

2021-2023 Biennium Internal Budget Proposal Narrative

Division: Department of English (CHSS)

Evaluation Criteria: Proposals will be evaluated on every aspect of this template. It is highly recommended that the narrative portion touch on each area. Proposals forwarded to UPRC by unit leaders will be discussed at UPRC and authors are encouraged to attend so that they may answer questions and provide clarification.

Film and Media Studies Major Track within English

- This is a revised version of a previously submitted budget proposal.
If box is checked please briefly outline any significant changes and/or indicate why it is being resubmitted.

This proposal was submitted as an Emergent Needs Budget Proposal Narrative last year. It is being resubmitted this year as an Internal Budget Proposal Narrative as the continued need for a film and media studies major at Western can no longer be considered “emergent” or as “having arisen as a consequence of changed conditions.”

Significant changes made to the proposal include updated information about enrollment and waitlist figures, new employment projections for film and media industries, an updated overview of film studies electives offered outside the English department, explanation of how this proposal aligns with the strategic goals of the department as well as CHSS, and new data about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Statement of Purpose: *(What is the challenge or opportunity being addressed? How does the proposal address this challenge or opportunity? Limit response to 1 page – please link to any existing reports, data, supplemental materials, etc.)*

The English department’s film studies minor program is a five course (23-25 credits) sequence comprised of ENG 364 (Intro to Film Studies), 365 (Topics in Film History), 464 (Topics in Film Studies), and two elective courses which can be taken anywhere on campus provided they are at the 300 or 400 level and focused on film and media studies or production.

The department’s core film studies offerings are always at capacity and have large waitlists, in many cases numbering as high or higher than the size of the class. In 2019-20, we added a fourth section of ENG 364 for the first time, but this has only minimally relieved enrollment pressure: the spring 2020 section, for instance, had a waitlist of 16 students, compared to 26 in spring 2019. Moreover, because ENG 364 is our gateway to the other courses in the minor, additional demand now falls on those courses as more students are moving through 364 each year (140 where before it was 105). In spring 2019, our ENG 464 offering had a waitlist of 11 students for the 20 student course, compared to only 1 waitlisted student in spring 2018. Our ENG 466 Screenwriting course, which counts as an elective toward the minor and was offered once a year until this current academic year (2020-21) when we’ve begun to offer it twice, has consistently had a waitlist larger than the 20 student cap: 21 students were on the waitlist in winter 2020 and 23 in winter 2019. Since spring 2020, all of the film studies courses offered in the English

department (4 sections of ENG 364, 3 sections each of ENG 365 and ENG 464, and 1 section of ENG 466) have enrolled at full capacity and often with waitlists despite the university-wide decline in student enrollments as a consequence of the pandemic. It is clear we need more sections simply to satisfy student demand, and also that more students would declare the minor if it were easier to get into our courses.

Our proposal is to create a new major track within the English department alongside the existing tracks in Literature and Creative Writing. As with our existing minor, the proposed major would focus on the critical study of film and media, which is to say it would be comprised mainly of courses pertaining to film and media theory, history, and analysis, akin to the study of literature within the Literature major track. At the same time, the curriculum would break down the divide between theory and practice by integrating media production skills (such as shooting and editing video) into courses when suitable, and also by requiring students to take at least one elective entirely focused on media production. A sample curricular plan for the major is attached.

We currently have two TT faculty members who teach full time in film and media studies: one specializes in queer, experimental, and documentary cinemas, and the other in global cinema, film festivals, and media policy. Another TT colleague specializes in new media and divides her time between literature, theory, and film studies courses, contributing about two or three courses a year (roughly half her teaching) to the film studies minor curriculum. We are requesting support to hire two additional TT lines in film studies: one a specialist in American screen industries, issues of equity and access, and cultures of production, and the other a specialist in digital media, specifically television or video game studies. By adding these two TT positions and expanding our roster of classes, we would be able to offer a Film and Media Studies major.

