



Boston University Study Abroad London

COM FT 344 (Elective B)

Curating Contemporary European Cinema: Film Festivals and Film Culture

Overview

The course commences with an examination of key concepts such as national cinema, transnational cinema; language, subtitling and dubbing; and the European/Hollywood binary. It develops to explore the role of film festivals in acting as alternative sites of distribution for contemporary European cinema and students will have an opportunity to examine how film festivals work as sites of economic, critical and cultural exchange. Across the course students are exploring the commercial, cultural and critical functions of the cinema industry as it works through alternative spaces in Europe, in festivals, through distribution and in nominations for awards. Each case study explores variously the conditions which enable smaller European films to find a wider release onto a larger circuit.

On completion of the course, the successful student will be able to:

- Research, prepare and present on a selected area of the course including reference to a film showing an understanding of wider reading about European cinema and distribution (AE LO2, AE LO3)
- Describe and explain how European cinema moves between national and international contexts through a process of curation and what the role and value of film festivals is in this exchange; (GCIL LO1; AE LO1)
- Demonstrate a close understanding of different data sets around cinema distribution and, what this data reveals about distribution and audience interest in European cinema in the UK context (GCIL LO1)
- Curate a short film festival showing an understanding of how festivals target audiences and covet spaces for the promotion of European cinema (AE LO3)
- Evaluate the issues pertaining to European cinema and relate that knowledge to a wider understanding of national cultures in a globalised world. (GCIL LO1)

Such learning will be demonstrated through a series of assessments that require students:

- to present around a selected film showing both close textual analysis skills and research skills in understanding the film's creative origins, and distribution
- analyse and interpret a range of film texts as well as the context in which these films were created, circulated and exhibited
- to select and retrieve information from a variety of sources and to reference that work appropriately including trade press and survey data
- to write cogently and with some critical distance about the material being studied referencing a wide range of reading
- to be able to create a film festival product and evaluate why it has been conceived as such

Evidence of Hub Outcomes

Evidence of Hub Outcomes in **Aesthetic Exploration** are evaluated in a range of ways across the course:

AE LO1	Across the course students view a range of contemporary European
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	films. They will engage with wider reading and will regularly have the opportunity to voice their observations, ask questions and debate the significance of the examples shown to the ongoing development of Contemporary European cinema. The focus is on cinema that emerges from festivals and achieves a wider release, notably seen in the UK. This outcome will be examined in most sessions through group and class discussions, in end of class presentations and in final assessments e.g. in Assignment 1, and assessed as part of their participation grade.
AE LO2	Students will be guided to use appropriate terminology when analysing a film so that, for example, they are able to evaluate all aspects of the mise-en-scene, identify directorial creative choices, and draw connections between the film and its context. This will primarily be developed through in-class formative assessment and participation in reading and viewing, and examined in summative assessments – 1 (by critical essay), within their overall participation grade, and in Assignment 3 (through the creation of images and copy designed to attract audiences to festivals).
AE LO3	By the end of the course students will have gained a good understanding of many issues pertaining to the movement of European cinema from national origin to a wider audience. The final assignment is designed to encourage students to apply their synthesised knowledge of issues such as form, style, content, artistic merit; as well as an understanding of distribution strategies and exhibition venues, to a task to create a film festival brochure for a weekend festival in London. This is a creative task which enables students to demonstrate their aesthetic appreciation through selection and use of images in their brochures. Students will present their brochure to their peers, take on board feedback and subsequently write a 1000-word evaluation under timed conditions.

Evidence of Hub Outcomes in **Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy**

GCIL LO1	This course invites comparative analysis of films created in different countries in Europe enabling discussions about the meaning of place, and of European preoccupations, cultural values and film production practices. This is embedded in many of the taught sessions at the beginning of the course when we explore notions of continent vs country, as well as exploring the role and value of transnational institutions such as festivals. Students can examine conditions of exhibition in the UK for European cinema in Assignment 2 formally, as well as drawing on aspects of distribution of European cinema in the UK as one of the markers for a film’s success beyond the festival circuit.
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Grading

The following Boston University table explains the grading system that is used by most faculty members on Boston University’s Study Abroad London Programmes.

