slow cinema

the ethics of being-with in time

Program in Film and Media Studies
Johns Hopkins University

Spring 2026

Course Information
AS.061.304
Slow Cinema
3 credits
W 2:00–4:30
Parkway Theatre 2

Instructor Information
Kyle Stine, PhD
Program in Film and Media Studies
Office: Gilman 65
Hours: T 1–3 p.m. and by appt.
kylestine@jhu.edu

Course Description
Against the tendencies of a media environment that seems to prioritize faster content at shorter intervals in nearly all areas of cultural life, this course attends to the aesthetics, ethics, and attentional challenges of slow cinema. A global array of filmmaking practices traceable to the earliest years of film history, slow cinema cultivates what we will call long circuits of attention—extended modes of looking and listening that unfold across decelerated time. Although often associated with long takes, slow cinema cannot be reduced to shot duration; some films deploy extremely long takes while maintaining a rapid, volatile tempo, revealing that slowness is a comprehensive experience involving everything that goes on in the cinematic frame. Over the semester, we will consider how the formal strategies of slow cinema open up meditative and contemplative modes of spectatorship, inviting new forms of care toward dimensions of life that often go unnoticed: labor, landscape, environment, memory, and existence itself.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes
Gain facility with key terms in the literature, that is, images, as in

- on cinema and scientific and medical imaging.
- Develop a critical and historical perspective on the cultural values expressed in films and medical images involving issues of race, gender, class, and sexuality.
- Cultivate skills in film analysis.
- Engage in the practice of writing to improve the clarity, force, and impact of ideas.
- Develop editing skills through the process of feedback and revision.

Course Materials
All readings and screenings will be available via e-reserves on Canvas. Most of the films will be viewable

on Kanopy (https://jhu.kanopy.com/login). Please note, however, that as a class focused on the theatrical cinema experience, we will be screening a majority of the films during our regular meeting time in the Parkway Theatre, the best screening spaces JHU has to offer.

Evaluation
Grades will be based on completion of all assignments, active and constructive participation in class discussions, and high-level creative and academic thought.

A (94–100): Exemplary
A- (90–93): Excellent
B+ (87–89): Strong
B (84–86): Good
B- (80–83): Satisfactory
C+ (77–79): Adequate
C (74–76): Acceptable
C- (70–73): Minimally Acceptable
D (60–69): Unsatisfactory
F (59–0): Failure

Assignments
Attendance and Participation (20 points)
Attendance is required for all discussions and in-class screenings, and students earn participation points for attending class and engaging in discussions. A written response about the course materials will be required for any classes missed, up to two. A reduction of one full grade from the cumulative course grade will result from each unexcused absence beyond two. Two unexcused tardy arrivals to class will result in the recording of an unexcused absence. Students should follow all university illness protocols. Students who have flu symptoms should not attend class and should isolate themselves to the extent possible until they have been fever-free for twenty-four hours. Religious holidays are valid reasons to be excused from class. Students who must miss a class because of a religious holiday should inform the instructor as early in the semester as possible to be excused from class and, if necessary, to make up any work that is missed. Students who must miss class should contact a classmate for discussion notes and information before contacting the instructor with any questions. ***Successful completion of this course requires attendance at two special events hosted by the JHU Film and Media Studies Program. Proof of attendance must be submitted to the instructor prior to the end of the semester. Failure to fulfill this obligation will result in a reduced attendance and participation grade.***

Reflection on Slow Art, 4 pages (20 points)
Assignment prompt to be distributed on February 18.

Meetings (4), 5 points each (20 points)
This assignment is an exercise in collaboration and, following the theme of the class, one of being in time with each other. Because we are using our normal class time for the majority of our screenings, we will make up for missed discussion time by holding a series of meetings throughout the semester. Consider it extended office hours but with a plan: Each student will hold a meeting with every other student in the class and me. With five students, that means four meetings for each student and ten meetings for me. Please prepare two discussion questions for each meeting. More details on coordinating schedules to come.