Western is behind most of our state's other public universities in its commitment to film and media studies. The University of Washington offers BA, MA, and PhD degrees in Cinema and Media Studies alongside an interdepartmental graduate certificate and an undergraduate minor. This a longstanding and especially robust program with 14 tenured or tenure-track faculty members. The BA program has about 110 majors at present. Students are required to complete 60 credits of coursework to earn the major, including an introductory course, two courses in film history, two courses in critical theory, a capstone senior seminar, and multiple film studies electives. Our proposed Film and Media Studies major is structured similarly to UW's program as a model toward which to grow. Central and Eastern Washington both offer BA degrees in film that are focused on production, in addition to minors that are focused on critical studies. Washington State University offers only a film studies minor and no major; as such, it is the only major public university in the state comparable to us in terms of how little it offers students who are interested in film and media studies and production. Obviously, not every student in the state can get into the University of Washington, so our Film and Media Studies major program, with its primary emphasis on critical studies, would fill a significant gap.

Anticipated Outcome(s):

The demand for our courses reflects the groundswell of support on campus for a full-fledged film and media studies major. In spring 2019 we conducted an anonymous survey of students enrolled in the minor in which, among other questions, we sought to gauge interest in the development of a major. 36 of our 44 declared minors responded, and 35 of them (97 percent of those who

responded) said they would have considered pursuing a film and media studies major had it been available. Similarly, we conducted anonymous paper surveys with the students enrolled in our spring 2019 and fall 2019 sections of ENG 364: Intro to Film Studies, which would also serve as the gateway course to the major. Of the 56 students who participated, 36 (64 percent) said they would consider a film and media studies major were it available. The survey of declared minors left space for comments. One student stated, “Personally speaking, a film major is what I have been pining for over the last three years.” Another noted that “one of my biggest regrets in coming to Western was not being able to participate in a film major,” and added that it was “essential to establish [a film major] to better support young filmmakers who cannot necessarily afford to go to school elsewhere but still deserve a start.” Another student, Katrina James, who graduated in spring 2019, initiated an online petition drive to push for the creation of a film studies major at Western. She amassed 462 signatures, primarily from current Western students.¹

Based on these surveys, we anticipate 20 to 30 declared majors in the first year, followed by steady growth until the figure settles at around 100 majors. This number is only an estimate; because the new major would draw students to Western who would not otherwise come here, it is hard to know how much demand there will be. That said, the figure is based on a comparison to the number of declared majors in UW’s Cinema and Media Studies program, which currently has about 110, as well as Western’s Linguistics department, which likewise began as a program in English and currently has 154 declared majors.

Not only would the expanded film and media studies curriculum benefit our declared majors and other students in the English department, it would also serve students in Fairhaven, Art, and elsewhere on campus who are interested in media studies and production but who are often shut out of our existing classes. Film and media studies offerings on campus—both critical studies courses and production courses—are remarkably limited. During the past two academic years (2019-20 and 2020-21), only COMM 442: Video Workshop has been offered regularly every quarter, but it has a low cap ranging from 6 to 12 students and fills very quickly. ART 385: Time-Based Art has been offered only once (Spring 2021) while ART 386: Experimental Video Production has been offered only twice during the same period (Winter 2020 and Winter 2021). Both of these courses are capped at 18 students. Fairhaven courses can also be counted as electives towards the film studies minor (such as FAIR 334 and FAIR 356 when the special topic is related to film), but only seven such sections have been offered in the last two years (all capped at 18 or below), and there were no film courses offered at Fairhaven in winter 2020, fall 2020, or winter 2021. So while students are engaged with media studies and production across campus, there is a need both for more offerings and for a strong, focused curriculum in the area.

