiple disciplines.

The Film Studies Minor will be hosted by the Department of Theatre Arts.

Strategic Planning

The Film Studies Minor supports Westmont's strategic plan. One of the strategic planning goals is to strengthen education through innovation, which entails creating new academic programs [See Westmont College 2017-2020 Strategic Map, A1] that help us recruit prospective students [See Westmont College 2017-2020 Strategic Map, C1]. A Film Studies Minor appeals to current and prospective students and combines with any major discipline, enhancing overall student learning and innovation. Some other ways in which a Film Studies Minor supports Westmont's Specific Strategic Planning include:

1. *Cultivate High-Impact Learning and Scholarship.* The Film Studies Minor strengthens student creativity, research, experiential learning and capstone/portfolio culminating experiences, which are recognized as high-impact educational practices that support and promote student learning and success [See Westmont College 2017-2020 Strategic Map, A5].
2. *Nourish a Sense of Belonging for All Students.* The minor requires group projects and the production of films and therefore, students minoring in Film Studies learn significant lessons working collaboratively and in community on concept, storyboarding, pre- and post-production, and public presentation of final work. Collaborative and team-based assignments and projects contribute to a sense of community and belonging [See Westmont College 2017-2020 Strategic Map, B4].
3. *Reach New Markets with New Programs and New Sites.* The Film Studies Minor extends Westmont's scholarship and expertise to expand societal influence and strengthen Westmont's presence in the Santa Barbara community and beyond. Our students are extraordinary, and we

expect that many of them will learn new ways to bring their stories and Christian liberal arts visions to a broader audience locally, nationally and globally. Locally, we live in a city with a rich historical connection to the film industry, not to mention the annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival. We look forward to regularly showcasing Westmont talent and sensibilities in this highly visible venue [See Westmont College 2017-2020 Strategic Map, C2].

Courses

Westmont already offers most of the film-related courses (see list below). The Film Studies Minor requires 20 units. Consistent with current policy, only 4 units of the minor may be double-counted toward a major. To distinguish this Film Studies Minor from similar programs at other colleges and universities, Westmont's Film Studies Minor integrates a Christian faith (e.g., church, gospel, Christianity), a liberal arts approach, and an emphasis on interdisciplinarity. Ultimately, we want to empower our students to employ film to make sense of the world and for their critical and artistic work to be informed by their connection with the gospel. Students are required to take courses from each of the four categories below (Theory & Criticism, Cinema in Context, Practice, and Electives). Additionally, students are required to compile a portfolio or to complete a capstone project. Note that we also encourage practice via internships.

The Film Studies Minor consists of four categories of courses:

1. *Film Criticism*, where students learn film analysis and theory
2. *Cinema in Context*, where students learn about cinema in the context of another subject or culture, such as World cinema, where students learn the history of film in a particular body of theory or in a broader global context (e.g., North America, Middle East, Africa, Asia).
3. *Film Practice*, where students learn film production (e.g., storyboarding, shot lists, pre-shot/post production) and study the use of film for the development of the moral imagination (e.g., social, cultural, and religious awareness, advocacy, Christian mission).
4. *Electives*, where students engage with two of the many dimensions of film (e.g. acting, computer graphics, postmodern narratives, etc.) or complete a film internship.

Film Theory & Criticism (3-4 units)

ENG 101 Film Studies (4)
COM 107 Focus on Film (1 unit each, 3 total units required)

Film in Context (choose one course)

COM 148 Postmodern Narratives (4)
RS 1XX Theology in Film* (4) [A new course proposal will need to be submitted to the Academic Senate Review Committee]
POL 142 The Politics of Film (4)
SP 130 Hispanic Film and Literature (4)

Additional courses as developed by Westmont faculty across disciplines

Film Practice (choose one course)

