

Certificate in

AMERICAN FILM AND TELEVISION STUDIES

Certified Focus as Part of the “Free Elective Courses”
of a Degree Program at the University of Graz

§ I. Tasks and Structure of the Program

The Certificate “American Film and Television Studies,” directed and organized by the Professorship of American Studies II (at the Department of American Studies), Research Area of American Literary and Cultural History with a Focus on (Trans-)Nationality and Space, offers an additional curriculum that complements and extends a given course of study. The curriculum is organized by the Professorship of American Studies II and supported by courses at the Department of Art History, the Departments of Fundamental Theology and Religious Studies, as well as the Center for Jewish Studies. Practice-oriented courses are provided by the Department of Corporate Leadership and Entrepreneurship. The certified focus can be taken as free electives and is accredited with a **certificate** from the University of Graz. The certified focus is available to **all bachelor and master students** at the University of Graz who wish to acquire qualifications in the field of U.S.-American film and television research. It is particularly aimed at those students who see their future careers in the U.S. or in employment sectors in Europe that cooperate with the U.S. entertainment industry.

§ II. Learning Objectives of the Module

The certified focus provides students with **extensive theoretical knowledge** in the field of U.S. cinema and television. In addition to theoretical, film, and cultural expertise, there is a **practice-oriented focus** that provides concrete experience in the U.S. film and television industry (1-week Film Summer School) and emphasizes the business-related levels of project management and marketing; additionally, students need to complete an obligatory four-week internship of 40 hours per week in a media company. Through this combination, the aim of the certified focus is to provide students with the necessary theoretical and historical basic knowledge in addition to establishing links to economic processes in general and to the American film and television business in particular.

The certified focus is designed to enhance students' familiarity with **basic elements of American cinema and television**, but also provides a useful **tool for planning and promoting film- and television-related projects**. At the same time, students learn to effectively combine creativity and methodical work in a practice-oriented workshop. Students will learn skills that are helpful for the entire duration of their studies and that increase their overall career prospects, even if they decide to work outside of film and television. The focus provides insights into key aspects of the American film and television industry and offers students the opportunity to gain a foothold in a booming professional field. In addition, it substantially increases the interdisciplinary and intercultural competence of students through its broad academic selection and the possibility of a stay abroad.

§ III. Organization of the Certified Focus

(1) The certified focus is constituted primarily of free elective courses, comprising a total of 18-25 ECTS credits. A maximum of 50% of the ECTS credits required for the certificate may come from compulsory and optional courses taken as part of the student's regular major. Subject to availability, courses from the curricula of English/American Studies, Art History, and the Center for Jewish Studies can be utilized for this; furthermore, the Departments of Fundamental Theology and Religious Studies (Catholic Theology Department), and the Department of Corporate Leadership and Entrepreneurship (at the School of Business, Economics, and Social Sciences) offer courses that can be accredited for the certificate.

(2) The teaching and learning activities of the certified focus consist of lectures and seminars (VO, PS & SE) dealing with selected aspects of American film and television culture and their theoretical classification (modules 1-3), as well as practice-oriented elements (modules 4-5).

(3) Achievements to be completed for the "American Film and Television Studies" certificate:

| | Courses | Course Type | ECTS Credits |
|-----|--|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | Introduction to Paradigms of Film Theory and Analysis | | 3-4 ECTS |
| 1.1 | <i>American Film and Television Studies – Analysis and Theory</i> [BA English and American Studies: PS <i>Topics in American Cultural Studies</i> , 3 ECTS] | PS | |
| | or | | |
| 1.2 | <i>Film Analysis and Film Theory</i> [BA Art History, Module B.2, VO <i>Introduction to Current Methods and Theories</i> , 4 ECTS] | VO | |
| 2. | Survey of Film History | | 3-4 ECTS |
| 2.1 | <i>Survey of American Film History</i> [MA English and American Studies: VO <i>Cultural Studies</i> , 4 ECTS] | VO | |
| | or | | |
| 2.2 | <i>Survey of Film History</i> [BA Art History, Module H.2, VO <i>Photography, Film, Video Art</i> , 4 ECTS] | VO | |
| | or | | |
| 2.3 | <i>Survey of World Cinema</i> [MA Religion Culture Society: RWF 1 VO/AG <i>Transformation of Religious Narratives and Symbol Systems in Film and TV</i> , 3 ECTS] | VO/AG | |
| 3. | Advanced Studies in Film and Television | | 3-5 ECTS |
| 3.1 | <i>Comparative Analysis & Contextualization – Focus America</i> [BA English and American Studies & European Joint Master's Programme in English and American Studies: SE <i>Specialized Topics in Cultural Studies</i> , 4 ECTS; MA English and American Studies: SE <i>Cultural Studies</i> , 5 | SE/VO/VU | |

