

This course explores Black British cinemas and visual culture while examining categories of race and nation specific to post-Imperial Britain and its Black subjects' world-making. Institutional practices and networks that have shaped the development and aesthetics of Black British film cultures from the 1960s to the present, will be highlighted, when, in the words of Stuart Hall, filmmakers sought to “find a new language” to challenge post-war norms and culture that led to seismic shifts towards imagining postcolonial Britain. Studying Black British visual culture on UK soil offers the opportunity to be immersed in the cultural and political ethos of Black Britain. We will experience locales and re-visit histories that, in part, inform deeper understanding of the unique moving-image and art practices under study. Topics will include London as a post-imperial migrant city, “political Blackness,” Black Power and black music’s transnational remit, Black film collectives and Black aesthetics, among other topics. Media objects will range from documentary, feature film, television, moving image art, to visual culture, broadly conceived.

Field Trips

In our field trips we will trace Black British entanglement. During our first week we will explore Oxford’s infamous Pitt Rivers Museum, where stolen African artefacts are housed. Our overnight trip to Liverpool will feature a visit to the International Slavery Museum and an Old Dock Tour, as well as the opportunity to experience The Liverpool Art Biennale first-hand. Our two day-trips to London will include a Black History walk, visits to the Museum of London Docklands and various venues that exhibit works by Black artists ranging from Tate Britain to Autograph Gallery, among additional sites that highlight Black Britons.

Prerequisites:

Cinema Studies **OR** *humanities-based* academic preparation: Book and Media Studies, Art History, Visual Studies, History, English, Critical Studies in Equity and Solidarity, Women and Gender Studies, Sexual Diversity Studies, Philosophy, or Sociology.

First-year students, those currently enrolled in CIN105Y, or Introductory Film courses offered at UTM and UTSC, are eligible to apply.

Due to the course’s compressed nature, and the requirement to write assignments within a short time frame, students in applied programs (such as Art Management) seeking to fulfill a humanities requirement will most likely find the course challenging.

Breadth Requirement = Creative and Cultural Representations (category 1)

Course Engagement/Assessment

Two Field Reports: 30% (2 x 15%)

One Reading Reflection: 15%

Discussion Leadership: 10%

Final Test: 25%

Participation: 20%

Instructor

Questions of “difference” and moving image media have inspired Professor Kass Banning’s research and teaching for decades at the Cinema Studies Institute, St. George campus, University of Toronto. She has taught undergraduate and graduate courses on race, global screen cultures, black diasporic visual culture, film theory, oceanic imaginaries, moving images in the gallery, and interventions in British, Canadian, Irish, and African cinemas from a theoretical lens. She has published extensively on minor moving image media of Britain and Canada, with a current focus on experimental documentary media and artists’ moving image installation. Publishing on and organizing symposia on renowned Black British filmmakers also indicate Professor Banning’s long-standing engagement with Black British visual culture. Most recently, she co-authored “A Grand Panorama: Isaac Julien, Frederick Douglass and Lessons of the Hour,” in *Isaac Julien. Lessons of the Hour. Frederick Douglass*, eds. Isaac Julien and Cora Gilroy-Ware, with Vladimir Seput. London: Memorial Art Gallery of Rochester & Delmonico Books, 2022, winner of the 2023 Krazna-Kraus Book Award.