

Oakland University, Cinema Studies Program (Fall 2018)
CIN 3905 Film Festivals as Global Market (CRN 43564) //
CIN 4996 Independent Study (CRN 44309)

Professor: Dr. Courtney Brannon Donoghue
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Office Hours: Thursdays 12-2pm, or by appointment

Course Description (4 credits):

An exploration of the industrial structures, practices, and operational aspects of film festivals using the Toronto International Film Festival as a case study. The course centers on a seven-day trip to Toronto for on-the-ground participation in festival activities such as screenings, conference panels, industry events, etc. The course will expose students to core film festival studies literature and media industry studies research methods including interviewing, participant observation, and discourse analysis. Students will document and critically engage with their festival experiences through assignments, projects, and in-person class meetings after we return.

Course Objectives:

- Navigate the workings and operations of a film festival through hands-on participation in festival activities, press coverage, and industry discourse.
- Examine the film festival as a unique temporal and geographical space and microcosm of the global film industry.
- Complete practical and experiential projects utilizing first-hand knowledge gained from TIFF to examine the macro-level workings of the film business.

NOTE: The majority of class instruction will take place in Toronto from September 6-12. Upon returning from TIFF, the class will meet three times in-person: (T 10/2, T 11/6, T 12/4) during the designated class time 5:30-8:50 pm in MSC 93.

Required Readings:

All readings available via Moodle.

Course Communication:

- At the festival: cell phone + WhatsApp + Tumblr
- After festival: email + Moodle

Assessment:

TIFF Field notebook	10 pts
TIFF Tumblr + Festival Participation	50 pts
In-class Participation/Attendance	5 pts
Program Focus Reflection	10 pts
Final Project	25 pts
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	100 pts

Grades

Grading for this course will be based on the OU grading scale:

A	94-100 pts	4.0	C+	77-79 pts	2.3
A-	90-93 pts	3.7	C	73-76 pts	2.0
B+	87-89 pts	3.3	C-	70-72 pts	1.7
B	83-86 pts	3.0	D+	67-69 pts	1.3
B-	80-82 pts	2.7	D	60-66 pts	1.0
			F	59 pts or less	0.0

Grades are based on your ability to follow directions, execute the assignment, interpret and comprehend the overall rationale for the course by reading materials with appropriate theoretical approaches. Your projects must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date.

All late assignments will lose points for each day late.

A-range = for work which is outstanding, not just completing the assignment well, but going beyond—perhaps insightfully integrating ideas in the current section, perhaps drawing in readings from other parts of the course in interesting ways, or bringing something else special to the assignment.

B-range = for work which is good, not just meeting the minimum requirements necessary for completing the assignment, but also characterized by the inclusion of something more than the minimum.

C-range = for work which is adequate, meeting most but not all of the basic course/assignment requirements, or meeting the requirements at the bare minimum level without going beyond this.

D-range = for work which is worthy of some credit even though it does not satisfactorily meet the basic course/assignment requirements.

F-range = for work that does not meet the basic course/assignment requirements and/or is not submitted on time.

Projects

TIFF Field Notebook

DUE: Tuesday, October 2

You are required to keep a daily notebook tracking your on-the-ground “field” experiences at TIFF. Think of it like a description journal of what you are doing, seeing, watching, thinking, etc. Each student will maintain a field notebook during TIFF as well as collect festival materials, film reviews, industry publication coverage, and follow social media discourse. I recommend buying a paper journal for this assignment or downloading a journaling app.

TIFF Tumblr

DUE: Completed during the festival.

You will need to post required assignments to the group TIFF Tumblr during the festival.

Program Focus Reflection

DUE: Tuesday, October 2

Based on your chosen screening program focus, you will watch at least 3 films from that program. You will write a 600-700-word reflection based on these films and the festival program category due in class on Tuesday, October 2.

