Department of Film
Brooklyn College of
The City University of New York

Proposal

To Establish a Program in Cinema Studies,
Leading to the Master of Arts Degree

HEGIS Code: to be assigned
SED Program Code: to be assigned
Date of Brooklyn College governance approval: April 2012
Anticipated date of implementation: Fall 2015
Letter of Intent

Master of Arts Degree in Cinema Studies

Introduction

The Department of Film at Brooklyn College proposes to establish a graduate course of study culminating in the Master of Arts Degree in Cinema Studies. The anticipated date for admitting the first cohort of students is Fall 2015.

The goal of the program is to provide a comprehensive education in cinema history, theory, criticism, and aesthetics and to encourage the scholarly exploration of motion pictures as a form of art and a means of social communication. Students will complete a total of 36 credits, which may be pursued on either a full-time or a part-time basis. Because the degree program will be housed in the same facility (the Steiner Film Studios in the Brooklyn Navy Yard) as the proposed M.F.A. in Cinema Arts, it will encourage students to deepen their knowledge within the context of a larger community of filmmakers, entertainment management practitioners, and cinema scholars. This program’s interrelationship with the M.F.A. program will make it truly unique. Students will benefit from the depth of M.F.A. electives, while interacting with professional filmmakers at the Steiner site.

Central to the program is its embrace of the University's commitment to access and excellence. The program will attract students who reflect the rich cultural diversity of the United States and beyond, and it will invite into the scholarly discussion of cinema voices that would not otherwise be heard.

Purpose and Goals

Today, the very idea of cinema is in flux. No longer does it exclusively involve projected images in a darkened auditorium. Now, filmmakers create work that is viewed on televisions, computers, hand-held devices, and even cellular phones. The purpose of the M.A. in Cinema Studies is not merely to invest in its students a specific body of facts; rather, it is to prepare them to engage with the changing cinematic landscape and to understand its broadest aesthetic and cultural implications across media.

To do this, the program will provide a solid foundation in those areas traditionally associated with advanced study in the discipline: cinema history, theory, criticism, and aesthetics. At the same time, it will foster intellectual independence and ask its students to pursue research that deepens understanding of the cinematic past while contextualizing present and future cinematic forms.

Need

Despite rapid changes in technology that have altered the way that people communicate through art, cinema remains the preeminent art form of the contemporary era, one of enduring cultural
and social significance. Essential to the continued exploration of the medium’s effect on audiences—as well as society—is the training of individuals who are capable of scholarly investigation and public discourse.

Students who complete the M.A. degree program will be able to pursue career opportunities in a wide range of areas, of which these are a sample:

- film curatorship/archiving
- festival programming
- film preservation
- film criticism
- story development for motion pictures and related media
- publicity and promotion for motion pictures and related media
- high school or post-secondary (community college) education

Because of the intellectual rigor of the program, the M.A. in Cinema Studies will be of value to anyone pursuing a career that requires highly developed critical, analytical, and communication skills. For this same reason, it will prepare students with the desire for further study on the doctoral level.

Students

Across the nation and around the world, student interest in cinema is stronger than it has ever been. Graduate programs, whether in cinema studies or in the hands-on areas like cinematography, producing, and directing, remain among the most popular degree programs in the country. In a typical year, for example, approximately 1,400 prospective students apply for one of the 90 openings in the M.A., M.F.A., and Ph.D. programs at UCLA. Locally, New York University and Columbia University offer programs leading to the M.A. in cinema studies (or, using an alternative nomenclature, film studies), and each enrolls 30-35 students with an estimated ten percent acceptance rate.

The level of interest in graduate study in cinema seems largely unaffected by its cost, which can be prohibitively high at private institutions. Columbia University, New York University, and the University of Southern California all offer M.A. programs in this area of study. Although the specific titles of the programs may differ slightly, the high cost of matriculation is a constant.

- Columbia University charges $44,264 in total tuition for the 30-credit M.A. in Film Studies.
- New York University charges $50,292 in total tuition for the 36-credit M.A. in
Cinema Studies

- The University of Southern California charges $52,092 in total tuition for the 36-credit M.A. in Critical Studies.

- Out-of-state tuition for New Yorkers at public institutions offering graduate degrees in film studies is close to that of private universities. For example, UCLA charges $34,817 in tuition per year for out-of-state students.

Even at the low-end, a student can expect to pay nearly $35,000 to pursue a master’s degree in this discipline. Significantly, financial assistance is usually unavailable, reserved instead for Ph.D. students. As a result, diverse talent is effectively shut out even before an application for admission is ever filed. The proposed program at Brooklyn College aims to remedy that by broadening access to graduate study in cinema with a tuition structure that is at once rational and affordable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 – Tuition and Fees</th>
<th>New York State</th>
<th>Non-resident</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First year</strong></td>
<td>10,535</td>
<td>18,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second year</strong></td>
<td>10,957</td>
<td>19,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>21,492</td>
<td>38,189</td>
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Certainly, the City University can boast of several low-cost, high quality, media-related graduate programs on its campuses. The proposed Master of Arts in Cinema Studies represents a unique and important complement to the three existing programs:

- **College of Staten Island**
  Department of Media Culture
  M.A. in Cinema and Media Studies
  A two-year program that spans core knowledge in media history, theory, criticism, and production in order for students to develop research, writing, and media-making skills in preparation for careers in academia, the arts, or media-related professions.

  The Brooklyn College program will distinguish itself from the CSI program in that its curriculum focuses exclusively on film (rather than media) theory, history, criticism, and aesthetics. Unlike CSI, it does not contain a production component. Furthermore, the Brooklyn College program is site-based, on location at the Steiner Studios, bringing students into a larger community of scholars, practitioners, and filmmakers to encourage cross-disciplinary research and colloquy.

- **City College**
  Department of Media and Communication Arts
  M.F.A. in Media Arts Production
A two-year program that prepares students for the field of media arts, including film and digital video production, with an emphasis on strong, original storytelling in documentary and fiction.

- Hunter College
  Department of Film & Media Studies
  M.F.A. in Integrated Media Arts
  A two-year program that focuses on politically and socially engaged creative work and the social role of media and technology.

The Brooklyn College program will further distinguish itself from the City College and Hunter College programs because it will lead to an M.A. degree. Its curriculum, therefore, will focus exclusively on theory, history, criticism, and aesthetics. It will not have production requirements, although its unique location at Steiner Studios will allow a depth of insight into the production process.

Admission to the program will be based on academic record and the potential for success in graduate-level study as evidenced by an undergraduate record of achievement shown in transcripts and letters of recommendation, along with a statement of purpose, writing samples from the student, and scores from the Graduate Record Examination.

Admitted into the first cohort will be 20 full-time students, along with additional part-time students on a case-by-case basis, and remain the same over the next five years. Attrition in the graduate arts programs at Brooklyn College has traditionally been very low, and therefore the numbers below reflect zero attrition. The following table sets out a modest enrollment goal.

[Table 2 – Five-year Enrollment Projections]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Year Students</th>
<th>2nd Year Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Curriculum

The curriculum, to be completed over the course of two years of study, will consist of 36 credits, chosen from the following course distribution, plus a capstone project.
FOUNDATION COURSES (NINE CREDITS)

Film Analysis and Research
60 hours; 3 credits

Film Theory
60 hours; 3 credits

Film History/Historiography
60 hours; 3 credits

II. ELECTIVES (TWENTY-FOUR CREDITS)*

* Course titles listed under Electives are rubrics only. Topics will change every semester so that students can take a particular course more than once.

Film Directors
60 hours; 3 credits

Film Genres
60 hours; 3 credits

National Cinemas**
60 hours; 3 credits

Global Cinemas**
60 hours; 3 credits

**National Cinemas will include analysis of the complex cultural, artistic, intellectual, social, economic, political, historical, and cinematic dynamics of a particular national cinema. Global Cinemas, on the other hand, will focus on a major cinema tradition that transcends national borders. Unlike National Cinemas, which will focus on the cinematic traditions of a particular nation-state, Global Cinemas will focus on themes grouped according to regional, political, aesthetic, or cultural traditions shared by people across the globe.

Special Topics in Film Theory
60 hours; 3 credits

Subjects of interest in any of the areas of film theory that are not treated systematically in the regular curriculum. Topics vary from term to term, but may include theoretical paradigms, such as semiotics or psychoanalysis, or a focus on particular theorists: Andre Bazin or Gilles Deleuze, for example. Students may take this course two times, but may not repeat topics.

Specials Topics in Film History
60 hours; 3 credits

Examination of one topic in film in relation to its historical, cultural, technological and theoretical contexts. Topics vary from term to term. Students may take this course two times, but may not repeat topics.
III. CAPSTONE (THREE CREDITS)

Students must complete either of the following courses:

**Comprehensive Examination – Supervised Reading**
45 hours; 3 credits
(Students must pass a comprehensive examination.)

**OR**

**Thesis Development**
Permission of the Director required (for advance students only)
45 hours; 3 credits
(Credit is earned only upon acceptance of the thesis)

[Table 3: Sample 2-year course breakdown]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1, semester 1 (9 cr.)</th>
<th>Year 1, semester 2 (9 cr.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Film Analysis and Research</em></td>
<td><em>Film Theory</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 hours; 3 credits</td>
<td>60 hours; 3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Film History/Historiography</em></td>
<td><em>Film Directors</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 hours; 3 credits</td>
<td>60 hours; 3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>American Film</em></td>
<td><em>International Film</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 hours; 3 credits</td>
<td>60 hours; 3 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*American Film and International Film are required courses for the M.F.A program. Students enrolled in the M.A. program will not be required to take either American or International Film; however, both classes are considered electives for the M.A. Each offers an overview of the major films, directors, cycles, and movements of either the American film industry or international cinema. They are survey courses and should not be mistaken for either the National Cinemas or Global Cinemas courses in the M.A. program, which are more focused in scope.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2, semester 1 (9 cr., 27 cr. total)</th>
<th>Year 2, semester 2 (9 cr., 36 cr. total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Film Genres</em></td>
<td><em>Global Cinemas</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 hours; 3 credits</td>
<td>60 hours; 3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>National Cinemas</em></td>
<td><em>Special Topics in Film Theory</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 hours; 3 credits</td>
<td>60 hours; 3 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specials Topics in Film History  Capstone Project (Thesis or Exam)
60 hours; 3 credits  45 hours; 3 credits

Faculty

The core faculty, all either established scholars with international reputations or promising young scholars whose early work has received positive critical notice, will come from the Department of Film at Brooklyn College.