Film Response Papers (5), 4 points each (20 points)
Throughout the semester students will be expected to complete five response papers, worth 4 points each, on assigned feature-length films. These short writing assignments should be around 2 pages and engage with the films in connection with readings, other films, and recurring topics in the course. One

paper of your choosing should become a conversation. For all papers, I will try to respond in dialogue with your ideas. If you craft a 150–200-word response to my notes, you can earn an additional point, which I will distribute across your response papers to a limit of the total points possible (20 points).

Final Project: Slow Cinema Event (20 points)
Due April 27. More details to come in assignment sheet to be distributed on April 9.

Academic Integrity
The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of student conduct (or designee) by calling the Office of the Dean of Students at 410-516-8208 or via email at integrity@jhu.edu. For more information, see the Homewood Student Affairs site on academic ethics: (https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/student-life/student-conduct/academic-ethics-undergraduates) or the e-catalog entry on the undergraduate academic ethics board: (http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/student-life-policies/#UAEB).

Beyond the university's statement on academic integrity, I offer additional guidance for this course to ensure clarity. All assignments you submit in this class should be your own original work. Your writing should express your own ideas, composed by your own power, and should not include passages produced by other students or by AI assistants (ChatGPT, Claude AI, Google Bard, Grammarly's AI Writing Assistant, etc.), unless these are put in quotation marks and cited with academic rigor. Scholarly citation is a form of human collaboration, and the crediting of others a vital part of community building and important tool in knowledge creation. In that spirit, I am here to help you in any part of your writing process. If you have any questions about how to handle certain materials in your research, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

You should be prepared to demonstrate the authenticity of your work. A good practice is to always save a record of your writing process, so that you have it on hand in the event questions arise about the originality of your paper. Whether you compose your draft in Google Docs, Microsoft Word, or a special writing app like Scrivener, the application can provide statistics on the amount of time you worked on the paper, how many editing sessions you had, and the dates when the document was created and edited. If your project is suspected of plagiarism or AI creation, these statistics can help support a case that it is your own work.

Disability Services
Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, 410-516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

The Counseling Center
If you are struggling with anxiety, stress, depression or other mental health related concerns, please consider visiting the JHU Counseling Center. If you are concerned about a friend, please encourage that person to seek out their services. The Counseling Center is located at 3003 North Charles St. in Suite S-200 and can be reached at 410-516-8278 and online at http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/.

Schedule

Introduction

W1 Structural Film
when we discuss shot duration and the unwatchable

W 1/21 Introduction and course overview.
Read: Noël Carroll, "Warhol's *Empire*," in *Unwatchable*, ed. Nicholas Baer, Maggie Hennefeld, Laura Horak, and Gunnar Iversen, 189–193. Rutgers University Press, 2019.
P. Adams Sitney, "Structural Film," in *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde*, 1943–2000, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2002), 347–356.
In-class screening: *Wavelength*, dir. Michael Snow, Canada/USA, 1967, 45m. 16mm.
And for reference here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0DgHpdNCaU

W2 Transcendental Style
when we think about the long take and how directors have conceived of the spiritual in film

W 1/28 **Read:** Steve Neale, "The Long Take—Concepts, Practices, Technologies, and Histories," in *The Long Take: Critical Approaches*, ed. John Gibbs and Douglas Pye (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 127–141. Paul Schrader, "Dreyer," in *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer*, rev. and expanded ed. (University of California Press, 2018), 133–167.
In-class screening: *Ordet*, dir. Carl Theodor Dreyer, Denmark, 1955, 126m.
https://catalyst.library.jhu.edu/permalink/01JHU_INST/t3c16/alma991060757702007861

W3 Cinematic Modernism
when we consider art cinema as a stylistic form and the role of time in cinema

M 2/2 Charles Theatre Revival Series Screening of *L'Avventura*, dir. Michelangelo Antonioni, Italy/France, 1960, 143m. Monday, February 2, 7:00 p.m.
https://thecharles.com/movie/lavventura/

W 2/4 **Read:** Paul Schrader, "Rethinking Transcendental Style," in Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer, rev. and expanded ed. (University of California Press, 2018), 1–33.
Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 1–24.
Recommended: David Bordwell, "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice," *Film Criticism* 4, no. 1 (Fall 1979): 56–64.
Watch before class: *L'Eclisse*, dir. Michelangelo Antonioni, Italy/France, 1962, 126m.
https://www.kanopy.com/en/jhu/video/112937.

M 2/9 Response 1 Deadline (*Wavelength*, 1/26; *Ordet*, 2/2; or *L'Eclisse*, 2/9)

W4 Slow Cinema

when we address the historical specificity of the turn to slowness in film

W 2/11 **Read:** Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge, "Introduction: From Slow Cinema to Slow Cinemas," in *Slow Cinema*, ed. Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 1–21. Jonathan Romney, "In Search of Lost Time," *Sight & Sound* (February 2010). Nick James, "Passive Aggressive," *Sight & Sound* (April 2010).
Recommended: Jacques Rancière, *Béla Tarr: The Time After*, trans. Erik Butler (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 1–9, 37–61.
In-class screening: *Werckmeister Harmonies*, dir. Béla Tarr, Hungary/Germany/France, 2000, 145m.

M 2/16 Response 2 Deadline (on *Werckmeister Harmonies*)

Labor

W5 Domestic Labor

when we turn to the ethics of sharing time with others

W 2/18 **Read:** Laura Mulvey, "A Neon Sign, a Soup Tureen: The Jeanne Dielman Universe," *Film Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (Fall 2016): 25–31. Andreja Novakovic, "Introduction," in *Chantal Akerman: Filmmaker and Philosopher* (Bloomsbury, 2025), 1–22.
Watch before class: *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*, dir. Chantal Akerman, Belgium/France, 1975, 202m. https://www.kanopy.com/en/jhu/video/1729253
Prompt for Final Project: Slow Cinema Event Distributed

W6 Precarious and Industrial Labor

when we consider the variability of the experience of time

W 2/25 **Read:** Elena Gorfinkel, "Weariness, Waiting: Enduration and Art Cinema's Tired Bodies," Discourse 34, nos. 2–3 (Spring/Fall 2012): 311–347.
In-class screening: *Wendy and Lucy*, dir. Kelly Reichardt, USA, 2008, 80m. https://www.kanopy.com/en/jhu/video/4208760. Excerpt from *Lunch Break*, dir. Sharon Lockhart, USA, 2008, 83m (5m). https://www.lockhartstudio.com/lunch-break.

W7 Endurance

when we try to make it through—and the ethics of staying with

W 3/4 **Read:** Karl Schoonover, "Wastrels of Time: Slow Cinema's Laboring Body, the Political Spectator, and the Queer," *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 53, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 65–78.
In-class screening: *Stray Dogs*, dir. Tsai Ming-liang, Taiwan/France, 2013, 138m. https://www.kanopy.com/en/jhu/video/6440405.

M 3/9 Response 3 Deadline (*Jeanne Dielman*, 2/23; *Wendy and Lucy*, 3/2; or *Stray Dogs*, 3/9)

Environment

W8 Landscape

when we think about the temporality of waiting

W 3/11 **Read:** Shari Tishman, "Introduction: Slow Matters" and "Slow Looking," in *Slow Looking: The Art and Practice of Learning Through Observation* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 1–27. Mathew Abbott, "Kiarostami's Picture Theory: Cinematic Skepticism in *The Wind Will Carry Us*," *SubStance* 42, no. 1 (2013): 165–179.
In-class screening: *The Wind Will Carry Us*, dir. Abbas Kiarostami, Iran, 1999, 118m.
Prompt for Paper on Slow Art Distributed