Final Project

DUE: Tuesday, December 4

Specific assignment guidelines to follow.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Oakland University provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Disability Student Services at (248) 370-3266, TTY: (248) 37-03268, <http://www.oakland.edu/dss>

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Oakland University takes the Academic Code of Conduct seriously. Cheating will not be tolerated. Two kinds of academic misconduct are **cheating** on exams and **plagiarism** (such as turning in someone else's work, downloading a paper in part or in whole, copying and pasting from Wikipedia, or paraphrasing or quoting sources without citation). You are responsible to adhere to and be familiar with Oakland's Academic Code of Conduct. Information on academic integrity and disciplinary action is available at <http://www.oakland.edu/?id=1610&sid=75>

WRITING AND RESEARCH RESOURCES

The Cinema Studies program requires you to follow Chicago Style of using footnotes for all writing assignments. For more information on Chicago, please see: http://www.chicomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Since this course relies on research and writing skills, you are encouraged to look for outside resources and support. I strongly recommend that you contact The Writing Center here on campus (located in the Kresge Library; phone 471-6222). The Center offers individualized assistance to students. Their website offers information about scheduling appointments and how to prepare for your visit at: <http://www.oakland.edu/ouwc>

CONTACTING DR. BRANNON DONOGHUE

Please take advantage of my office hours. I also will be available for a few minutes before and after lectures to answer questions. When sending an email, please address me as Dr. Brannon Donoghue or Professor Brannon Donoghue. My pronouns are she/her/hers. Please only email to contact me for quick questions or if you need to

schedule an appointment. Depending on your question, I may request that you see me during office hours. If you are having difficulties, you should see me ASAP and not after assignment has been completed. Your success in this course is important to me. I am willing to make appropriate accommodations for any student who experiences problems understanding the material or meeting course requirements as long as he/she demonstrates a genuine desire to learn and takes the initiative to seek my help. I look forward to getting to know each of you during this semester!

BEFORE THE FESTIVAL

- Attend the TIFF Student Orientation to review trip and course information.
- Sign up for a WhatsApp AND create Tumblr account if you don't have one. Add both apps to your phone. We will be communicating via group WhatsApp and I will invite you via email to join the class Tumblr (<https://outiff2018.tumblr.com/>)
- Review the TIFF screening and industry conference schedule. Start mapping out what films and conference panels you want to attend.
- Read industry trade publications (*Variety*, *Hollywood Reporter*, *Indiewire*, etc.) for the latest festival news.

AT THE FESTIVAL

For the majority of your time at TIFF, you will create your own schedule for attending screenings and industry conference panels alongside other requirement meetings and assignments.

Participation

Screenings

- You will be required to attend at least five films from programs outside of Gala and Special Presentations. See full list of different festival programs on p. 7.
- You will also be expected to have a focus in one program, meaning that you should see at least three films from that particular program, keep track of these screenings, and submit a 600-700-word reflection on this program due Tuesday, October 2.

Industry Conference Panels

You will be required to attend at least three panels as part of the Industry Conference. Also, take this opportunity to pick up copies of industry trade publications like *Variety*, *Hollywood Reporter*, and *Screen International*.

OU Master Class + Events

You are required to attend ALL OU meetings and events including Sunday's Master Class.

Assignments

TIFF Field Notebook

You are required to keep a daily notebook tracking your on-the-ground field experiences at TIFF. Think of it like a description journal of what you are doing, seeing, watching, thinking, etc. I recommend buying a paper journal for this assignment or downloading journaling app to your phone. The notebook is due in class on Tuesday, October 2.

TIFF Tumblr - OUTIFF2018.tumblr.com

In addition to daily journaling, you will need to post the following to our group TIFF Tumblr during the festival:

- One short interview with industry professional (informal or formal; written notes or short video).

- One event from Share Her Journey Women’s March on Saturday, September 8. More info TBA (1-2 photos with short description).
- Two personal reflection videos on the TIFF experience and culture.
- Two film reviews (written or vlog style).
- One national film agency in TIFF Industry Centre (370 King Street West) (1-2 photos of table & marketing materials with caption about national film industry)
- One film premiere with Q&A OR red carpet (1-2 photos with caption).