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|----|--|-------|-------------------|
| | ECTS; Master's Program Jewish Studies: Module D - M3 Selected Courses in Literature, Art, Music, SE/VO/VU <i>History of Jewish Cultures</i> , 4 ECTS] or 3.2 <i>Close Readings of Cinematic Texts – Focus Global Cinema</i> [a.) MA Religion Culture Society: RWF 3 SE <i>Religious Iconography in Media Contexts</i> , 5 ECTS; or b.) MA Religious Education, B.1, SE <i>Introduction to a Theology of Media</i> , 4 ECTS] or 3.3 <i>Expanded Cinema / Film and Art</i> [BA Art History, Module F.4, UE <i>Methods and Practice of Art History</i> , 3 ECTS; MA Art History, Module C.2 SE <i>Topics in Modernism</i> , 5 ECTS] or 3.4 <i>Theoretical and Topological Perspectives on Film</i> [a.) MA Religious Studies: E.2, SE <i>Judaism/ Christianity/ Islam in Film, TV, and Other Digital Media</i> , 5 ECTS; or b.) MA Religious Studies: E.4, SE <i>Transformation of Religious Symbol Systems II</i> , 5 ECTS; or c.) MA Religion Culture Society: RWF 2 VU <i>Media Analysis</i> , 4 ECTS] or 3.5 <i>Film Summer School (USA)</i> [4 ECTS] | | |
| 4. | Social and Economic Context Courses offered by the Department of Corporate Leadership and Entrepreneurship 4.1 <i>Project Management</i> [or equivalent courses, 1-2 ECTS] 4.2 <i>Marketing and Law</i> a.) <i>Marketing concise</i> or b.) <i>Law concise</i> [1 ECTS] or c.) <i>Applied Corporate Communications I - (Online-) Marketing, PR & Management</i> [2 ECTS] 4.3 <i>Creativity and Methodical Work</i> [or equivalent courses, 1-2 ECTS] | VU/KS | 3-6 ECTS |
| 5. | Internship/Professional Practice | | 6 ECTS |
| | TOTAL | | 18-25 ECTS |

PROGRAM WITH DESCRIPTIONS

1. Introduction to Paradigms of Film Theory and Analysis

1.1 *American Film & Television Studies – Analysis & Theory* [PS, American Studies] 3 ECTS

This module offers an introduction to relevant theories of American film and television studies, including structuralist/poststructuralist approaches and visual/gaze theory. Students familiarize themselves with the methodologies, the interpretative framework, and the terminology required to “read” and interpret cinematic works. Focusing on one key aspect from American cinema and television, the course provides participants with the basic tools of interpretation concerning the uses and functions of film language (*mise en scène*, montage, framing, camera movement, sound, and lighting). The main goal of the module is to enable students to understand how works of film and television are composed and how they operate on the level of narrative transmission.

OR

1.2 *Film Analysis and Film Theory* [VO, Art History] 4 ECTS

The module "Film Analysis and Theory" introduces the fundamental questions, object constructions and concepts of film theory, and provides an insight into the theory-historical genesis of the concepts of contemporary film theory and aesthetics. The module conveys the terminology, problems, and basic principles of theoretical knowledge formation in the argumentation and presentation of exemplary film theory, aesthetics, media, and cultural-theoretical texts.

2. Survey of Film History

2.1 *Survey of American Film History* [VO, American Studies] 4 ECTS

This module offers an overview of U.S. American film history, from the beginnings of modern entertainment culture to the present day. Special emphasis will be placed on movie genres and their tradition, the emergence of the classical Hollywood system, and the genealogy of groundbreaking cinematic techniques (from the cinematograph to 3D and computer-generated imagery). Examples will include early short flicks and slapstick films as well as *film noir*, monumental cinema, science fiction, action thrillers, war movies, animation films, and contemporary blockbusters. While examining these films on an aesthetic level (with respect to their narrative strategies and patterns of cinematic construction), we will also situate them within the framework of political and historical events.

