

THIS NEW PRINCETON UNIVERSITY COURSE IS DEDICATED TO THE STUDY OF
CRITICAL FILM CURATION.

The pandemic brought a total disruption to traditional film production, distribution, curation and canonization. Could this disruption be turned into a creative subversion of the strong industrial and commercial aspect of American filmmaking? The formation of the American film canon is an ongoing struggle between civil rights activism and a Jim Crow system of representation. The responsibility of film studies is to assist this creative struggle with sophisticated and openminded film curation and canon formation. With a readiness to be inspired by the unfamiliar from systemically injured and overlooked groups, this studio course will give students the opportunity to practice these virtues by curating brand new films, some not yet distributed, as well as unacknowledged, undistributed classics.

02 Themes of Justice and Canonization**04** Zora Neale Hurston, Ethnographic Film Essays
Ousmane Sembène, *Black Girl* (1966)
Melvin Van Peebles, *Classified X* (1998)
Finding our way around the online studio, division of studio work**02** Access to Public Spaces: Physical/Virtual Reversal of Disability**11** Nicole Newnham, James Lebrecht, *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution* (2020)
*Class Interview with Nicole Newnham and James Lebrecht***02** The Genius of Melvin Van Peebles**18** Melvin Van Peebles, *Watermelon Man* (1970)
Melvin Van Peebles, *Three-Day Pass* (1968)
Jean-Luc Godard, *Breathless* (1960)
*Zoom Guest: TBA***02** Classic Contemporaries: Julie Dash and Charles Burnett**25** Julie Dash, *Daughters of the Dust* (1991)
Charles Burnett, *Killer of Sheep* (1978)
*Zoom Guest: Richard Brody (Film Critic, The New Yorker)***03** It's Berlin, Baby!**04** Virtual Trip to the Berlinale

Art, more than any other human institution, more than even philosophy, is there to give injustice its due. Within an operative system of law, certain kind of injustices become systemic and overlooked. The injured has no legal remedy, only the recourse of poetic justice. The disruptive insistence of artists to open our eyes onto what is overlooked makes them the legislators of the world.

When an artwork is canonized, its disruptive innovation ideally becomes the established rule of the community; the renewed common sense issuing a renewed sense of justice. Yet, artworks that are too disruptive have a long and winding road until allowed to take their place in the canon. Creative critical curation has an important role in enabling the recognition in an audience that the new values produced by art have in fact been 'always already' shared by their community.

03 11 Girl Power

Channing Godfrey Peoples, *Miss Juneteenth* (2020)

Maïmouna Doucouré, *Cuties* (2020)

Věra Chytilová, *Daisies* (1966)

Class Interview with Channing Godfrey Peoples

03 18 Celebrity Power

Emerald Fennell, *Promising Young Woman* (2020)

Ildikó Enyedi, *The Story of My Wife* (2021)

Ryan Coogler, *Black Panther* (2018)

Class Interview with Pat Mitchel (Chair, Board of Trustees, Sundance Film Festival)

03 25 Power to the People

Mario Van Peebles, *Panther* (1995)

Ava DuVernay, *Selma* (2014)

Zoom Guest TBA

04 01 Roots: Afro-American Neo-Realism and Afrofuturism

Zora Neale Hurston, short research films

Gordon Park's Photography

Gordon Parks, *The Learning Tree* (1969)

Ryan Coogler, *Black Panther* (2018)

W. E. B. Du Bois, *Princess Steel* (1905) and *The Comet* (1920)

Zoom Guest: George E. Lewis (composer, Professor of American Music, Columbia University)

The students will present their academic work in form of digital production (slideshow, film essay, film montage, interview) in which the scholarly arguments will be grounded in cinematic quotations and other audio-visual presentations. Three short research film essays or digital montage (max. 5 min.) will be assigned individually for each student and a short digital work (max. 10 min.) developed in consultation with the professor is due on Dean's Day in lieu of a Final Exam. The class will record Zoom interviews with critically acclaimed filmmakers, film festival directors and leaders of the film industry.

04 Spreading Democracy: The American Hubris**08**

Dee Rees, *Mudbound* (2017)
Roberto Rossellini, *Paisan* (1946)
Melvin Van Peebles, *Three-Day Pass* (1968)
Zoom Guest: TBA

04 The Un-distributable Wendell B. Harris**15**

Wendell B. Harris, Jr, *Chameleon Street* (1989)
Abbas Kiarostami, *Close-up* (1989)
Zoom Guest: Tabitha Jackson (Artistic Director of the Sundance Film Festival)

04 Site Specific/Being There: New Ontological Wave**22**

Béla Tarr, *Missing People* (2019) at the Wiener Festwochen
Béla Tarr, *Till the End of the World* (2017) Eye Exhibition, Amsterdam
Alejan Alejandro G. Inárritu, *Carne y Arena* (2017)
Toni Morrison, *The Foreigners Home* (2006) Louvre, Paris
Julie Dash, *Brothers of the Borderland* (2004) National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Cincinnati
Melvin Van Peebles, *Love, That's America* (1971/2011) Occupy Wall Street
Zebulon Café Concert, Brooklyn
Zoom Guest: Béla Tarr

Class Readings:

W. E. B. Du Bois, *Princess Steel* (1905) and *The Comet* (1920)
James Baldwin, *The Devil Finds Work* (1976)
Erwin Panofsky, "Style and Medium in the Moving Pictures"

Individual research into each studied film and filmmaker will generate more weekly reading.