



Course Outline

TITLE OF COURSE: FILM AND TOURISM

Elective course for L-1/L-15, LM-49 and LM-89

Institution: University of Macerata, Italy

Instructor: Prof. Dr. John Mugubi, HSC, Kenyatta University, Kenya

Duration: 12 hours (6 hours per week, 3-hour blocks, twice a week)

Department: Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course interrogates the powerful yet often invisible relationship between cinema and tourism. Moving beyond the assumption that films merely *depict* places, the course demonstrates how cinematic images actively construct desire, shape perception, and influence mobility.

Anchored in the theoretical framework of the Tourist Gaze, the course examines how audiences are conditioned to see, imagine, and ultimately travel to destinations through film. Particular attention is given to African cinema and its role in reconfiguring global representations, alongside comparative case studies from Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

Through a combination of film analysis, live perception experiments, and applied creative tasks, students will critically and practically explore how cinema transforms locations into destinations, and how these transformations carry cultural, economic, and ethical implications.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- (i) Explain the relationship between film, visual culture, and tourism using key theoretical frameworks
- (ii) Critically analyse how cinematic images shape perceptions of place and influence travel desire
- (iii) Evaluate the concept of the “tourist gaze” and its implications for global tourism
- (iv) Interrogate the politics of representation in film, particularly in African contexts
- (v) Assess both the opportunities and risks of film-induced tourism (economic, cultural, environmental)
- (vi) Design a basic film-based tourism strategy grounded in visual storytelling

COURSE STRUCTURE (12 HOURS)

SESSION 1: THE IMAGE AS DESIRE

(3 Hours)

Theme: From Seeing to Wanting

Key Concepts

- (i) Visual culture and tourism
- (ii) Image, imagination, and desire
- (iii) Introduction to film-induced tourism
- (iv) The Tourist Gaze

Film References

- (a) The Beach
- (b) Out of Africa

Core Activity: Perception Experiment

Students are shown curated images of global destinations without context and asked to indicate:

- (i) preference
- (ii) emotional response
- (iii) likelihood of visit

The same locations are later revealed through film clips.

☞ **Objective:** To demonstrate how desire is visually constructed.

💡 Learning Outcome

Students begin to recognise that:

Tourism begins not with travel, but with imagination shaped by images.

SESSION 2: FILM-INDUCED TOURISM – EVIDENCE AND IMPACT

(3 Hours)

Theme: From Screen to Site

Key Concepts

- (i) Film-Induced Tourism (FIT)
- (ii) Destination branding through cinema
- (iii) Audience psychology and travel motivation

Film References

- (i) The Lord of the Rings
- (ii) The Constant Gardener

🔗 Core Activity: Before/After Test

Students assess a destination before and after viewing selected clips.

🔗 **Objective:** To empirically observe shifts in perception.

Case Studies

- (a) New Zealand (post-LOTR tourism boom)
- (b) Thailand (*The Beach*)
- (c) Kenya (*The Constant Gardener*)

💡 Learning Outcome

Students engage with evidence-based understanding of how films influence tourism flows.

SESSION 3: REPRESENTATION, POWER AND THE POLITICS OF THE GAZE

(3 Hours)

Theme: Who Tells the Story of Place?

Key Concepts

- (i) Representation and stereotyping
- (ii) Postcolonial perspectives in film
- (iii) Cultural authenticity vs commodification
- (iv) Tourism and power

Film References

- (i) Supa Modo
- (ii) Nairobi Half Life
- (iii) Queen of Katwe

🔗 Core Activity: Comparative Scene Analysis

Students analyse contrasting representations:

- Global North vs African cinema
- Exoticism vs lived reality

💡 Critical Question

What kind of tourism is produced by different cinematic representations?

💡 Learning Outcome

Students critically interrogate how film shapes **not just tourism but the meaning of place itself**.

SESSION 4: FILM AS STRATEGY – DESIGNING TOURISM THROUGH CINEMA

(3 Hours)

Theme: From Analysis to Application

Key Concepts

- (i) Destination branding
- (ii) Storytelling and marketing
- (iii) Visual narrative as strategy

CORE ACTIVITY: GROUP PROJECT

Students design a **film-based tourism campaign**, including:

- (i) Location
- (ii) Narrative concept
- (iii) Visual style
- (iv) Target audience

Mini Presentations

Each group presents a 5-minute pitch.

💡 Learning Outcome

Students transition from critique to creative application.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

- ▶▶ **Class Participation & Activities** – 20%
- ▶▶ **Short Reflective Analysis (Individual)** – 30%
- ▶▶ **Group Project & Presentation** – 50%

SELECTED CORE REFERENCES

- (i) Film-Induced Tourism
- (ii) The Tourist Gaze 3.0
- (iii) The Experiences of Film Location Tourists
- (iv) Tourism and Visual Culture

(Additional readings may be provided in class depending on focus areas.)

CLOSING PHILOSOPHY

Tourism does not begin at the airport.
It begins in the imagination.
And cinema is its most powerful architect.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Beeton, Sue. *Film-Induced Tourism*. Channel View Publications, 2016.