The major would also address a critical need in the state for more graduates trained to evaluate, produce, and disseminate moving-image media in a variety of careers. According to data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, several occupations under the “Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries” category will experience much faster growth than the national average over the next ten years.² Nationwide, there will be approximately 10,800 annual

¹ The petition can be found [here](#). *Western Front* articles from 2017 and 2018 about student efforts to develop a film major on campus can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

² Employment projection data can be found [here](#) and [here](#). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides nationwide growth projections for the period between 2019-2029 while the most recent comparable data for the state of Washington is available for the period between 2018-2028.

job openings for audio and video equipment technicians between 2019-2029, for a net growth rate of 12 percent. The state of Washington in particular is projected to experience substantial growth, far beyond this already impressive number: the number of employment opportunities for audio and video technicians is projected to grow by 18 percent in the state between 2018-2028 (a net growth of 300 positions annually) and positions for entertainers, performers, and artists are projected to grow by 13 percent (60 new positions annually). Similarly high growth rates are estimated for a wide range of career options including film editing, multimedia art and animation, directing, and editing (for stage, motion pictures, television, and radio).

The same level of growth is anticipated for jobs that require critical study of media texts. Curatorial positions are expected to grow by 19 percent in the state of Washington until 2028, with approximately 40 new jobs created every year. The number of positions for post-secondary cultural studies teachers is predicted to increase 14 percent with 20 new job openings every year. These state-specific growth numbers are far ahead of the single-digit national averages and, when combined for a sector-wide figure, account for hundreds of new jobs annually. Despite the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment projections in many other sectors, the projections for the film and media industries remain very robust.

The new major, together with the accompanying cohort of dedicated Film and Media Studies faculty, would also foster a more robust film culture on campus, expanding on our current array of offerings which has included visiting scholar lectures, guest filmmakers, film screenings and festivals, workshops, filmmaking competitions, alumni roundtables, and other initiatives. These extracurricular offerings benefit all our students, not just those enrolled in film studies classes.

Finally, the new major track would allow Western to put the Digital Media Center (DMC) to optimal use. The DMC, which opened in 2016, is part of the Learning Commons at Haggard Hall and provides the campus community with state-of-the-art equipment for media production. It includes a TV studio with a green screen, floor cameras, control room, a lighting grid, and other facilities for hands-on media instruction. The TV studio is currently used as a classroom for a limited number of courses as well as for training workshops organized by the DMC. The formation of a film major would significantly boost the number of instructional and creative opportunities offered by the DMC, allowing a larger number of students and faculty to benefit from these services already available on campus.

Metrics: *(How will outcomes be measured? Please include current data points and goals. If this proposal will have any impact on the [Overall Metrics](#) included in the university's strategic plan, please indicate which specific ones here.)*

The outcomes of the new major program will be measured in student credit hours, the tally of declared majors and minors, and the number of students who graduate with the degree in a timely fashion. We will also keep track of alumni and create lists of the film and media projects they have worked on, the awards their projects have received, the industry positions they have attained, the institutions of higher education to which they have been accepted for graduate study, the articles and books they have published, and so on. (We currently collect this information informally and publish it in our English department's annual alumni newsletter.)

One of the questions in our survey to current film studies minors asked about their intentions after graduating from Western. Of the 35 students who answered the question, 21 mentioned an interest in pursuing work in film and media industries, while 7 others expressed an intention to pursue further education in the field, together comprising 80 percent of all responses. We believe the formation of a Film and Media Studies major track, with production skills integrated into a comprehensive curriculum on theory, history, and analysis, will be an essential step in preparing our students to achieve these goals. We have also devised our first proposed hire, in the area of American screen industries, issues of equity and access, and cultures of production, with the goal of better serving students seeking careers in the industry. Many of our film studies minors have already gone on to work in the industry, both regionally in and around Seattle as well as in Los Angeles, and several others have made successful applications to highly competitive graduate programs, including Columbia, NYU, and UT Austin.

