

Major Filmmakers: Greta Gerwig

Last Updated: Thu, 07/17/2025

Course prefix: LMC

Course number: 3256

Section: B

CRN (you may add up to five):

92026

Instructor First Name: Kristi

Instructor Last Name: McKim

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

Traces in depth an individual artist's career and affords students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the works of an important figure in the world of film.

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Trace the general trajectory of the career of filmmaker, writer, and actor Greta Gerwig
- Situate Gerwig's films within historical and theoretical contexts
- Make critical arguments about the reception history, aesthetic trajectory, and cultural significance about Gerwig's films
- Consider how focusing on one filmmaker's body of work gives rise to new connections within their oeuvre
- Appreciate the influences--media, literary, cinematic--upon Gerwig's artistic imagination, insofar as her work is in conversation with precursors
- Reflect on how students' individual patterns of attention compare with those of peers and film critics
- Create original claims and new work—written and multimodal—that blend Gerwig's films with theory, history, and/or experience

Required course materials:

No required texts for purchase

Grading policy:

Classroom Engagement (10%): Structured as a dynamic sustained conversation instead of a lecture course, this advanced class expects your prepared, thoughtful, and respectful participation. Your discussion contributions need to reflect your careful reading, screening, and thinking about class materials. Engagement doesn't mean simply *talking* but also *listening*, responding to, and asking questions of your colleagues and professor.

Substantive participation involves respect for each other's ideas alongside careful attention to the assigned texts/films. Your classroom engagement should demonstrate:

- Careful reading of texts and screening of films before coming to class;
- Preparedness to be an involved discussant and engaged listener (not a spectator);
- Active thinking about questions and issues raised during class;
- Courage in trying out your own ideas, exercising vulnerability, and asking for help;
- Respect for the ideas and worth of others in the discussion; and
- Effort and thoughtfulness on any written exercises assigned to prepare you for discussion.

To earn engagement points, you should be involved in every class. An "A" is reserved for the student who—even if not always speaking—contributes substantive ideas and asks earnest and thoughtful questions (an "A" student expresses an alertness and engagement that is contagious; an "A" student is a leader, whether by speaking or by modeling a thoughtful listening; an "A" student's contributions reveal their thoughtful engagement with the course outside of class, i.e. familiarity with readings and film). A "B" looks like well-meaning but inconsistent engagement, with comments offered sporadically (maybe every other class) but also sometimes with distraction or inattention. A "C" goes to students who are present and who might go through the motions but who seem not wholly intellectually engaged ("C" students are comfortable letting other students carry the responsibility for discussion). A "D" or "F" goes to students who show up but who work against the focus of the class, through a negative contagion of disengagement. I appreciate how we all have good days and bad days (the same applies to me!), and this engagement grade looks for trends over time and not isolated incidents.

Introductory Letter (8%): Who are you in relation to this course? Tell me about yourself, with as much precision and singularity as possible. How does this class pertain to your hopes, concerns, and interests? What are your goals for this course (beyond its learning objectives), and why have you chosen to take it? Write a paper (1000 words, roughly) that introduces yourself in the process of reflecting upon your patterns of attention and screen experience. You will revisit these questions at the course's end as you consider how studying Greta Gerwig changes you.

Film Impressions (18%): Part of our semester's work includes the regular practice of not just discussing but writing about films in ways that might be generative. Regular engagement in this course means submitting an "impression" about your experience of the feature films. These posts should be roughly 500 words in length, and they need to convey that you've put time, thought, and creativity into your expression. No late writing will be accepted, as this assignment expects that you're keeping up with screenings. Impressions

are due at the beginning of the class and are graded on a credit/no credit basis (i.e. submitting the work earns you full credit), provided you've written roughly 500 words and made a legitimate effort to engage with the film relative to your singular perception; impressions need to be *yours* and not whatever GAI creates.

Group Presentation (15%): This assignment expands the scope of our course to include films/directors/influences we have not studied at length. In (roughly) self-chosen groups, you and your peers will introduce the class to either a film that has influenced Gerwig or a film (that we haven't studied at length) in which she acts.

Short Paper (21%): This paper—roughly 1500 words—expects close analysis of class texts (films and readings), as enriched by class discussion and film experience.

Final Project (20%): This media project—and accompanying artistic statement/rationale—represents your culminating work in the course. This project will be phased into our semester via in-class exercises, to help you give shape to your work. Details TBD.

Final Letter of Self-Reflection (8%): This reflection lends to your own work the interpretation, argument, attention, affinity, and curiosity that you've shown to films and readings throughout the semester.

Attendance policy:

This class expects that you will be present for our meetings. Absences for religious holidays and observances, Georgia Tech athletic competitions (for athletes), illness, and sanctioned school functions will be excused (with notice). You can achieve the objectives of this course only through regular, responsible attendance and active engagement during our meetings. Students who miss more than three classes without documentation of illness or family emergency may see a lowered final grade, and students who miss more than six classes for any reason may fail the course. Students who are absent do not have the option of accessing a recorded class or participating remotely.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence