About

Department Name Change

In December 2019, we became the Department of Cinema & Media Studies. Please see our name change FAQ page for more information.

What is Cinema & Media Studies?

From our smartphones to the movie theater, human experiences across the globe today are shaped by the media we view and create. Visual media are entwined with culture, art, politics, and entertainment. Understanding these relationships is at the core of Cinema & Media Studies.

Our department offers undergraduate and graduate programs in Cinema & Media Studies and is the home to the Comparative Literature major for undergraduates. These students and our department's alumni actively engage with contemporary media as critical observers, analysts, researchers, and industry experts. They communicate their findings clearly and persuasively. They interpret and utilize the tools of visual communication to affect and influence the world.

Highlights of Cinema and Media Studies at UW

- Excellence in teaching and scholarship: Our faculty members are dedicated teachers and award-winning researchers, recognized as leaders in their field.
- Diverse subject expertise: We cover the expected (world cinema, television studies, film history, and screenwriting) and the surprising (cell phone culture, surveillance, media labor). See our faculty's research fields and our undergraduate and graduate course offerings.
- Abundant Resources: In addition to UW-affiliated opportunities, our department offers close ties to the Northwest's film and media community.
- Meaningful outcomes: Alumni of both our undergraduate and graduate programs find success in their chosen fields. Learn more about the careers of our undergraduate alumni and academic placements of graduate alumni.

Department Research

Research in our department reflects the diversity of our faculty's and students' areas of expertise and interest. Recent faculty projects and publications have covered such topics as global art cinema, feminist approaches to silent film history, and history of production design in Hollywood. Recent dissertations have included studies of the history of animation in Eastern Europe, queer perspectives in contemporary East Asian cinemas, and transnational heritage films.

Department History

The history of the Cinema and Media Studies Department demonstrates how fields of study at the UW grow and evolve in response to new ways of examining and understanding our world. In 1982, the Department of Comparative Literature was established: the field previously had been a specialty within the English Department. In the 1990s as new student and faculty interests emerged, Cinema
Studies became a track within the major of Comparative Literature, receiving its official designation in 1998.

Interest and research in the field of cinema and media studies has continued to expand. In 2015, to recognize the department's notable strengths in these fields, its name was changed to the Department of Comparative Literature, Cinema & Media.

A distinct B.A. in Cinema and Media Studies was launched in autumn 2017, and in late 2019, the unit's name changed to the Department of Cinema and Media Studies to reflect the further development of this area at the UW. At the same time, the department began offering graduate degrees, an M.A. and Ph.D., in Cinema and Media Studies for the first time.

The legacy of comparative literature endures at UW. Its influence is seen in the global scope of the Cinema and Media Studies course offerings, which explore and examine underrepresented perspectives and voices in contemporary media. As the comparative literature faculty lead the way to develop a new major in global literary studies, the Department of Cinema and Media Studies and its advisers are supporting students pursuing the Comparative Literature major.

More about the Department

- Recent News
- Events Calendar
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

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