

NHSI Elective Catalog - Session 1 (First Two Weeks)

Block A: 2:30-4:00 PM

The Dream Sequence

What do dreams and cinema have in common? They're both visual and aural experiences that conjure a spectrum of themes, genres, and emotions. Dreams and cinema go hand in hand, traversing uncharted worlds of feelings and ideas. In this course, we'll analyze various formal styles used to evoke dreams by watching a varied selection of infamous and lesser-known dream sequences in film and television. Students will then create a short film project capturing their personal dream experiences and demonstrating a unique directorial vision.

Shakespeare on Screen

So you read Romeo and Juliet in English class. Maybe you even saw the new Macbeth starring Denzel Washington. But Shakespeare's influences don't stop there: from Lion King to 10 Things I Hate About You, Shakespeare's stories stretch far beyond his own words. We'll break down just what makes his work so timeless by watching clips, writing our own scenes, and creating our own adaptations of the Bard's stories.

Plot of Land: How to Find, Frame, and Film Real Spaces

Just like you, every film needs a place to live! In this course, we'll explore how locations shape characters, mood, and story. You'll scout real spaces, build shot lists, and learn how to turn everyday spots into cinematic worlds. We'll cover both creative and practical skills, from finding the perfect alley to figuring out how to actually shoot there. By the end, you'll see the world around you as one big movie waiting to happen!

Take 5!

The first five minutes can make or break a film. In this course, students will practice presence and precision, the essentials for composing the first five minutes of their films. Students will produce the first five pages of an idea as a screenplay. The first five pages—effectively the first five minutes—will be subsequently produced as a moving image. We must make the rules before we break the rules. Let's get started.

The One About Comedy

This course will teach you timing...eventually. Get it? It was a comedy joke. Wasn't it funny? No? Then why are jokes funny? Why are YOU funny? HOW DOES FUNNY EVEN WORK???? This course breaks down four different types of live comedy – clown, long and short form improv, sketch, and stand-up. You'll learn how each medium works by doing them. So sign up if you think you're not funny. Cause bad news. You are.

Music Video

From "Thriller" to "Oops! I Did It Again" to "Formation," music videos have had a dramatic impact on pop culture. In this screening and discussion course, we'll watch music videos through a filmmaker's lens and evaluate them in their cultural context. Students will have the opportunity to develop and film a music video!

Block B: 4:10-6:00 PM

Take Two: Sequels, Reboots, and Remakes

In an industry dominated with blockbusters, that often give rise to some of the most recognizable franchises, it's inevitable that sequels, reboots, and remakes are made. Although this treatment has been given to both pop culture staples and lesser known films, this prominent trend has changed the industry, but what makes a good sequel, reboot, or remake? This elective explores what makes sequels, reboots, and remakes different from one another, but more importantly, what function they serve in film franchises.

Directing Actors

Directing Actors is a hands-on workshop for directors, screenwriters, and actors in which we will explore ten principles for approaching the challenges and opportunities of creating memorable performances. Students will learn how to break down a dramatic scene into acting beats and how to direct the actor. By the end of the elective, each student will have picked a scene, rehearsed with actors, and presented it to the class for feedback on their directing. Oh, and all students must be open to acting in each other's scenes!

Films We Pretend We've Seen

Finally watch the iconic films everyone talks about but many have not actually seen. In this fun, no-shame zone, we'll screen and discuss legendary movies that shaped cinema from Citizen Kane to Singin' in the Rain. You'll learn why they matter, how they influenced everything from editing to cinematography to storytelling, and what makes them timeless. Leave class ready to join any film convo with confidence (and real opinions).

Found Footage & Experimental Film

In this elective, students will explore remixing archival or found footage to create poetic, political, or abstract short films. This is a hands-on, creative course that encourages experimentation. Though editing students will manipulate visual and audio elements and learn to take existing materials and reshape them into new stories.

Funny Stuff

This is a screening class for comedy lovers. We will watch, we will laugh and we will discuss films and TV shows across all comedy sub-genres; slapstick, satire, rom-com, mockumentary, action, horror, coming of age and dramedy. We will explore how each sub-genre utilizes comedy to enhance the story, how they may differ structurally from each other, and why it all matters in the first place.