

**LMC 4500 A: Storytelling in Global Cinema**  
**Fall 2026**

**Instructor:** Krystian K. Ramlogan  
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**Office Hours:** M/W 2:00–3:30p.m | Tu/Thu 2:00–3:30 p.m. virtually | By appointment  
**Class Location:** Skiles 343  
**Class Time:** M/W 12:30pm – 1:45pm  
**Credits:** 3  
**Prerequisites:** ENGL 1102



*"I have never tried to please my audience through the embellishment of reality. I am a participant and an observer of my society."* Ousmane Sembène, interview with Françoise Pfaff, in *The Cinema of Ousmane Sembène*, Greenwood Press, 1984, p. 40.

*"I was to discover that the line which separates a witness from an actor is a very thin line indeed. Nevertheless, the line is real."* James Baldwin *Remember This House* (unfinished manuscript, c. 1979; published in *I Am Not Your Negro*, ed. Raoul Peck, Vintage, 2017).

### **Catalog**

An in-depth investigation of a major movement, theory, period, or technological development in film studies.

### **Course Description**

What does it mean to tell a story? And whose grammar governs the telling?

This seminar investigates how filmmakers, cultures, and scholars organize stories across Black and Global Cinemas. Rather than treating any narrative grammar as universal, students compare multiple analytical frameworks and organizing concepts. An original narrative framework developed by the instructor, grounded in Caribbean performance traditions, functions as one major comparative instrument among these approaches.

The course begins with shared films and analytical frameworks, then expands into a Storytelling Genealogy that moves across ancient literary and mythic traditions, Black independent cinema, diasporic and Gullah/Geechee storytelling, saga, East Asian narrative organization, adaptation, Indigenous Storywork, and African oral traditions. Shared films include *Sankofa*, *Django Unchained*, *Daughters of the Dust*, *Love & Basketball*, *Origin*, *Smoke Signals*, and *Black Girl*, with additional worked examples drawn from global cinema.

Students will explore how analytical instruments such as narrative structure or organizing concept can reveal different ways in which to read a film and subsequently generate new research questions. The semester moves from shared evidence toward independent scholarship through comparative analysis, genealogy mapping, and a final research paper. At the heart of the course is a larger question: how do scholars construct new knowledge about narrative through comparative analysis of films, artistic traditions, and cultural histories?

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Situate films, filmmakers, movements, and storytelling traditions within relevant cultural and historical contexts across Black and global cinemas.
- Apply and compare narrative frameworks and organizing concepts, including an original instructor-developed framework, while recognizing their analytical usefulness and cultural or conceptual limits.
- Analyze how filmmakers use narrative structure, visual language, editing, sound, performance, and adaptation to construct meaning.
- Construct and evaluate genealogical relationships among films, texts, artistic traditions, and histories, distinguishing chronology and resemblance from evidence of influence, transmission, adaptation, transformation, recurrence, or opposition.
- Produce clear, evidence-based comparative research that integrates close film analysis with peer-reviewed scholarship.

### **Required Texts and Reading Materials**

- **Film Blackness: American Cinema and the Idea of Black Film** by Michael Boyce Gillespie.
  - ISBN-10 : 0822362260 | ISBN-13 : 978-0822362265
- **Additional reading materials** - will be available through Canvas, Georgia Tech Library access, or linked course resources.

### **Recommended Texts**

- *Black American Cinema*, by Manthia Diawara.
  - ISBN-10:9780415903974 | ISBN-13:978-0415903974

### **Technology Requirements**

- Computer/Laptop with a reliable internet connection.
- Pen/Pencil/Notebook or Tablet/Stylus for in-class notes.
- Software to complete assignments: MS Word/PowerPoint, Google Docs, Adobe, etc.
- Computer Storage: access to reliable local and/or cloud-based storage for backing up your work.
- Access to streaming platforms for some films.

