

FILM 101 : INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGE OF CINEMA

Cinema du Musée

Fall 2026

Instructor : Teejay Bhalla, Coordonateur à la programmation, Cinema Cinema

Meeting time : Tuesdays 6PM

Course Description

Cinema is more than stories and spectacle; it is an art form with its own unique language. Filmmakers create meaning through the interaction of form and content, using the specific possibilities of the medium to shape cinematic experiences.

Through five film screenings, this series introduces participants to the fundamental elements of cinematic language: mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, sound, and screenwriting. Each session explores one formal element, its history, and its relationship with the others, revealing how filmmakers transform individual choices into complete cinematic experiences.

Every screening begins with a 10-minute introduction to the day's topic and film, followed by a feature film screening. After the screening, participants are invited to continue the conversation in the cinema lobby. Discussion prompts are provided to encourage thoughtful analysis alone or in a group, creating opportunities to meet fellow cinephiles!

Each lesson also includes optional readings and viewing recommendations for those wishing to explore the topic in greater depth. No prior knowledge of film studies is required!

Recommended reading: Susan Sontag's Against Interpretation

Course Schedule

Lesson 1 : Mise-en-scène

September 8, 2026

Film: **CITIZEN KANE** (1941, Orson Welles) (French subtitles)

CLASSEMENT : GENERAL

One of cinema's most celebrated films, CITIZEN KANE is a masterclass in how visual choices create meaning. Through an analysis of mise-en-scène, including composition, performance, lighting, and costume, this screening examines the relationship between form and content, while exploring how cinema connects to other visual arts.

READING FR:

<https://culturellementvotre.fr/2021/12/28/analyse-citizen-kane-mise-en-scene-et-deep-focus/>

READING ENG:

<https://cinematicexplorations.wordpress.com/2021/06/20/the-mise-en-scene-of-citizen-kane/>

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/features/20-inspired-visual-moments-citizen-kane>

Lesson 2 : Cinematography

September 22, 2026

Film: **VERTIGO** (1958, Alfred Hitchcock) (French subtitles)

CLASSEMENT : GENERAL

How does the camera tell a story? VERTIGO reveals how movement, lenses, and camera effects shape our experience of a film. This session explores the language of cinematography through Alfred Hitchcock's innovative use of technique, including the famous dolly zoom.

READING FR: <https://www.sebmagic.com/2024/01/l-effet-vertigo-au-cinema.html>

READING ENG: <https://theasc.com/article/flashback-vertigo/>

Lesson 3: Editing

October 20, 2026

Film: **AMERICAN PSYCHO** (2000, Mary Harron)

CLASSEMENT : 16+ VIOLENCE ÉROTISME

Continuity, montage, rhythm, and point of view shape our understanding of time, character, and narrative in films. Mary Harron's AMERICAN PSYCHO, exemplifies how editing, including the Kuleshov effect, are illusions to create continuity and meaning.

READING FR:

<https://www.vanityfair.fr/culture/ecrans/story/pourquoi-american-psycho-est-toujours-aussi-culte-vingt-ans-apres/10950>

READING ENG: <https://screenrant.com/american-psycho-willem-dafoe-kimball-scenes-editing/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjSr7QMppi4>

<https://transmettrelecinema.com/video/leffet-koulechov/>

Lesson 4 : Sound

November 17, 2026

Film: **BLOW OUT** (1981, Brian De Palma) (French subtitles)

CLASSEMENT : 13+

Through diegetic and non-diegetic sound, music and silence, this session examines how what we hear can build tension, reveal information, and transform the meaning of what we see. Brian De Palma's BLOW OUT offers a perfect exploration of cinema's invisible language.

READING FR: <http://interne.ciclic.fr/pdf/BlowOut.pdf>

<https://transmettrelecinema.com/video/a-lecoute/>

READING ENG:

<https://www.thecine-files.com/a-conspiracy-of-sound-modes-of-listening-in-brian-de-palmas-blow-out/>

<https://nofilmschool.com/brian-de-palma-blow-out>

Lesson 5 : Screenwriting

December 8, 2026

Film: **RASHOMON** (1950, Akira Kurosawa) (English subtitles)

CLASSEMENT : G

To conclude the series, RASHOMON explores one of cinema's most fascinating questions: who gets to tell the story? Through Kurosawa's innovative narrative structure and the idea of the "Rashomon effect," this session examines how perspective, storytelling, and the other formal elements of cinema work together to shape meaning.

READING FR:

<https://www.premiere.fr/Cinema/News-Cinema/Rashomon-d-Akira-Kurosawa-le-film-qui-a-tout-declenche--critique>

<https://labrechestudio.fr/2024/10/10/le-rashomon-effect-film-publicitaire/>

READING ENG:

<https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/195-the-rashomon-effect?srltid=AfmBOooNtexFeEhclmZ5pXdL6WF8EmoMcyjFNQrXfZ7IN67Jom-T8t5xp>

<https://www.tasteofcinema.com/2018/10-great-movies-that-used-the-rashomon-effect/>