

Spring 2026 Course Description

COURSE TITLE: First-Year Seminar 1000.23 Childhood in International Cinema

COURSE SECTION/DAYS: Tu 4.30-7.50

INSTRUCTOR: Aine O'Healy

Office: UNH 3945

Email: aine.ohealy@lmu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Childhood in International Cinema

This seminar introduces students to critical writing through an exploration of international cinema. Our particular focus is the representation of childhood in approximately twelve feature films produced around the world since the 1940s. To engage critically with these films, drawn from different national contexts and historical periods, we apply the tools of audiovisual analysis to identify the symbolic function of the figure of the child on screen. The body of work we examine is organized into groups of two or three films linked by a common theme (childhood in wartime; childhood and disability; dilemmas of the transgender child; border-crossing children; and so on). We thus explore how the construction of children in cinema intersects with discourses of nation formation and with the representation of gender, sexuality, national identities, and social class. The assigned readings, drawn for the most part from cinema studies, will guide our explorations, allowing us to place the filmic analyses in a broader context that encompasses issues of historical memory, globalization, social conflict and cultural diversity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successfully completing this course

- Students will understand and appreciate the intellectual rigor and academic excellence that defines an LMU education,
- Students will be able to engage critically and reflectively in scholarly discourse.
- Students will interpret audiovisual images with appropriate critical tools.
- Students will understand the capacity of cinema to encode cultural and ideological values.
- Students will be able to evaluate research sources for quality (e.g., by learning to differentiate between scholarly and popular sources).
- Students will acquire research skills including use of library catalog and electronic databases to retrieve books or articles, whether in print or online.

WORK REQUIRED

Weekly reading assignments; short essays; final research paper; formal oral presentation.

TEXTS

All assigned readings are available on Brightspace.