How does this proposal align with your departmental/divisional strategic priorities? *(Please reference specific items from the recently completed departmental/divisional strategic plan and attach a copy.)*

As indicated in the mission statement of the English department, our courses “encompass and explore multiple cultural traditions, allowing our graduates to cultivate skills in critical thinking, creative expression, close reading, persuasive writing, and effective speaking.” Our current courses in film studies directly support this mission by exploring a diverse group of audiovisual texts. There is a direct connection between our approach to film studies, informed by critical and cultural theory, and the stated mission of the department. Formation of a major in Film and Media Studies would significantly strengthen our curriculum in terms of cultural breadth, critical thinking, and creative expression.

The new program would also closely align with the mission statement of CHSS, which emphasizes that “students, faculty, and staff participate in research, creative activity, service, and community engagement to promote learning that contributes to equitable, just, and sustainable communities. Members of the CHSS community critically examine their world and themselves, embrace diverse perspectives, and devise innovative solutions to critical societal concerns.” Our proposed curriculum for the Film and Media Studies major has a similar focus on justice, equity, and diversity, preparing our students to devise innovative solutions within relevant professional settings.³

How does this proposal support the University Mission and Strategic Objectives? *(Please refer to the [2018-2025 Strategic Plan](#) and indicate which core theme(s) this proposal will help achieve.)*

The development of a Film and Media Studies major directly supports the university’s expressed Vision that “Western Washington University prepares and inspires individuals to explore widely, think critically, communicate clearly, and connect ideas creatively to address our most challenging needs, problems, and questions.” Critical media studies and production skills are

³ The mission statement of the English Department can be found [here](#), the mission statement of CHSS can be found [here](#).

vital to understanding our world and to participating actively, ethically, and successfully within it. As such, the proposal supports a number of the expressed aspects of Goal #1 of the university's Strategic Plan, "Western will provide a transformational education grounded in the liberal arts and sciences and based on innovative scholarship, research, and creative activity," in particular #1.E: "Review and improve general education requirements and programs of study at the undergraduate and graduate levels to ensure they foster the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind required in a dynamic world."

Our current film studies faculty includes scholars of global cinema and social-justice media whose work is grounded in queer, feminist, and postcolonial approaches. Our curriculum is and will continue to be international in scope, and the new major would allow our faculty and teaching to expand in ways that further support the university's expressed Value of "commitment to equity and justice, and respect for the rights and dignity of others." The expansion of the diverse film and media curriculum on campus, along with related extracurricular activities, will be a significant step towards supporting Goal #4.A: "Foster a positive and collaborative campus climate...that welcomes and affirms the diversity of individuals, groups, cultures, and ideas," and 4.F: "Support and strengthen curricula and other programming that engage issues of access, equity, power, and privilege in and across disciplines."

The new program would also make progress toward the university's three "overarching constructs essential for advancing the institutional mission" as expressed in the conclusion of the Strategic Plan: Advancing Inclusive Success, Increasing Washington Excellence, and Enhancing Academic Excellence. In terms of the second construct specifically, a new major in Film and Media Studies would help Western "prepare our students to be successful in a continuously changing work and social environment, where technology and automation are driving employment trends, and significantly changing the nature of work and relationships." The field of film and media studies is a subset of the liberal arts that is actively engaged with new technologies as they develop.

Finally, it is important to recognize that many of the key debates of our time, such as the #MeToo movement and struggles around racial representation, started and are deeply rooted in the film and media industry. The social impact of such movements extends far beyond film culture as they significantly change the way we think about justice, equity, and diversity. Media matters. The Strategic Plan also highlights the significance of such social developments and encourages our students to actively engage with them, for instance in Goal #1.B, "Provide tools and experiences for all students...to develop the skills, knowledge, and habits of mind that will enable them to effectively contribute to evolving societal needs."

What are the consequences of not funding this proposal?

Students interested in the study of film and media, provided they recognize the interest early enough, will continue to go elsewhere, and interested students who are already at Western will continue to be underserved. They will have the options of minoring in film studies, cobbling together a student/faculty designed major in the field, or pursuing an independent major through Fairhaven (which is almost always centered on media production rather than critical studies, and supplemented with classes drawn from our minor curriculum). Moreover, the continued shortage

of available courses in film and media studies on campus, alongside the absence of a robust film culture, will be a deficit for all our students, not just the ones who would pursue the major.

