GE-A, The Arts

Courses that meet this requirement enable students to engage with the arts by teaching students to create and analyze works of art, understanding the context of their creations and their connections to cultural issues.

AHIS 373g, History and Theory of Photography

The image of the world than had ever seemed possible before. The camera appeared to offer a superior vision: unaffected by subjective prejudice, this machine was capable of rendering the invisible visible and its images could be chemically fixed to offer enduring records of fleeting moments, endangered peoples, and uncharted places. This course troubles the persistent faith in the realism of the photographic “document,” challenging technological objectivity. It considers the creative act of taking and making photographs in historical perspective. Students will gain skills in analyzing visual images and in combining visual and textual evidence to consider how human creativity in context that is fostered and expressed through technology such as the camera.

This course description has been provided by Professor Vanessa Schwartz.

ARCH 214bg, World History of Architecture

This course is only for a specified cohort of students.

The World History of Architecture Series offered by the USC School of Architecture looks at the world-wide perspective of history, in all of its textured richness and variegated scope. ARCH 214b presents an overview of the history of architecture from the 16th century to the present from a global perspective. It is based on a five-part structure to ensure complete coverage. In alphabetical order, this is: (1) Africa, (2) Asia (3) Europe, (4) The Americas (5) West Asia (the area formerly known as the Middle East). For clarity, this part of the survey will be divided into chronologically coherent groupings, related to discernable similarities, as well as three distinct sections, entitled I: The Dawn of the Modern Age, II: The Modern Age, and III: After Modernism.

This course description has been provided by Professor James Steele.

CTCS 190g, Introduction to Cinema

The course goals are:

- To provide a critical methodology (through lectures, visual analyses, screenings, and readings) and the practical application of that methodology (through written assignments and discussion groups) that will lead to an ability to analyze and evaluate film texts. To develop a critical vocabulary for describing the elements of film form and aesthetics (e.g., literary design, performance, visual design, composition, temporal design, sound design). To develop an understanding of the various types of academic criticism and their respective methodologies.

- To explore the nature of cinema as a technology, business, cultural product, entertainment medium, and most especially, as an industrial art form, by examining the production process from development through production, post-production, and marketing and distribution. To use individual films as exemplars of the various elements of this process: the star system, the studio system, the script, production design, sound design, etc.
To understand film’s relationship with other art forms and media, as well as its relation to society, and its modes of representation, such as realism and formalism and everything in between. To understand genre, and the conditions and causes of genre (such as culture, technological developments and social and economic forces). To understand the different periods of film—classical, post-classical, modernist, post-modernist—in relation to other arts.

To study the styles of outstanding film artists and artisans, and to appreciate a wide variety of film genres, stylistics and nationalities. To understand the cinematic and extra-cinematic influences on the film text and the concept of overdetermination. To understand also that there are multiple influences on a film which allow for multiple and contradictory readings.

Encourage the viewing of all kinds of films—pop culture and high culture—as well as different types of fictional films, documentary films, avant-garde films, and various national cinemas. Highlight theatrical venues in Los Angeles and home delivery systems and their respective effect upon viewing, particularly privileging and encouraging the theatrical viewing of movies.

This course description has been provided by Professor Drew Casper.

CTCS 200g, History of the International Cinema I

This survey course examines the technological, social, cultural, and aesthetic dimensions of the first fifty years of cinema from pre-cinematic technologies to the middle of the twentieth century. Lectures, screenings, readings, and discussion will consider the formal diversity of cinema produced around the globe during this period, examine debates over cinema’s social function, investigate the aesthetic and political ramifications of the global circulation of films, filmmakers and film culture, and explore the relationship of the development of cinema to historical and cultural issues and shifts.

DANC 212g, Dance in Popular Culture

Dance for the mainstream stage experiences ebbs and flows based on popular culture, both in and outside of the Western canon. This course will investigate how social dance functions as culture, that is, as a byproduct of society, community and economy. By using the classroom and studio, the course will aim to widen student perspectives about cultural dance practices and foster opportunities to discover how the history of social dance within various societies and communities has affected and paralleled the perception of codified and popular dance forms over time. The course will give an overview of iconic moments in social dance, highlighting its origins within particular cultural groups. It will also highlight notable choreographers in the fine arts dance continuum who contribute to the popularity of a dance and/or utilize influences from the form within a codified technique. Students will make through lines between these mediums and popular culture from a Western and global perspective.

