

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.

ASSESSMENT

- class participation (30%)
- midterm test (30%)
- final exam test (40%)

The students will be graded on weekly assignments, a midterm, and a final test.

Every week by Friday:

1. submit their one-page research notes on the director and the film that we watch together the following Monday
2. submit two informed questions/comments to shape the post-screening conversation on the theme of the week
3. fulfill one of the possible audience design tasks: bring a friend or two, design/distribute flyers, invite a guest discussant, moderate the conversation, film the conversation, create a social media event page



Cinema in Times of Pandemic

Research
Film
Studio

COM373 AAS373 AS373 – FALL 2022

<https://cinema.researchfilm.studio/>

Prof. EA KISS

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.

Optional creative work can upgrade your exam results or substitute audience design work.

First optional collective exercise is to make a music video that contains cinematic quotations (clips) from the 12 +1 films that we will watch together with the script 9/13 -8PM @ The Jimmy Stewart Theater Amir Questlove Thompson, Summer of Soul (2021) over the images and Princeton campus images with short scenes of singing the refrain of the Van Peebles' song.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IcC22nqKYQ>

Contributing to a class film based on the discussions and interviews recorded in the class and outside the class with film directors on Afro-American Cinema.

Using the uncut class interviews of the previous generation of students, the class might make another interview film "Cinema in Times of Pandemic".

CLASS SCHEDULE

- 09
13 Themes of Justice and Canonization
Amir Questlove Thompson, Summer of Soul (2021)
Melvin Van Peebles, Classified X (1998)
Zora Neale Hurston, Ethnographic Film Essays

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.

09
20 BLM for the Check-American New Wave

Ján Kadár, *Freedom Road* (1979)

Miloš Forman, *HAIR* (1979)

Reading: W. E. B. Du Bois, Foreword to Howard Fast's *Freedom Road* (1952)

09
27 The Think Piece Film

Julius Onah, *Luce* (2019)

Jordan Peele, *Get Out* (2017)

Reading: W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Criteria of Negro Art*

Alain Locke, *Art or Propaganda*

10
04 The Homecoming of the Black Hero

Dee Rees, *Mudbound* (2017)

Roberto Rossellini, *Paisan* (1946)

10
11 Black New Wave

Melvin Van Peebles, *Three-Day Pass* (1969)

Jean-Luc Godard, *Breathless* (1960)

Reading: George E. Lewis, *Lifting the Cone of Silence From Black Composers*

10
25 **Girl Power**

Channing Godfrey Peoples, *Miss Juneteenth* (2020)

Maïmouna Doucouré, *Cuties* (2020)

Julie Dash, *Four Women* (1975)

Reading: Erwin Panofsky, *Style and Medium in the Moving Pictures*

11
01 **Roots: Afro-American Neo-Realism and Afrofuturism**

Gordon Parks, *The Learning Tree* (1969)

Ryan Coogler, *Black Panther* (2018)

Reading: W. E. B. Du Bois, *Princess Steel* (1905)

10
08 **Classic Contemporaries: Julie Dash and Charles Burnett**

Charles Burnett, *Killer of Sheep* (1978)

Julie Dash, *Daughters of the Dust* (1991)

Julie Dash, *Illusions* (1982)

Reading: T. S. Eliot, *What Is a Classic?* (1944)

10
15 **The Impostor Syndrome**

Wendell B. Harris, Jr, *Chameleon Street* (1989)

Abbas Kiarostami, *Close-up* (1989)

Reading: J. M. Coetzee, *What Is a Classic? A Lecture* (1993)

11
22 **White Face**

Melvin Van Peebles, *Watermelon Man* (1970)

Reading: James Baldwin, *The Devil Finds Work* (1976)

11
29 **Boy Power**

Jarrold Carmichael, *On the Count of Three* (2021)

Mario Van Peebles, *Panther* (1995)

12
06 **Diaspora**

Ekwa Msangi, *Farewell, Amor* (2020)

Ousmane Sembène, *Black Girl* (1966)