This course will introduce students to the history of film as an artistic medium and a global art form. We will track technological, aesthetic, and formal developments in its evolution from photographic and proto-cinematic technologies to digital cinema (roughly 1827-2001) by studying particular masterpieces, and focusing on the role of the director or auteur. We will pay close attention to the medium’s complex relationship to time, its changing materiality (and “medium specificity”), and its fraught relationship to truth and reality. Students will engage in a historical and formal study of international cinema through a chronological survey of its major forms, techniques, and its relationship to the broader history of art, as well as social and political history. We will sample its major and “minor” forms, from Hollywood productions to art gallery experiments and cinema from the developing world. Students will be introduced to the grammar of film through a historical account of its formal evolution and the stylistic analysis of the visual and narrative structures of individual films.

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