OR

2.2 *Survey of Film History* [VO, Art History] 4 ECTS

This module deals with historiographic and analytical problems of film theory in the context of media, cultural, and social history, emanating from topics of discussion in other disciplines. Students are empowered to extend their insights into key research fields of contemporary film historiography and problems related to film analysis. The module introduces the fundamentals of film historiography and provides an overview of the various areas of historical film research. In addition, the ideas and methods of film history will be taught as a key element of basic scholarly education.

OR

- 2.3 *Survey of World Cinema* [VO/AG, Fundamental Theology, Religious Studies] 3 ECTS

“Reading” a movie is a skill that has to be trained by everyone who is taking the contemporary audio-visual culture seriously. Developing a “literacy of pictures” is best achieved by working on representative products from cultural contexts and focusing on a selected topic, with special regard to the specific iconographic tradition. Through this approach, cultural differences and commonalities as well as connections to religious traditions by narration and pictorial language can be traced and shown. A special focus is placed on the connection of gender, religion, and culture.

3. **Advanced Studies in Film and Television**

- 3.1 *Comparative Analysis & Contextualization – Focus America* [SE, American Studies; SE/VO/VU Center for Jewish Studies]

4-5 ECTS

This course will deal with a central theme of U.S. American film and/or television, focusing on an important genre, director, artistic movement, or style. Students will familiarize themselves with the cultural and cinematic background pertinent to this topic. Attention will be drawn to the intertextual dialogue between key examples from the U.S. film and television canon, taking into account cross-medial exchange (e.g., in film adaptations). While concentrating on the audiovisual dimension of selected examples, the course will also deal with the cultural, social, and political context reflected in these works of art. Which aesthetic techniques are employed in works of U.S. film and television to articulate and negotiate key concerns of cultural practice?

OR

- 3.2 *Close Readings of Cinematic Texts – Focus Global Cinema* [SE, Fundamental Theology] 4-5 ECTS

In this course, the focus is on the medial representation of a given topic. What do different movies by the same director have in common, what defines his/her "personal handwriting"? What are the criteria for correlating certain films with a style, and in what way/to what extent does the parent culture of a director affect his/her work? How are the principal topics of mankind, such as love, guilt, contingency, mercy, and the longing for something transcendent depicted in these works? These and other questions are critically examined. Possible answers will be checked against the guiding principle of formal film analysis.

OR

- 3.3 *Expanded Cinema / Film and Art* [UE/SE, Art History] 3-5 ECTS

a. *Expanded Cinema:*

The idea of ‘Expanded Cinema’ aspires to extend cinema beyond its aesthetic, technical and institutional boundaries. The module is dedicated to the concept of ‘Expanded Cinema,’ taking as its example major American filmmakers and examining the relationship with related artistic disciplines, as well as cultural relations with Europe, Asia, and Latin America. From a historical perspective, Expanded Cinema is situated within the framework

of artistic practices and discourses of the 1960s and 70s. It is also about opening up the respective contexts of performance and exhibition in order to gain a broader understanding of cinema and its dynamic conceptions.

b. *Film and Art:*

Film and the visual arts maintain a close correlation. The art of film forms the starting point of a differentiated understanding of the way images are conceived: film history, aesthetics, and theory are as much a target of this approach as the reflection of cinema in the visual arts. The module deals with exemplary questions of film theory, theory formation at the interface of aesthetic theory, cultural theory, and art theory. Students will be familiarized with the academic contexts of art, the extended frameworks of aesthetic theorization, as well as forms of reflection of theory transfer.

OR

3.4 *Theoretical and Topological Perspectives on Film* [SE/KS/AG/VO, Religious Studies]

4-5 ECTS

In this course, we analyze characters from different religious systems in the past and the present as, for example, gods/goddesses and demons, regarding their relevance within the particular religious system. In the second half of the course, current transformations and representations of these characters within film and television are investigated. Students will acquire the religio-historical fundamentals as well as reconstruct and understand the transformations in current media productions; they will also learn how to apply relevant theories of gender in the fields of religious history and media analysis.