**Grading Breakdown**

| ASSIGNMENT OR ACTIVITY         | POINTS | DATE                 |
|--------------------------------|--------|----------------------|
| Small Group Discussions        | 10     | Weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 |
| Screening Responses            | 20     | Weeks 1, 2, 4, 6, 8  |
| Comparative Framework Analysis | 20     | Weeks 4 thru 8       |
| Genealogy Mapping Presentation | 20     | Weeks 7 thru 11      |
| Final Project (UG / Grad)      | 30     | Weeks 4 thru 16      |
| TOTAL                          | 100    |                      |

- Small Group Discussions: Five structured small-group discussions connecting recent films, readings, frameworks, storytelling traditions, and developing research.
- Screening Responses: Student responses to prompts about designated shared film screenings.
- Comparative Analysis: Comparative analysis of an anchor film and paired film using narrative frameworks, close film evidence, and scholarly research.
- Genealogy Mapping Presentation: Individual or pair research presentation constructing and defending a genealogy across a minimum of three films.
- Final Project: Semester-long comparative research paper developed through checkpoints, with a minimum of seven full pages of analytical content, three films, five peer-reviewed scholarly sources, a 150-250 word abstract, close film evidence, and a Works Cited. Draft presentation in Week 15; revised submission in Week 16.

**Grading Scale**

| GRADE | POINTS   | DESCRIPTION                                    |
|-------|----------|------------------------------------------------|
| A     | 90 - 100 | Excellent, 4 quality points per credit hour    |
| B     | 80 – 89  | Good, 3 quality points per credit hour         |
| C     | 70 – 79  | Satisfactory, 2 quality points per credit hour |
| D     | 60 – 69  | Passing, 1 quality point per credit hour       |
| F     | 0 – 59   | Failure, 0 quality points per credit hour      |

**Extra Credit Opportunities**

Any extra credit opportunities, if offered, will be discussed in class. Details, expectations, and eligibility will be communicated at that time.

### **Course Policies, Expectations and Guidelines**

#### **Academic Integrity**

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. [Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the [student Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

#### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

#### **Attendance, Participation, and Engagement**

Regular attendance and active participation are required in this course. Students are permitted three absences without penalty. Beginning with the fourth absence, two points will be deducted from the final course grade for each additional absence. Three instances of tardiness or early departure count as one absence. Institute-approved and documented excused absences will be handled according to Georgia Tech policy.

Please also review the Institute [expectations and restrictions related to attendance](#), including information about excused absences.

#### **Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI**

Collaborative study is expected and encouraged. You may work with classmates on homework preparation, screenings, readings, research conversations, and other out-of-class study unless an assignment states otherwise. Collaboration does not create a shared submission unless the assignment explicitly permits individual or paired work. Any individually submitted work must be your own original work created for this course.

Students may not use Generative AI without the instructor's explicit permission. Unauthorized use of AI tools will be treated as a violation of academic integrity..

#### **Communication Policy**

Email: I will respond to emails as soon as possible, with a standard 48-hour turnaround time. Weekend communication is welcome with the same 48-hour standard response time.

#### **Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams**

Late work is subject to the penalties stated in the individual assignment instructions. Make-up quizzes or alternative arrangements may be provided for documented illness, approved Institute activities, or religious observances.

**Recording:** **No recording** (audio, video, or photographic) is permitted without explicit permission from the instructor. This protects the privacy and intellectual property of all class participants.

### **Religious Observances**

Georgia Tech recognizes the diversity of its student body and respects students' religious practices. Students who wish to be absent from class for religious observances must provide **two (2) weeks advance notice** in writing via email. Alternative arrangements for missed work will be made on a case-by-case basis. More information about approved exceptions can be found [here](#).

### **Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

### **Student Well-Being**

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A comprehensive list of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide.gatech.edu](http://student-resource-guide.gatech.edu)).

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**This syllabus is subject to change. Changes, if any, will be announced in class. Students will be held responsible for all changes.**

*Syllabus Revision 1.0 (any changes to the syllabus will result in a new revision number, e.g., from 1.0 to 1.1, etc.)*

August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026