Bolan, Peter, and Julie Williams. *Film Tourism: A Marketing Perspective*. Springer, 2020.

Burns, Peter. *Tourism and Visual Culture: Theories and Concepts*. CABI Publishing, 2010.

Chhabra, Deepak. *Destination Image and Branding for Tourism: Theory and Cases*. CAB International, 2010.

Clements, Shaun, and Alastair Morrison. *Destination Branding: Creating a Unique Destination Proposition*. Routledge, 2020.

Croy, W. Glen, and Sue Beeton. *Tourism, Performance and Place: A Geographic Perspective*. Routledge, 2017.

Frost, Warwick. *Cinematic Countrysides*. Manchester University Press, 2014.

Hudson, Simon, ed. *Marketing Destinations: A Film Tourism Perspective*. Goodfellow Publishers, 2011.

Hudson, Simon, and J.R. Brent Ritchie. *Film Tourism and Destination Marketing: The Case of The Lord of the Rings and New Zealand*.

Iwashita, Chieko. *Media Representation and Cultural Identity: The Relationship Between Japanese Popular Culture and Tourism*. Routledge, 2008.

Kim, Seongseop (Sam), and Sangkyun Kim. *Film Tourism in Asia: Evolution, Transformation, and Trajectory*. Springer, 2021.

Maphalala, Gcina. *Cultural Representation and Film Tourism in South Africa*.

Roesch, Stefan. *The Experiences of Film Location Tourists*. Channel View Publications, 2009.

Schofield, Paul. *The Development of Film-Induced Tourism: Theory and Practice*. Channel View Publications, 2019.

Tzanelli, Rodanthi. *Cinematic Tourist Mobilities and the Plight of Development: On Tourism's Savvy Mobilities*. Routledge, 2015.

Urry, John, and Jonas Larsen. *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*. Sage Publications, 2011. Waithera,

Beatrice. *Film and Cultural Tourism in Kenya: A Focus on Cinematic Safari*.

CORE THEORETICAL ANCHORS

(Selected, essential readings with guided descriptions)

The following texts are not exhaustive, but foundational selected to guide critical engagement with the relationship between cinema, perception, and tourism.

Film-Induced Tourism

Sue Beeton provides a foundational analysis of how films transform locations into tourist destinations. The book examines the emotional and symbolic connections audiences form with

cinematic spaces and how these connections translate into actual travel behaviour. Through case studies, Beeton demonstrates how film can act as both a cultural and economic driver of tourism, while also raising critical concerns about sustainability and destination management.

The Tourist Gaze

Urry and Larsen introduce the influential concept of the “tourist gaze,” arguing that tourism is shaped by culturally constructed ways of seeing. Tourists do not simply encounter places—they consume them through expectations formed by media, images, and narratives. The book is essential in understanding how cinema pre-configures what tourists look for and how they experience destinations.

The Experiences of Film Location Tourists

Roesch explores how tourists engage with locations they have previously encountered through film. Focusing on audience psychology, the book reveals how emotional attachment, memory, and imagination shape the tourist experience. It highlights how expectations formed through cinema influence both satisfaction and perception when visiting real locations.

Tourism and Visual Culture

Burns examines how visual media, including film, photography, and advertising, construct tourism imaginaries. He argues that destinations are often consumed as visual symbols rather than lived realities. This work is crucial in understanding how images detach places from their complexity and repackage them into desirable, marketable experiences.

Suggested Further Reading

Film Tourism: Evolution, Management, and Impacts

This text provides a comprehensive overview of the development of film tourism, addressing both its economic potential and its social and environmental consequences. It is particularly useful for understanding how destinations manage increased tourist flows resulting from cinematic exposure.

Destination Branding: Creating a Unique Destination Proposition

This book explores how destinations are strategically branded in a competitive global tourism market. While not exclusively focused on film, it provides valuable insights into how cinematic narratives contribute to shaping a distinctive and attractive destination identity.

Film Tourism in Asia: Evolution, Transformation, and Trajectory

Focusing on Asia, this text examines how different countries have leveraged film to boost tourism industries. It provides comparative insights into policy, marketing strategies, and the cultural implications of film-induced tourism.

Cultural Tourism in Africa: Strategies for the New Millennium

This work situates tourism within African contexts, emphasizing the importance of cultural authenticity, sustainability, and local participation. It is particularly useful in framing discussions around African film and tourism beyond Western representations.

FILM LIST FOR IN-CLASS VIEWING AND DISCUSSION

Supa Modo (2018) – Directed by Likarion Wainaina (Kenya)

Nairobi Half Life (2012) – Directed by Tosh Gitonga (Kenya)

Queen of Katwe (2016) – Directed by Mira Nair (Uganda/USA) *Coco*

(2017) – Directed by Lee Unkrich (Mexico/USA)

From a Whisper (2009) – Directed by Wanuri Kahiu (Kenya)

Spirited Away (2001) – Directed by Hayao Miyazaki (Japan)

Y Tu Mamá También (2001) – Directed by Alfonso Cuarón (Mexico)

Out of Africa (1985) – Directed by Sydney Pollack (USA/Kenya)