OR

3.5 *Film Summer School*

4 ECTS

The Film Summer School will provide students with further knowledge regarding the economic and entrepreneurial context of film. This intensive course consists of classes with a decisively pragmatic focus designed specifically for film students. Participants will receive career guidance and tailored information on a.) the key elements of the Hollywood system; b.) job descriptions; c.) developing film projects; d.) industry trends; e.) internships in the entertainment industry; f.) preparation for interviews; g.) networking skills; h.) the creation of a comprehensive business plan. The program provides academic lectures by film professors as well as field visits. Participation in the Summer School will enable students to gain firsthand experience in the Hollywood film industry and provide a behind-the-scenes look to expand their knowledge of film studies.

4. Social and Economic Context

[VU/KS, Department of Corporate Leadership and Entrepreneurship] all in all 3-6 ECTS

4.1 *Project Management* [or equivalent courses]

1-2 ECTS

The module deals with key methods and techniques for the analysis and long-term planning of projects. Students will learn to understand and apply the project cycle with its key elements of planning, controlling, and project management in the context of practical examples. Likewise, the social competencies relevant for project management will be

conveyed and strengthened on the basis of practical examples of application. Social skills, such as creative techniques, conflict management, moderation, and leadership, are considered important components in the professional profile of project managers and contribute significantly to the successful implementation of projects.

4.2 *Marketing and Law*

Marketing concise [or equivalent courses] 1 ECTS

The course focuses on application-oriented insights into the strategic concepts and methods of marketing. Behavioral and informational foundations of market-oriented corporate governance with depictions of central business processes and functional units from a marketing perspective will be taught. Emphasis is placed on analysis and qualified handling of stakeholders as well as demonstrations of the marketing mix, its implementation and controlling. Practical exercises and application-oriented case studies as well as simulations in the field of market-oriented corporate management are included.

OR

Law concise [or equivalent courses] 1 ECTS

Students will acquire application-oriented insights into the foundations of law. The course offers an introduction to legal methodology and insights into different private law and public topics. Significant legal terms will be explained and various legal topics will be discussed, illustrated by practical examples.

OR

Applied Corporate Communications I - (Online-)Marketing, PR & Management 2 ECTS

This course provides a practical overview of corporate communication. It focuses on (Online-)Marketing, Public Relations, and the project management involved. The learning objective of the students is to gain an essential know-how for a career entry in the marketing/communications sector. The tools and disciplines of corporate communication will be taught by real life cases. There will be an emphasis on current issues like online marketing and social media. Students will gain in-depth knowledge by proactively working on their own case examples and presentations.

4.3 *Creativity and Methodical Work* [or equivalent courses] 1-2 ECTS

The course aims at familiarizing students with creative techniques and methods of structured work based on practical examples. The main focus is on the development of new ideas, making a vision a reality, as well as problem-solving through different techniques of creativity in individual and group work. The module promotes creative thinking processes, while also stimulating innovative ideas through concepts and methods taken from practice.

5. **Internship/Professional Practice** 6 ECTS

In order to gain direct insights into the professional world of the entertainment industry, students will take part in a four-week internship of 40 hours per week in a media company of their choice (film, television, electronic media, etc.) as part of their training for the Certificate in American Film and Television Studies. It is the responsibility of each student to search and apply for this internship on their own. Students must apply for this module

in advance by completing the form “Genehmigung der Absolvierung einer (Auslands-) Praxis (pdf),” available at <https://gewi.uni-graz.at/de/studieren/bachelorstudium/formulare/> and, in turn, seek approval from the responsible governing body for matters of study.

§ IV. Certification

- (1) After successful completion of the courses, students will receive a certificate for completion of studies in the total amount of 18-25 ECTS credits.
- (2) The certificate is issued by the head of the program.

§ V. Requirements

The module is open to all bachelor and master students at the University of Graz.

§ VI. Frequency of Module Offering

All courses can be completed within one and a half years of study (3 semesters).

§ VII. Management and Organization

- (1) The direction, organization, and content coordination of the certified focus is carried out by the Professorship of American Studies II (at the Department of American Studies), Research Area of American Literary and Cultural History with a Focus on (Trans-)Nationality and Space.
- (2) The annual program of the certified focus is published on the homepage (<https://amerikanistik.uni-graz.at/de/trans-nationality-space/>).