

Criteria for Evaluation of Film Faculty  
Department of Film Studies  
(Revised March 2020)

The Film Studies department evaluates cases for promotion with regard to the three canonical areas of Teaching, Scholarship, and Collegueship.

### **TEACHING**

*'For purposes of evaluation, teaching refers primarily to classroom performance and promise as evaluated by students and other teachers. The influence on and contribution of the candidate to the teaching of his/her colleagues should also be considered. Supplementary evidence might include a candidate's contribution to formulating new or improved courses, programs, or teaching techniques and also his/her availability to and effect on students as a counselor.'*  
(2019-20 Faculty Handbook Academic Council By-Laws Section 502a)

The department places special emphasis on teaching, and expects candidates to maintain consistent and strong records in the area. Evaluation is based on reading student assessments, class visitation, and the candidate's statement on teaching. Assistant and Associate Professors are assigned a teaching mentor to offer guidance and feedback throughout their pre-promotion careers. In addition, the chair or a designee will visit classes for the purpose of evaluation as part of the standard review, reappointment, and promotion processes.

### **SCHOLARSHIP**

*'Refers to intellectual power, depth and breadth of knowledge, originality and skill in research, creativity and significance of executed work, past contributions to knowledge, and promise of future growth. Published, performed, and executed works, important as a contribution to knowledge and understanding, are also the clearest measure of their author's scholarship. Other evidence might include mastery of skills and disciplines outside the candidate's field.'*  
(2019-20 Faculty Handbook Academic Council By-Laws Section 502b).

The Film Department encourages each candidate applying for promotion to Associate professor or promotion to Full Professor to pursue a specific and rigorous agenda in research-oriented, creatively-oriented, or a combination of the two, approaches to scholarship. Relevant in the case of promotion to Associate Professor is work in film studies completed since arriving at Wesleyan. Relevant in the case of promotion to Full Professor is work in film studies completed since the granting of tenure.

What matters most for promotion is producing work of high quality, that is, work that is significant to our discipline. Assistant and Associate Professors are assigned a scholarship mentor. The mentor will offer guidance and feedback throughout their pre-promotion careers. In making recommendations for promotion to Associate, the tenured professors of the Department, informed by outside experts in film scholarship and film creation, and other germane fields, judge whether work is significant or not. In making recommendations for

promotion to Professor, the full professors of the Department, informed by outside experts in film scholarship and film creation, and other germane fields, will judge significance.

In close conversation with the Department leadership, the candidate is responsible for defining the categories of scholarship for which they expect to be evaluated. Criteria within each category of scholarship are stated below.

### **Research-Oriented Scholarship**

Research-oriented work in film studies typically takes the form of articles (published in journals or scholarly collections) or books. In cases in which a book is the principal basis for promotion, the Department normally expects that a successful candidate will present a completed book manuscript of genuine significance that has been accepted for publication by a well-regarded press at the time the candidate submits materials for promotion. Otherwise, the Department normally expects that a successful candidate will present a significant number of high-quality articles, some of which will have been published in well-regarded peer-reviewed journals or collections, and some accepted in well-regarded peer-reviewed journals or collections. Disciplinary significance of the publications is more relevant than their quantity. That said, typical patterns for a successful case include: 5-7 articles, or a completed and accepted book manuscript and 1-2 articles, or 4-6 articles and an edited volume.

In addition, the Department expects that successful candidates for promotion will have a clear and promising direction for their continuing research that is spelled out in a detailed research statement and evident in ongoing work. We recommend that the candidate be in regular communication with their mentor regarding the pace, quantity, and quality of the scholarly record.

### **Creatively Oriented Scholarship**

The Film Studies Department fully accepts creative work as part of the evaluation process when such work is appropriate to the candidate's specialization and teaching. We expect that successful candidates will have a significant record of disseminating their work, and that it will be thoroughly and expertly evaluated. Because there is no easy equivalence between research-oriented scholarship and creative work, we submit the following guidelines and considerations for evaluation.

#### **Length, Collaboration, and Expense:**

Three initial factors that distinguish creative work in film from research-oriented production are variability in length, the role of collaboration, and relative expense.

