

It's The Only Class With Credits

CAST OF SPEAKERS

STEPHANIE ZACHAREK Film Critic, Time Magazine
MARK HARRIS Movie Journalist & Author ("Mike Nichols: A Life")
JOHN KNOLL VFX Supervisor, Industrial Light & Magic
ASHLEY LEE Associate Editor, Hollywood Reporter
STEPHANIE GOODMAN Film Editor, The New York Times
BROOKS BARNES Hollywood Beat Reporter, The New York Times
BILL THOMPSON VP, Theatrical Sales, Cohen Media Group
KELLY BUSH NOVAK Founder and CEO, ID Public Relations
BARRY DALE JOHNSON National Publicity, Searchlight Pictures

PETER BECKER, President DENNIS LIM, Artistic Director MARGARET BODDE, Executive Director
Criterion Collection Film at Lincoln Center The Film Foundation

CLASS ASSIGNMENT TECHNICIANS

MOLLY HASKELL Film Critic & Author ("From Reverence to Rape")
ERIC KOHN Executive Editor, IndieWire
DEVIA GIRISH Co-Deputy Editor, Film Comment
ELENA HOWE The Envelope Editor, The Los Angeles Times
AVIVA DOVE-VIEBAHN Staff Writer, Ms. Magazine
BILGE EBIRI Film Critic, New York Magazine

GLENN WHIPP, Critic & Columnist PHILLIP LOPATE, Critic & Author
The Los Angeles Times "Totally, Tenderly, Tragically"

The professor wishes to thank the following for their contributions

Illustration courtesy of NASH WEERASEKERA Poster Design JOSEF EDMONDS

Learn every aspect of film journalism, from criticism to obits,
and cover the 2024 Tribeca Film Festival



Film Taught by Craigh Barboza Journalism



Watch, think, talk and write about movies

Session 1 May 21 to June 27 | Tues. & Thurs. 3:30 to 7 p.m.

Register Now | Course No. Jour-UA 202.001 | Albert No. 4946

Film Journalism | 2024

New York University

Summer Journalism

Course No. SS1: JOUR-UA 202.001 | **Albert No.** 4946

Class Schedule

Session 1 | May 21 to June 27, 2024 Tues. & Thurs. 3:30 to 7 p.m.

Instructor

Craig Barboza

New York University | 20 Cooper Square #647

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Office hours: Wednesdays: 11 a.m. to noon & 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Course Description

This course is designed for students with a serious interest in writing about movies for print and digital media. A capacity to laugh at deadline pressure—or at quips and witty retorts coming from the back row of the movie theater—is also required. Students collaborate with peers on key projects, pitch in to shape stories and come up with ideas for their own articles, reporting on a variety of film topics. Beyond screening contemporary and essential films, students will be asked to engage in close readings of important critical works by François Truffaut, Pauline Kael, Peter Bogdanovich, Molly Haskell and Donald Bogle that will deepen their understanding of cinema as an art form. This course equips students with a working knowledge of the film industry they will report on, as well as the ability to identify and describe major movements and pioneering artists. Students attend and cover the 2024 Tribeca Festival. (The class is pre-approved for press credentials.) Other planned class trips include Film at Lincoln Center, home of *Film Comment* magazine, and the Criterion Collection, a catalog that's come to function "as a kind of film Hall of Fame." We do topic-inspired lessons, presentations and pop-up workshops on journalism skills and ethics. Guest speakers will offer guidance on reporting techniques, the forces transforming modern film and the purpose of criticism. By the time the course credits roll, students will have raised their cinema I.Q. and completed several publishable, well-sourced articles.

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate an understanding of the film industry and how it is covered by the press
- Write clear, accurate and engaging prose in an audience-appropriate manner
- Interview subjects, conduct research, and evaluate information
- Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diverse perspectives
- Report from and about a film festival

Grading System

This class uses letter grades, which will be based on the following criteria:

- 30% final project
- 40% papers and assignments
- 20% class participation and in-class assignments
- 10% familiarity with the assigned readings

Grades can be lowered for unmet deadlines, lateness or absence from class. Plagiarism, invented sources or other ethical breaches can result in an automatic F.

The following is a breakdown of numeric grade to letter grade:

Outstanding work, publishable as is

- A (100% to 94%)
- A- (93% to 90%)
- B+ (89% to 87%)

Good work, in need of minor revision

- B (86% to 83%)
- B- (82% to 80%)
- C+ (79% to 77%)

Ordinary work, needs significant revision

- C (76% to 73%)
- C- (72% to 70%)

Major problems with facts, reporting, writing

- D (69% to 65%)

Issues with plagiarism, etc.

- F (64% to 0%)

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is www.nyu.edu/csd. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Diversity Statement

The Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute is committed to creating an anti-racist learning environment that embraces diversity, complexity, and honesty. We are an intellectual community enriched by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, sex, gender identity, class, ethnicity, sexualities, abilities, religion, and culture. Our student body is excitingly international. We welcome a multiplicity of perspectives. We acknowledge that listening to other perspectives on some of these issues may be personally challenging, and we accept that challenge. We further acknowledge that our profession, journalism, and our home, New York University, have participated in the systemic racism that underpins U.S. history. We are committed to teaching and practicing fair, rigorous, and engaged journalism that helps all our communities move toward justice and equality.

Scene 1 | Rehearsals

Introduction to the class and syllabus review. Getting to know each other through a writing exercise. Why film journalism is a great job. A breakdown of the film journalist's standards and essential skills and how to pick subjects. Screen and analyze a clip from a film classic about a newspaper baron then discuss media coverage of Hollywood, from spotlights on emerging talent to obits and tributes.

