

Overview of the Cinematic Arts Major at UC San Diego

From narrative and documentary filmmaking to experimental and unconventional approaches, the films made by faculty, alumni, and students at UC San Diego are truly exceptional in the landscape of cinematic arts across California. Further, scholars of film at UC San Diego do not focus exclusively on the “canon” of Western European and American film history, but expand the field to include robust research of film from Latin America, East Asia, South Asia, Indigenous communities, as well as film arising from cultural traditions within the U.S. including Black, Latinx/Chicanx, AAPI, Queer, and Feminist film.

The new Cinematic Arts major is interdisciplinary, bridging both film-studies and film practice pedagogy. Cinematic Arts brings together theory and practice, teaching students both the theoretical/critical approaches to film and the practical techniques in film production.

The major allows students to avail themselves of the breadth of film studies and production classes across campus and includes film production courses taught in the Visual Arts, Literature, and Theater & Dance departments, among others. These requirements will be enhanced by a series of new production-based courses that include directing, cinematography, animation, and production design, among others.

Rather than recreating a version of film programs found at other research universities in Southern California, this major will dig into the expertise and unique filmmaking and studies culture at UC San Diego. Grounded in critical analysis and cultivating each student’s cinematic “voice,” the Cinematic Arts major gives focus to the production and study of narrative, documentary, and experimental cinema. Filmmaking is fundamentally collaborative, and the new major will ask students to learn and understand what various “departments” do in a film-production. Through collaborative projects and instruction, students will not be expected to become experts in all aspects of filmmaking, but rather identify, over time, areas which speak to each student’s unique interests and talents.

Of the nearly three dozen film-studies classes available for Cinematic Arts majors, eighteen of them are directly focused on themes of transnational, multicultural cinema. The production courses included in the major additionally highlight and feature examples by a broad and inclusive range of filmmakers and film traditions. Further, a key component in these upper-division courses is the role of student-led critique, whereby students engage in discussion of each other’s work, generating ideas and corrections from within the learning community of the classroom. Through the mixture of course-content and discussion with students in courses throughout the major, students are introduced to a wide range of perspectives and practices.

Goals of the Cinematic Arts Major

- Students will be introduced to the fundamentals of making, understanding, and analyzing film/cinema.
- Students will gain a broad historical and critical understanding of cinema history, including trends in the US and internationally.
- Students will learn fundamental production techniques including cinematography, writing, editing, sound, animation, visual effects, directing, and presentation.
- Students will cultivate a critical understanding of their own work as filmmakers and scholars, with the ability to write and speak about the themes and impact of their work.
- Real-world experience in the form of internships, work-study, and student-led projects.
- Collaboration: students will learn about the fundamentally collaborative nature of filmmaking, allowing them to identify areas within which they feel confident to pursue a practice beyond UC San Diego.

The *Film Studies minor* educates students in a conventional Humanities context, where students learn to critically analyze film and engage with a broad literature of film history and theory.

For more information about the Cinematic Arts Major

Visit our website at <https://filmstudies.ucsd.edu>.

UC San Diego students please contact us through the [Virtual Advising Center \(VAC\)](#).

All others please email filmstudies@ucsd.edu.