Everyone should log into Tumblr with:

Username: outiff2018

Email: outiff2018@gmail.com

Password: grizz2018

AFTER THE FESTIVAL

Tuesday, October 2 – Business and Culture of TIFF

DUE: Field Notebook + Program Focus Reflection

Topics: Festival as cultural event; TIFF reflection (prepare for questions below)

Read: Bazin, “Festival as a Religious Order”

Dayan, “Looking for Sundance: The Social Construction of a Film Festival”

Wong, “The Films of Festivals”

Discussion Questions:

- “Festival Programming” – What program did you focus on? Why? What did you learn about the different program categories? How did attendance or audience reception vary from program to program?
- “Public vs P&I screenings” – How do public and screening difference? Think about lines, audience, etc.
- “The Rush Line Experience” – What movies were discussed in the rush line?
- “The Biggest Buzz” – What were the films with the most hype?
- “Buzzkills” – What were the movies that had big buzz but failed to deliver? Any conflicting views between audiences and critics?
- “The Underdogs” – What were the films that went from no hype to festival hits?
- “The Hit or Miss” – What were the films you knew very little about but got into?
- “Star Sightings” – Who did you see? Where and in what context?
- “TIFF Culture” – What is the culture and community of the film festival in Toronto? What do you see (think race, class, gender, affluence, style, film tastes...)

Tuesday, November 6 – Industry of TIFF

Discuss: Film Festival as Industry Event, Film Markets, & International Sales

Read: Peranson, “First You Get the Power, Then You Get the Money”

Wong, “Film Festivals and Film Industries”

Iordanova, “The Film Festival Circuit”

Discussion Questions:

- “Industry Players” – Who are the key players at TIFF? What are their priorities for the festival? (EX: Filmmakers & producers, Festival Staff and Programmers, Publicity, Corporate Sponsors, Distribution/Sales reps, Press, Critics, etc.)
- “TIFF filmmaker” – What are some TIFF filmmaker stories you’ve heard or read about? How is the festival invested in director as auteur?
- What are common traits of TIFF films? (Is there a kind of film that represents the TIFF brand?)
- What are some things you learned during the Industry Conference panels and Master Class? What are the hot industry topics or issues right now?
- Share Her Journey: What was your experience with the Women’s March? What are the issues at stake for TIFF and the film industry at large?
- Primetime: TIFF is screening more television in a special category. How might that shift a film festival’s mission?

Tuesday, December 4

DUE: Final Projects

Discuss: Festival as Cultural Capital + Distribution, Awards Season, etc.

Read: TBD

Discussion Questions: TBD

TIFF CHECKLIST

Five films from different programs (outside Gala & Special Presentation)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Program Focus: _____

1.
2.
3.

Industry Conference Panels

1.
2.
3.

OUTIFF2018 Tumblr

- One short interview with industry professional (informal or formal; written notes or short video).
- One event from Share Her Journey Woman’s March on Saturday, September 8. More info TBA (1-2 photos with short description).
- Two personal reflection videos on the TIFF experience and culture.
- Two film reviews (written or vlog style).
- One national film agency in TIFF Industry Centre (370 King Street West) (1-2 photos of table & marketing materials with caption about national film industry)
- One film premiere with Q&A OR red carpet (1-2 photos with caption).

Don’t forget your Daily Field Notebook entries!

TIFF Program Categories (via Wikipedia)

- **Gala Presentations:** high-profile feature films, often featuring international movie stars, presented with a red carpet**
- **Special Presentations:** high-profile feature films, usually Canadian premieres if not world premieres**
- **Contemporary World Cinema:** narrative feature films generally by directors who are established but not famous
- **Discovery:** films that are typically the director's first or second feature film
- **Masters:** feature films by "the world's most influential art-house filmmakers"
- **Midnight Madness:** genre films, usually premiering at midnight
- **Platform:** a competitive section launched in 2015, named for Jia Zhangke's film Platform, of films from around the world that do not have distribution in North America.
- **Primetime:** television episodes making either their world premiere or North American premiere projected cinematically.
- **Short Cuts:** a section of short films (usually six to ten short films included at each screening) both Canadian and international.
- **TIFF Cinematheque:** films from all eras of cinema, often classic films that have been newly restored
- **TIFF Docs:** documentary films
- **TIFF Kids and TIFF Next Wave:** films for children and teenagers
- **Wavelengths:** both feature-length and short experimental and art films

***These program categories do not count towards your five required films.*