Homework — Read + Response: Packet on film writing, and viewing assignment TBD. Write brief in memoriam tribute (approximately 200 words).

Scene 2 | Establishing Shot

A Zoom “cameo” by ComScore Senior Media Analyst Paul Dergarabedian, who monitors film box-office results and measures the effectiveness of Hollywood studio campaigns through data research and evaluation reports. Dergarabedian will talk about the big issues facing the movie industry. Student presentations and a peer editing workshop. A primer on reporting techniques, including sourcing tips and news writing followed by a survey of the Hollywood beat. (Who knows who's being hired, or how's being fired, and how much films cost? What are the major talent agencies and guilds? How do you handle story tips?) A screening and analysis of a clip from a documentary on American cinema.

Homework — Research and write a box-office report (350 words) based on this weekend's results, using at least two sources. Viewing assignment TBD.

Scene 3 | What's the Pitch?

An overview of how writing about movies has evolved, from the first piece ever done in 1903 to the present. A group exercise followed by a review of grammar, syntax and punctuation. An A to Z guide to film coverage. (What's the difference between *Cineaste* and *The Hollywood Reporter*? How do I track down a contact for the costume designer on the new big-screen version of *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga*?) We will screen and analyze a clip from a comedy about a magazine writer with commitment issues and talk story pitching.

Homework — Read + Response: chapter from the book “The Art of the Interview,” and viewing assignment TBD. Compose a sample celebrity interview request.

Scene 4 | Access Hollywood

An in-person cameo with Searchlight Pictures head of publicity Sarah Peters, who will discuss the Hollywood PR machine and how she works with journalists. Peters will also provide feedback student interview requests. Screen a movie clip from a cynical drama about a corrupt reporter followed by a discussion of journalism ethics. (What constitutes a conflict of interest? Can I accept freebies?) How to pursue truth, accuracy, fairness and a diversity of perspectives in your work. An overview of film coverage and a story pitching exercise. Students will be assigned a film publication that they will track and provide weekly reports on, as well as an industry expert and specialization for their final project: a long-form profile of a film personality.

Homework — Research and pitch two possible subjects for your final (300 words each).

Scene 5 | Movie Times

An in-person cameo by the film editor of *The New York Times*, Stephanie Goodman, who will provide tips on the film beat, everything from navigating the movie industry to working with editors. Goodman will also provide feedback on student final project pitches. Discuss and plan upcoming coverage of the Tribeca Festival. Presentations followed by a peer edit workshop. A review of story basics and an examination of the writing process. (How do I organize my material? What are some ways to add variety and texture to writing? Where do I go to fact-check my story?)

Homework — Read + Response: packet of clips on the contemporary film, including passages from the book “She Said,” about the sexual harassment story from The Times that helped ignite the #MeToo movement.

Scene 6 | Close-Up

Student presentations and a conversation about the nuts and bolts of interviewing, including access and parameters. (How do I negotiate and conduct fruitful interviews? Who are good secondary sources? How do I ask the tough questions?) Devices and other ways to frame a story to make it relevant to the intended reader. Anatomy of an article and lesson on nailing the personality profile. In-class screening and discussion.

Homework — Final project prep, including an interview with the student-assigned industry expert.

Scene 7 | On Location: Film at Lincoln Center

Class trip to Film at Lincoln Center, sponsor of the annual New York Film Festival, for a tour of the offices of *Film Comment*, a digital magazine devoted to the art of cinema. Writers and film programmers Devika Girish and Clinton Krute, who also edit the magazine, will discuss the history and significance of film festivals, as well as the magazine's coverage of them, and offers strategies for writing about festival events like premieres and panels.

Homework — Research, report and write the first draft of the festival report (500 words) and start preliminary work on the final project.

Scene 8 | On Location II: Tribeca Festival

Attend and cover the 2024 Tribeca Festival, whose lineup includes movies with Jenna Ortega, Kristen Stewart and Lily Gladstone, and documentaries on Diane von Furstenberg and Liza Minnelli.

Homework — Write the final draft of the Tribeca Festival report (500 words).

Scene 9 | Film Culture

A primer on the golden age of movie writing in the 1960s and 1970s, when it seemed just about every comment on a movie sparked wider discussion. An overview of major critics. Class workshop.

Homework — Read + Response: Packet of writing from and about the “Film Generation,” which began in the 1950’s with the rise of campus film societies and included the writings of François Truffaut and Pauline Kael, whose work helped change the way we think about movies. Write a pocket guide to a film movement (150 words).

Scene 10 | Everyone's A Critic

An introduction to writing the movie review. (How do I capture the quality of an actor's performance? How has criticism changed between *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Civil War*? As a critic, how much should political sympathies or being a woman or person of color shape my work?) Write a capsule movie review in class.

Homework — Revise capsule review, report and write a draft of the final profile (1,600 words). Viewing assignment TBD.

Scene 11 | The Magic of Movies

Cameo by *Time* magazine film critic Stephanie Zacharek, who will provide feedback on student capsule reviews and talk about the role of reviewers. Screening and discussion. Workshop on final project.

Homework — Revise profile project. Viewing assignment TBD.

Scene 12 | Wrap Party

Class trip to the Union Square headquarters of the Criterion Collection, the producer of a series of important classic and contemporary films on DVD and Blu-ray that has earned it the title “the Louvre of movies.” Closing statement. A review of the work we produced and lessons learned in class. Student presentations. Special end-of-semester movie presentation in Criterion’s screening room with an introduction by the company’s president, Peter Becker

Homework — Final draft of profile.