APP 1XX: Intro to Film Production: This course introduces the techniques of film making including conceptualization, storyboarding, cinematography, sound recording,

and editing. Students will learn post-production software, Premiere Pro.*** (*may be completed at Los Angeles Film Studies Center or elsewhere*) [A new course proposal will need to be submitted to the Academic Senate Review Committee]

- ENG 111 Screenwriting I (4)
RS 1XX: Religion & Filmmaking* [A new course proposal will need to be submitted to the Academic Senate Review Committee]
TA 153: Contemporary Theatre and Film Performance (4)
APP 190: Internship in Film Making (*may be completed at Westmont or elsewhere*)

Portfolio or Capstone Project (up to 2 units)

This is required to complete the minor. The Portfolio or Capstone Project will integrate and emphasize the intersections of culture, film, and Christian faith. It should be completed in the context of an internship or an existing course. As an [alternative exception](#), it may be an original film for the Fringe festival (or something similar) or part of a directed/independent study. It may or may not require extra units, depending on courses taken to complete the minor.

Electives (choose any above courses not already taken, or from list below, 8 units)

- ART 065 Digital Tools (4)
ART 131 Theory & Criticism in the Arts (4)
COM 107 Focus on Film (1 unit, may be repeated for up to 4 units as topics change)
COM 125 Media and Mass Communication (4)
COM 129 Persuasion & Propaganda (4)
COM 140 Communication Ethics (4)
COM 148 Postmodern Narratives (4)
ENG 111 Screenwriting I (4)
ENG 112 Screenwriting II (4)
ENG 113 Screenwriting III (4)
TA 010 Acting I: Foundations (4)
TA 036 Design for the Theatre (4)
TA 037 Scenic Technology (4)
TA 125 Directing for the Theatre (4)
TA 153 Contemporary Theatre and Film Performance (4)

Film Courses from Off Campus Programs, with Advisor's Approval (AUP Paris, NYU Summer in NYC or NYU Semester in Buenos Aires, Los Angeles Film Studies Semester, etc.)

No more than 9 units may come from any one department, and no more than 6 units may overlap with a major.

Students

The Film Studies Minor would be appropriate for any student interested in film, regardless of their background knowledge or experience. Offering the Film Studies Minor will attract more applicants to Westmont, many of whom will want to gain knowledge and skills to critically engage the world of film combined with a major area of study.

Resources

Most of the minor will be accomplished using existing resources. There are, however, some additional resources required:

Courses:

1. We recommend creating one film production course, to be housed in the Art Department, or perhaps as an applied (APP) course, or creating a "FILM" category in the college catalog for stand alone or cross-listed courses.
2. We recommend creating a "world cinema" course, potentially taught by current Professor Carmen McCain in English.
3. We recommend hiring an adjunct to teach the film production course.

Equipment:

Cameras. Until the minor is more fully funded, we anticipate using accessible cameras, for instance either iPhones or simple DSLR cameras. While film production once required access to expensive equipment, digital production has made it possible to make films far more inexpensively. The Nigerian film industry, worth around 3 billion dollars, grew from the creativity of filmmakers using low-budget equipment, and Academy award winning director Steven Soderbergh shot his most recent film *Unsane* entirely on an iPhone. A new cell phone app (Filmic Pro, \$15) allows iPhones to be used for filming with surprising quality. It may also be possible to rent cameras and other equipment locally. Theatre Arts recently received a new camera through the CIP process, which could potentially be used by film students.

Other Equipment. To begin with, a few simple audio setups will be sufficient, along with one or two tripods. Lighting also can be basic at the start. Some additional equipment may be necessary to purchase.

Software. Post-production software, Premiere Pro, has now been installed on the computers in the Graphics Lab, requiring minimal usage fee (this fee will be negotiated with the Art Department, since they use the lion's share of those computers and programs). As part of a production course and/or to complete a capstone project, students will need to purchase software.

College-owned equipment will be shared among film studies minors.

As the Film Studies Minor continues, we hope that high student interest and involvement would encourage external donors to help fund enhanced equipment, additional course electives, and other emerging needs.