Grade	Honour Points	Usual %
A	4.0	93-100
A-	3.7	89-92
B+	3.3	85-88
B	3.0	81-84
B-	2.7	77-80

C+	2.3	73-76
C	2.0	69-72
C-	1.7	65-68
D	1.0	60-64
F	0.0	Unmarked

Grading Criteria

‘Incomplete’ or **I** grades are not permitted because of the obvious difficulty in making up missed work once the student has left the country. All work must be completed on time. We also do not allow **‘Audits’** (AU), **‘Withdrawals’** (W), or **‘Pass/Fail’** (P) grades.

The grades reflect the quality of the work. Lecturers and students should use the following criteria for an understanding of what each grade means.

A This exceptional grade is assigned only to work that has persistently outstanding quality in both substance and presentation. The student must demonstrate a sustained capacity for independent thought and extensive study, producing rigorous and convincing analyses in well-ordered prose.

A- Awarded to work that is clearly focused and analytical, and based on wide reading. The student must cover all the principal points of a question and systematically develop a persuasive overall thesis, allowing for one or two venial omissions or inapt expressions.

B+, B, B- This range of grades indicates that the student has shown some evidence of original thought and intellectual initiative. The student has cited sources beyond the class materials, and shown a degree of originality in perception and/or approach to the subject. The work will show thoughtful management of material, and a good grasp of the issues. The differences between a B+, a straight B and a B- may reflect poor presentation of the material, or mistakes in punctuation, spelling and grammar.

C+, C, C- Work in this grade range is satisfactory, but uninspiring. If the work is simply a recitation of the class materials or discussions, and shows no sign of genuine intellectual engagement with the issues, it cannot deserve a higher grade. Should an essay fail to provide a clear answer to the question as set, or argue a position coherently, the grade will fall within this range.

Quality of presentation can lift such work into the upper levels of this grade range. Work of this quality which is poorly presented, and riddled with errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, will fall into the lower end of the range. To earn a C grade, the work must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the primary course material, be written well enough to be readily understood, be relevant to the assignment, and, of course, be the student’s own work except where properly cited.

D A marginal pass can be given where some but not all the elements of the course have been completed satisfactorily.

F The failing grade indicates the work is seriously flawed in one or more ways:

- Obvious lack of familiarity with the material
- So poorly written as to defy understanding
- So brief and insubstantial that it fails to properly address the subject
- Material presented is not relevant to the assignment
- Demonstrates evidence of plagiarism (see following section in Academic Conduct Code)

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism. This can be accessed via Blackboard Learn: <http://learn.bu.edu>

** Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.*

Attendance Policies

Classes

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend every class session, seminar, and field trip to fulfil the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme.

Authorised Absence:

The Authorised Absence Approval Request Form is available through the Academic Affairs section of the BU London Personal Page: <https://fm.bu-london.co.uk/fmi/webd/>

Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form does not guarantee an authorised absence

Students who expect in advance to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form ten working days in advance of the class date.

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- **Illness (first day of sickness):** If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must notify Academic Affairs as soon as possible by submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form in advance of the class. If it is the student's first absence of the semester (from any class) a doctor's note is not required.
- **Illness (multiple days):** If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must complete an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form and a sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class. Once well enough, the student will need to meet with Academic Affairs.
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor).
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

Unauthorised Absence:

Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to their final grade for the course whose class was missed.

This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with Academic Affairs to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

Religious Holidays

Boston University's Office of the University Registrar states:

'The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who

wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.’

Special Accommodations

Each student will need to contact the Disability & Access Services to request accommodations for the semester they are abroad. Students are advised by BU-DAS not to expect the same accommodations as they receive on campus.

BU London can only uphold special accommodations if we have received the appropriate documentation from the BU-DAS. We cannot accept letters from other universities/centres.

All disabilities need to be known to the DAS in Boston if they are to be used as a reason for requiring a change in conditions, i.e. reduced internship hours or special accommodations for the internship schedule.

Lateness

Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have their final grade penalised.