This course description has been provided by Professor Saleemah E. Knight.

DANC 280g, Introduction to Dance as an Art Form

In this interdisciplinary overview of Western dance forms, students will study the origins and evolution of classical and contemporary dance, explore emerging topics in the field of dance studies, and apply elements of art criticism to viewing dance productions. Through substantive analysis of course readings and live and recorded performances, students will advance critical reading, writing and analytic skills. Students will examine dance within a range of contexts, including fashion, photography, architecture, poetry, cinematic arts, technology, sports medicine and other fields. In their final paper, students will offer original comments on the content and form of a live dance performance in the greater Los Angeles-area, using current secondary source readings and scholarship to situate the performance within a broader historical context. For their final project, students will specifically situate dance in relationship to another discipline of their own interest.

This course description has been provided by Professor Jackie Kopcsak.
DES 123Lg, The Design Challenge: Exploring the Design Process

This lecture, studio and discussion course will overview the creative design process and introduce students to techniques and means to solve visual problems. By using the creative design process students will learn to identify visual problems, conduct design research, establish design perimeters, iterate through sketch and prototypes and assess work. The course begins with the processes that designer go through to create successful projects (brainstorming, sketching, and creating composites) and a brief introduction of design fundamentals.

Next students will be introduced to Rapid Visualization also known as napkin sketches, concept sketching, storyboarding, brainstorming, thumbnail drawings, quick/rough sketching, comprehensives and model making. Rapid visualization is the key to effective design thinking. Used as a means to quickly and effectively visually communicate, rapid visualization is more than finished drawings or modeling, finished illustrations or comprehensive models. Techniques in RV are used by artists, designers, filmmakers, game designers, scientists and industrial designers alike - the demand for people with these skillsets are enormous. It allows us to explore a wide range of possible solutions and scenarios without leaving our sketchbooks/tablet/computer. At its best, it offers incredibly possibilities to creatively problem solving a variety of common problems and opens up the scope of what is probable.

This course description has been provided by Professor Haven Lin-Kirk.

EALC 360g, Performing Japan: Bodies, Media and Textuality

In this course, we will explore the classical foundations of Japanese performance, ranging from thirteenth-century chanting by blind lute performers to Noh theater, puppet theater, and kabuki, and the ways in which these genres are implicated in modern and contemporary Japanese performance. “Performance” in this course refers not only to stage productions but also to the representation and evocation of such productions in visual and textual media. We will see how various types of classical Japanese theater constructed “stage bodies” and “stage genders,” and examine the important role performative genres played in creating a sense of community among particular social groups, both through stage productions themselves and through the reimagining of the theater in visual art and literary texts. We will also consider how, in modern and contemporary times, ideas of performance derived from noh, kabuki, and puppet theater have been hybridized with Western theories and influenced by Hollywood films, and trace the effect of these hybrid notions of performance all the way into modern novels, contemporary animation, and digital media. Among the topics and issues we will address are performance and historical memory, performance as religious pacification, stage body and gender, puppets and ventriloquism, the Japanese reception of Hollywood movies and Shakespeare’s plays, and the connection between classical performance and modern performative, artistic, and narrative genres.

This course description has been provided by Professor Satoko Shimazaki.

FACS 150g, Visual Culture and Literacy I

This course will examine major developments in modern and postmodern visual culture. Beginning with the late 19th century and proceeding chronologically, the course will look closely at different modes of cultural production – including art, film, and design – and will focus particular attention on influential primary texts by artists, critics, and theoreticians. In so doing, the course aims to introduce students to the dominant aesthetic debates of the past hundred years and put those debates into broad social, philosophical, and historical context. As such, the course intends to provide students with the theoretical foundation to help them critically understand their own visual interests and activities in relation to the diverse and shifting concerns of contemporary culture.

This course description has been provided by Professor Amelia Jones.
FADN 323g, Design Theory

This course provides a critical examination of issues, theories, movements and practices which are relevant to the contemporary professional designer. This course will offer you a comprehensive study of visual communication and the broader arena of human-centered design.