First, creative works in film and the moving image are characterized by forms whose length varies far more than is common in the traditional scholarly materials in a specific field. A faculty member might be involved in the production of a feature-length dramatic film, a half-hour documentary, a three-

minute animated work, or a work of some other type and length; many possibilities exist. **The length of a finished work is significant but not indicative of the effort required to create it.** A short experimental video piece or a multi-media production might require more time and effort to create than an hour-long documentary. When peers evaluate film or video work, it is important that they ascertain the difficulty of particular projects. Their task is analogous to that of judging the importance of a multi-year study in the social sciences; such a study might require many years of data-collection and analysis, yet the resulting publication might be fairly concise.

Second, film and moving-image works are frequently, although not always, collaborative endeavors. Thus, it is also extremely important to know what role(s) a candidate played on a particular production. In many cases, the faculty member will have had complete responsibility for the production. In other cases, their role might have been that of producer, writer, editor, etc. **It is appropriate to give varying levels of credit for varying levels of responsibility.**

Third, media production is inherently expensive. Thus, a faculty member may have to invest a good deal of time and energy seeking support for creative work. This process requires clear written and oral articulation of creative goals and methods. **Recognition should be given in the promotion and tenure process for the effort expended on seeking funding as well as for any grants received.**

#### **Moving-Image Work:**

Dissemination and evaluation of research-oriented scholarship is usually accomplished by means of publication. Creative work can be disseminated and evaluated in a similar way, although the process of dissemination and evaluation is less well developed and less well understood by some within the academic community.

The primary method of disseminating creative film and video work is the **public showing of work to informed audiences.** Here it is important to distinguish between screenings that merely provide the dissemination of a work, such as those organized by a filmmaker (for example, securing or renting out a space or creating a website for the purpose of showing your own work) and those screenings that involve both dissemination and a process of evaluation. Venues for public showing that include both dissemination and evaluation are:

**Festival Competitions:** Selection of a faculty member's creative work for showing at a reputable festival can be considered indicative of the quality of the work. Festivals can be of local, regional, national, or international importance. Many festivals have rigorous selection procedures. Just as a field knows which journals have a solid reputation and a rigorous review

process (or not), so do those in film track the nature of festival competition.

**Streaming and Broadcast:** Greater weight may be given to works selected for national presentation than to those carried only locally, as submission to national distributors is more competitive. In all cases, it is important to consider the level at which the work has had public exposure. Juried Internet distribution constitutes a legitimate form of dissemination.

**Universities, Media Art Centers, Museums:** Moving-image creators may be invited to show their work, often accompanied by oral presentations. The prestige of such invitational showings varies depending on the quality of the institution, the nature of the occasion, and the rigor of the selection process.

**Academic Association Screenings:** Some academic associations, including the University Film and Video Association, and the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, schedule screenings based on evaluation of submitted works. Selection for screening can be considered an indicator of quality, provided the current reputation and procedures of the association are known.

**Commercial Distribution:** While commercial release of films and showings in movie theaters represent significant forms of dissemination, this system is influenced by commercial interests, and the exclusion of a faculty member's work from such distribution should not be interpreted as an indication that it has little or no artistic or social value. Faculty works must compete for distribution with works produced by individuals whose careers are exclusively dedicated to creative production. That said, the commercial release work in a theatrical setting, or via DVD/video-on-demand/streaming/cable is a significant career achievement. Work released commercially should not be considered to have any less artistic or social value simply because it was disseminated in commercial formats.

**Presentations:** If the faculty member offers an oral presentation in connection with the screening of creative work at a festival, an invited screening, or an academic association screening, we consider that the equivalent of a presentation of a previously published scholarly work for peer critique in an academic setting, for example a previously published paper presented at a colloquium.

**Screenwriting:**

The Film Studies Department recognizes that writing for the screen, both film and television, is a worthy artistic and academic endeavor in and of itself, and that scripts have intrinsic value whether or not they are produced as films, for television, or for other media. Scripts selected for production might be chosen for their own merit, but it is equally possible for a script to be chosen based on its perceived target audience, availability of funding, or support of a celebrity, among many possible factors. The majority of optioned scripts never get made. Thus, the fate of a screenplay is not necessarily a reflection of its quality or the skill with which it is written. Further, the timelines of commercial productions seldom align with the schedules of the academic world.