SPRING BREAK 3/16–3/20

W9 Infrastructure

when we discuss the ethics and politics of recalling what lies beneath

W 3/25 **Read:** Ping Zhu, "Destruction, Moral Nihilism and the Poetics of Debris in Jia Zhangke's *Still Life*," *Visual Anthropology* 24, no. 4 (2011): 318–328; Corey Byrnes, "Specters of Realism and the Painter's Gaze in Jia Zhangke's *Still Life*," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 24, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 52–93.
In-class screening: *Still Life*, dir. Jia Zhangke, China, 2006, 111m.
https://www.kanopy.com/en/jhu/video/329016.

W10 Lakes and Limit Spaces

when we consider boredom, what nearly all cultural life and film seeks to avoid

W 4/1 **Read:** Francisco Brignole, "Reclaiming the Cinematic: Lisandro Alonso's Aesthetics of Excess in Liverpool," *Chasqui* 45, no. 2 (November 2016): 45–56. Scott MacDonald, *13 Lakes*, Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/national-film-preservation-board/documents/13_lakes.pdf. Scott MacDonald, "Testing Your Patience: An Interview with James Benning," Artforum International 46, no. 1 (September 2007): 428–37, 494. https://www.artforum.com/features/testing-your-patience-an-interview-with-james-benning-180723/.
Recommended: Richard Misek, "Dead Time: Cinema, Heidegger, and Boredom," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 24, no. 5 (October 2010): 777–785. John Rhym, "Towards a Phenomenology of Cinematic Mood: Boredom and the Affect of Time in Antonioni's *L'eclisse*," *New Literary History* 43, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 477–501.
In-class screening: *Liverpool*, dir. Lisandro Alonso, Argentina, 2008, 84m. https://www.kanopy.com/en/jhu/video/114265. *13 Lakes*, dir. James Benning, United States, 2004, 135m (excerpt)

M 4/6 Response 4 Deadline (*The Wind Will Carry Us*, 3/23; *Still Life*, 3/30; or *Stray Dogs*, 4/6)

Existence

W11 Memory
when we open ourselves to remembering

W 4/8 **Read:** Andrei Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (University of Texas Press, 1985), "Introduction," v–xi; and "The Film Image," 84–140.
In-class screening: *Mirror*, dir. Andrei Tarkovsky, Soviet Union, 1975, 107m. https://www.kanopy.com/en/jhu/video/11814153.

Saturday, April 11 — Slow Art Day

W12 Attunement
when we address what resonates beyond the frame and attend to the movie theater as a shared space

W 4/15 **Read:** Amy Taubin, "Sleepless Nights: Amy Taubin on Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Memoria*," *Artforum* 60, no. 5 (January 2022), 33. Chris Plante, "The Most Difficult Movie to See of the Past Decade Is Now Streaming," *Polygon* (July 16, 2024), https://www.polygon.com/24199980/memoria-steaming-mubi-tilda-swinton. Scott Tobias, "Tending the Garden: Why the Unusual Release Plan for *Memoria* Is Good for Film Culture," *The Reveal*, October 6, 2021, https://thereveal.substack.com/p/tending-the-garden-why-the-unusual
In-class screening: *Memoria*, dir. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Colombia/Thailand/United Kingdom, 2021, 136m.

W13 Privation
when we reflect on what cinema gives and what it takes

W 4/22 **Read:** Jacques Rancière, "Béla Tarr: The Poetics and the Politics of Fiction," in *Slow Cinema*, ed. Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 245–260.
In-class screening: *The Turin Horse*, dir. Béla Tarr, Hungary, 2011, 146m. https://www.kanopy.com/en/jhu/video/5461618.

M 4/27 Response 5 Deadline (*Mirror*, 4/13; *Memoria*, 4/20; or *Turin Horse*, 4/27)