We will begin the semester with a discussion of the scope of design — the elements and principles, creative methodologies, technology and media, criticism, theory, and design thinking. In evaluating the breadth of the subject, we will be better able to establish a foundation language for future discussions and critical analysis. Then, we will review the history of graphic design, which will include analysis of formal/visual developments as well as conceptual shifts. While we will review work going back to the invention of writing, the primary focus will be on design from 1900 to present. Next, we will review various models of communication and modes of communication/media. Although this part is the most intensely academic, it is important to understand the deeper layers when relaying information to an audience. Finally, we will finish the semester by discussing a series of contemporary essays that should help you understand of the larger design community. Your future work can build on the successes of previous developments and the current questions in the field.

This course covers an ambitious amount of information for one semester. The curriculum is a loose outline, so there may be other areas of exploration that we decide to pursue. The most important goal is to prepare you for a field that is continually evolving, where innovation and flexibility are paramount.

This course description has been provided by Professor Andrew Kutchera.

HIST 260g, Dramatizations of Korean History

In what promises to be a thought-provoking and fun exercise in contemplating the practice and perception of history, this course will analyze, interpret, and “read” popular depictions of Korean history and consider how they relate to issues of national identity, foreign influence, and social conflict. Korean history presents a special opportunity because of South Korea’s very sophisticated popular culture industry and this industry’s welcome attention—in reflecting, one surmises, popular demand—to the re-imagining of historical figures, events, and settings.

Through an examination of recently produced television dramas, feature films, and works of fiction (all in translation or with English subtitles), we will focus on three special historical themes: 1. The Korean War of 1950-53; 2. South Korean society in the second half of the 20th century; and 3. The Kwangju Uprising of 1980. For each group of works, we will ask, How do dramatizations of Korean history portray important moments and themes of the recent past and, furthermore, seek to shape popular understanding and perception? What larger messages are the dramatizations seeking to convey, and how are they crafted in a way that furthers this message? What are the significant differences in the different media that we examine? How does the use of visualization in filmic depictions allow for different narrative strategies and different emphases when compared to textual works of fiction? Finally, how do these dramatizations enhance our understanding of a particular historical event or theme?

We will devote a week to reading background histories before embarking on each theme, and then take turns reading historical fiction and viewing films on the topic at hand. Although we will also watch clips of television historical dramas and other shorter filmic depictions during some class sessions, most of the time will be spent discussing the assigned works, tackling each question listed above in class discussion.

This course description has been provided by Professor Kyung Moon Hwang.

THTR 196g, Shakespeare on Film

William Shakespeare (1564-1616): Shakespeare is regarded by many as the greatest writer in the English language. His plays remain popular today and are studied, performed and reinterpreted in diverse cultural and political contexts throughout the world. Our purpose is to unlock the humanity and artistry of this seminal writer.
In our course we will investigate the cultural background of Shakespeare's time, the theatrical conventions of the Elizabethan theatre, Shakespeare's use of language (both verse and prose), as well as elements of dramatic structure, and other elements of playmaking. The plays selected for study will first be analyzed as dramatic texts that are intended for public performance. The film versions of these plays will then allow students to see how different artists of different cultures and times turn texts into performances.

It will be the responsibility of the student to read the plays and view the films outside of class. The plays/films will then be discussed in class using selected excerpts from the texts and clips of selected scenes from the films. The purpose is to investigate questions of theme and character, questions of verbal vs. visual narrative and questions of the cultural context of the films.

1.) Textual vs. Visual narrative: Our investigation will include consideration of the differences and similarities (challenges and advantages) of translating highly formalized texts—which were originally written to be performed on a bare stage largely through the spoken word--into the largely visual medium of cinema.

2.) Chaos and Balance: Interpretive analysis will also address a major theme of Shakespeare’s plays: the restoration of balance and order to a world in chaos. We will explore the ways in which this Elizabethan theme is presented and interpreted for contemporary audiences using the various grammars of the stage and screen.

This course description has been provided by Professor Jack Rowe.

**THTR 211g, Theory and Practice of World Theatre II**

A multicultural and transnational examination of the history, theory and practice of theatre from the late 19th century to the present date. Recommended preparation: THTR 125.

This course description has been provided by Professor Paul Backer.