

Music and Film

The Western, Neo-Realism, Film Noir and Humanism – Seen Through the Prism of Films

This course will introduce students to the works of major artists in cinema – spanning the 100 year history of the art form – which have helped shape its language both in terms of form (Technique) and Content (Narrative style). In the context of the theme of the course, the intent is to take the students through the journey of the individual – both as a loner at home in the wilderness as well as the settler at home away from the wilderness – to specific genres that have remained popular like:

- The Western (Artist – John Ford, Fred Zinneman), b) Neo-Realism (Artists – Vittorio Di Sica and Satyajit Ray) c) Film Noir including Neo Noir (Artists – Billy Wilder and Sir Alfred Hitchcock) and d) Humanism as seen through the modern (20th century) lens of a Polish film maker (Krzysztof Kieslowski). By the end of the course, students would become aware of :
 - film form – in terms of technique and style unique to each artist,
 - Content that often influences the narrative style of a film and
 - Distinguish genres.

Profile:

Prasad is a former professional Ranji Trophy cricketer turned educator and a self-declared rasika of music who enjoys both Indian as well as western classical music, in addition to world cinema. A teacher and administrator, he was closely involved with Krishnamurti Foundation India and The School – KFI, both in Chennai as a friend and teacher. He taught at Rishi Valley School of the Krishnamurti Foundation near Madanapalle in Chittoor dt.AP.

He later taught at well-known schools offering the IGCSE/A levels as well as the International Baccalaureate (IB)

curriculums. He is now with the schools central team of the Azim Premji Foundation and also offers Open Course at the Azim Premji University. He may be contacted at v.prasad@azimpremjifoundation.org.

Understanding Cinema

Course Outline:

Cinema grows out of popular entertainment, but technology and the forces that control technology give cinema almost immediately a direction beyond entertainment into a larger discourse of politics, global, regional, local. A text film that throws up the connection is The Great Dictator by Charles Chaplin. Keeping this film at the centre, the course seeks to demonstrate how entertainment practices and devices can serve to raise and explore issues, in this case, the rise of a genocidal power system. The course will cover comedies, musicals, romantic narratives as carriers of critical content.

The course will also expose students to different approaches open to a documentary maker, viz., the objective documentation; the subjective response to a situation, often aimed at conscientizing the viewer; the argumentative, building a case for or against a position; the advertising turn, including tourism.

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Word and Image – Understanding Film Form and Narrative

Course Outline:

The intent of this course is to take the students through the works of select artists – from the silent era to the advent of sound in cinema until the post-modern age – who have pushed the envelope of the film narrative in the ever present search for a new language and communication in the new-fangled and youngest art form called cinema. The select films would include works by major artists spread across the Styles of the Classical, Modern and Post Modern cinema from across the world including the vibrant regional Indian cinema too.

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Indian Film Music

Course content:

Music – especially Indian film music – is an inescapable part of our day-to-day existence and impacts us in myriad ways. A historical appreciation of film music can help us better understand its artistic evolution and the various influences that have shaped it.

The course will introduce students to the diversity of film music in India. We shall explore the content of the music, the people who made it, the styles and the influences from folk and classical traditions, alongside developing a more analytical understanding of the research and innovations that contributed to the development of this genre.

Profile:

V.S. Kumar is a graduate of the 1970-72 batch of IIM Ahmedabad. He has been a passionate lover of Indian film music and has formed a group which gives public performances.