Jonathan Wacks (Professor and Founding Director of the Barry R. Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema)
B.A., Essex University; M.F.A. University of California, Los Angeles
Previously Professor and Chair of the Visual & Media Arts at Emerson College.
A filmmaker with extensive credits in directing, producing, and screenwriting for film and television. His work has won numerous awards and has screened at film festivals, including, Sundance, Tokyo, London and New York. Member Directors Guild of America.

Kara Lynn Andersen
B.A., University of California at Santa Cruz; M.A., Northeastern University; Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh
Articles and reviews in CLCWeb, Post Script and Scope. Areas of professional interest include digital cinema, animation, pop culture, and video games. Member, Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Society for Animation Studies.

Lindley Hanlon
B.A., Smith College; M.A., Columbia University; M.A., Ph.D., New York University
Author of Fragments: Bresson's Film Style. Has written on film theory, French film, and the arts in journals that include Millennium, Journal of Aesthetics, and Art Criticism. Lectured on contemporary American independent cinema in Japan, the Netherlands, and Russia.

Foster Hirsch
B.A., Stanford University; M.F.A., M.A., Ph.D., Columbia University

Paula J. Massood
B.A., University of New Hampshire; M.A., Ph.D., New York University
Elisabeth Weis
B.A., Cornell University; Ph.D., Columbia University
Publications include The Silent Scream: Alfred Hitchcock's Sound Track and the anthology Film Sound: Theory and Practice (co-edited with John Belton). As Executive Director of the National Society of Film Critics since 1974, she also edited two of its anthologies Movie Comedy (with Stuart Byron) and The Movie Star. She has published articles and reviews in The Village Voice, The New York Times, American Film, Film Comment, Cineaste, and The Encyclopedia Britannica.

When fully enrolled, the M.A. program will offer eight to ten course sections per year, exclusive of theses supervision. Full-time core faculty can be expected to teach most of these sections with the remainder covered by faculty from other CUNY campuses and by adjunct faculty. In consequence, there exists no immediate expectation of additional instructional lines, although administrative reassigned time of three to six hours will be necessary for the program head.

Cost Assessment

The M.A. program in Cinema Studies will require a budget and a level of support consonant with the high standard of professional training that it seeks to provide. It will join the M.F.A. program in Cinema Arts to form the Graduate Program in Cinema at Steiner Studios. Because personnel, equipment, and facilities will be shared among the degree programs, it is neither feasible nor helpful to break out the costs for any single program. Instead, an overall preliminary budget along with detailed enrollment projections is included here.
## Fees

### Fiscal Year 2016

| Tuition and Fee Rates by Degree Program | In-State | Non-State | Tuition | Fees | T & F | In-State | Non-State | Tuition | Fees | T & F | In-State | Non-State | Tuition | Fees | T & F |
|----------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------|------|------|---------|----------|---------|------|------|---------|----------|---------|------|------|------|
| MFA, Full Time Student Annualized Rates |          |          | 10,535  | 18,720 | 9,217 | 18,720  | 9,217 | 18,720  | 9,217 | 18,720 | 9,217 | 18,720  | 9,217 | 18,720 | 9,217 |
| MFA, Per Credit/Part Time Rates | 425  | 780     | 4,135  | 9,235  | 13,495 | 442  | 811     | 4,300  | 9,604  | 14,035 | 460  | 844     | 4,472  | 9,899  | 14,578 |
| MA, Full Time Student Annualized Rates |          |          | 10,535  | 18,720  | 0     | 10,535  | 18,720 | 0     | 10,535  | 18,720 | 11,395  | 20,248 | 0     | 11,395  | 20,248 |
| MA, Per Credit/Part Time Rates | 0     | 0       | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |

### Tuition and Fees Revenue Analysis

#### Barry R. Feirstein
Graduate School of Cinema

#### Degree Programs

- **MFA, Digital Media**
  - 18 11 7 267,076 161,007 428,083
  - 119 92 27 253,181 9,604 262,777
  - MA, Cinema Studies (PENDING) 18 15 3 222,756 0 222,756

#### Cohort Totals

- **Cohort 1 Shading**
  - 136 102 36 1,727,440 956,320 2,683,760

- **Cohort 2 Shading**
  - 136 102 36 1,727,440 956,320 2,683,760

- **Cohort 3 Shading**
  - 136 102 36 1,727,440 956,320 2,683,760

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* Programs may incrementally grow in fiscal year 2019; to be conservative this is not reflected in projections.