What alternatives were explored?

The film studies faculty has explored the alternatives of forging a standalone program and of creating an interdisciplinary major across departments and colleges. We have consulted with administrators as well as chairs of other recently developed programs and interdisciplinary majors on campus, such as Linguistics and WGSS. In the end, we concluded that it makes the best sense for us to build a new major track in English. This is true for a number of reasons: first, our department’s faculty members have already developed a strong film studies curriculum around the minor; second, there is a logical fit between the critical study of moving images and that of written media; third, there is greater institutional and infrastructural support for a major track developed within an existing department than for the other two alternatives mentioned above; and fourth, our department’s film studies minor program already has a model and practice in place for working collaboratively with other departments and colleges on campus (e.g., our minor curriculum counts media production courses offered in Art, Communication Studies, and Fairhaven as electives, and, inversely, our critical-studies courses are popular for students in Fairhaven who are developing independent majors focused on production).

Which units (departments, colleges, etc.) will be involved?

This would be a new major track within the English department, in CHSS. However, just as our existing film studies minor program functions, we would continue to work closely with faculty in Art, Fairhaven, and other departments and colleges across campus.

Equipment needed:

No purchases totaling more than \$25k.

For major (>\$25k) purchases, please provide the following information.

Item:

Click here to enter text

Purpose:

Click here to enter text

Cost:

Click here to enter text

Anticipated Useful Life:

[Click here to enter text](#)

Replacement Cost if any:

[Click here to enter text](#)

Human Resources *(Complete the table below adding additional rows if necessary):*

<i>Position Title</i>	<i>Total Headcount</i>	<i>Total FTE</i>	<i>Salary and Benefits per FTE</i>	<i>Total Cost</i>
<i>Assistant Professor (American Screen Industries) (FY23)</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>\$88,633</i>	<i>\$88,633</i>
<i>Assistant Professor (Digital Media) (FY23)</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>\$88,633</i>	<i>\$88,633</i>

Table above should match data on budget spreadsheets submitted with this proposal. Complete the spreadsheet to get salary, benefit, and total cost amounts. Contact your division budget officer with questions.

Operating & Maintenance Costs (include service contracts, installation costs, etc.):

General Operating Expenses: See attached budget spreadsheet.

Space Requirements:

What type of space is needed for this proposal? (e.g., private office, lab space, group work/study space, etc.)

Two faculty offices, ideally located in the Humanities building.

What features must this space have? (e.g., fume hoods, plumbing, 3-phase power, etc.)

[Click here to enter text](#)

What needs can be accommodated within your existing space?

Click here to enter text

How much new space will be required?

Click here to enter text

Appendix:

Proposed Film and Media Studies major track within the English Department Sample Curriculum

ENG 314: Critical Theories and Practices: Nineteenth Century to Present (existing course)
One more Literature course at the 300 or 400 level

ENG 364: Introduction to Film Studies (existing course)

ENG 365A or B: Survey of American Cinema, 1895–1960 or 1960–present

ENG 366A or B: Survey of World Cinema, 1895–1960 or 1960–present

(The above two courses are a proposed expansion of our existing ENG 365: Topics in Film History course)

ENG 367: Screen Industries: Equity, Access, and Representation (proposed new course)

ENG 368A or B: Critical Television Studies or Critical Video Game Studies (proposed new courses)

ENG 403: Film and Media Theory Seminar (proposed new course)

ENG 464: Senior Seminar in Film Studies (existing course)

Two other courses within the department in film and media studies, selected from existing GURs in the field (ENG 334 and 335) and possible new courses focused on issues of media representation, adaptation/hybrid media, and major genres or directors.

One 300 or 400 level production course from anywhere on campus (e.g. ENG 466: Screenwriting, ART 385 or 386, COMM 442, FAIR 334S or 356W)

Total: 58–60 credits