The possibilities for publication of scripts are extremely limited relative to the number of scripts completed each year. The Film Studies Department does not require that a script be published in order to validate its use as an accomplishment in promotion cases. The possibilities for the dissemination and evaluation of faculty screenwriting projects include the following:

- **Acceptance of scripts by reputable film agents.**
- **Sale of rights to produce scripts.**
- **Production of scripts into film or television.**
- **Distribution of scripts to professional organizations** that include script evaluation sessions and/or partial or complete script readings among their activities.
- **Acceptance of scripts at reputable script workshops** that include script evaluation sessions and/or partial or complete script readings among their activities.
- **Publication of scripts in whole or in part.**

#### **Creative Work in Related Areas:**

The Film Department actively supports innovation that crosses disciplinary boundaries. We respect the interconnections of creative work in related areas that contribute to the candidate's standing and profile as a scholar and value to filmmaking, film studies, and the liberal arts. In close consultation with Department leadership, the candidate is responsible for defining the range of creative works and how they relate to the forms of scholarship noted above. We expect creative work in related areas to be appropriate to the candidate's specialization and teaching. The Department will be concerned with how these various modes of creation reinforce and vitally support the study and teaching of film in a liberal arts context.

#### **Evaluation of Creative Work Can Include:**

**Successful Showing of Work:** We consider the successful presentation of work at the above public venues to be a strong indicator of the value and merit of the

work. Not all showings are of equal importance. We attach more weight to competitive venues and venues of high reputations with rigorous standards.

**Prizes and Recognition:** A work's nomination for or winning of a festival prize or other such competitive recognition will be considered as indicating its merit.

**Peer Evaluation:** Peer evaluation is essential to gauging the importance and value of creative work. Faculty members within the department will evaluate the creative output for the regular pre-tenure reviews. In the case of promotion, the department will seek the opinions of outside evaluators within the field. The department may include professionals from the media industry as evaluators, provided they are attuned to the requirements of the academic process. It is important that the evaluators be knowledgeable about, and sympathetic toward, the type of work created by the candidate. For instance, an evaluator specializing in narrative film should not be asked to evaluate an experimental work. When the creative work falls outside the expertise of our field, the Department will consult experts who can evaluate the work and speak to its value for Film.

In addition, the Department expects that successful candidates for promotion will have a clear and promising direction for their continuing creative work that is spelled out in a detailed research statement and evident in ongoing work. We recommend that the candidate be in regular communication with their mentor regarding the pace, quantity, and quality of the scholarly record.

#### **COLLEAGUESHIP**

*'Refers to contributions to the collegial life of the faculty as a community of scholars and to faculty and university service. Colleagues are expected and encouraged to contribute generously to multiple aspects of university life. Of particular importance is service at the department/program and university level. Equally important is effectiveness in stimulating the thinking of colleagues and encouragement and constructive criticism of their work, both on the more formal occasions when faculty meet for serious discussion and in day-to-day associations with colleagues inside or outside the department. Sharing service in an equitable manner helps establish the conditions for sustaining a stimulating atmosphere for all faculty members at Wesleyan.'* (2019-20 Faculty Handbook Academic Council By-Laws Section 502c)

With regard to collegueship, we expect strong evidence of service to the Department and the University. In addition, the Department values outreach and service to the community, the discipline, and to alumni. The Department expects colleagues to contribute to the intellectual life and leadership of the department, college, and university. This is demonstrated by participation in departmental and university meetings, service on departmental and/or university committees, advising majors and non-majors. It also includes contributions to College of Film such as the film series, special film screenings, moderated discussions with visiting artists, and meetings with alumni, community members, and prospective students.

This document refers to the Film Studies Department's expectations only. For a fuller understanding of the processes and University-wide expectations, candidates should also consult the Faculty Handbook, as well as the President's statement on promotion to full professor and promotion.