

MRTS at TIFF 2026 | INTE 3020Z.888

Global Intensive Opportunity / Study Abroad Office

University of North Texas

September 10-16, 2026

COURSE INSTRUCTOR/FACULTY CO-LEADER

Dr. Courtney Brannon Donoghue

Associate Professor / Department of Media Arts / Courtney.Donoghue@unt.edu

FACULTY CO-LEADER

Dr. Jennifer Gómez Menjívar

Professor / Department of Media Arts / Jennifer.Gomezmenjivar@unt.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Global Intensive Opportunity (GIO) is an intensive academic experience abroad offered as a zero credit course. Media Arts students will explore the industry cultures, business practices, and operational aspects of major international film festivals and markets by attending the Toronto International Film Festival. The one-week program will enhance students' understanding of the contemporary film business cultures and business practices within a global context. The TIFF program centers on a trip to Toronto in fall 2026 for on-the-ground participation in festival activities such as film screenings, Market panels, networking, and other industry-related activities. Students will document and critically engage with their festival experience through activities, assignments, and in-person meetings.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Student will engage hands on with contemporary filmmaking and global film industry trends.
- Students will develop an understanding of the business operations and cultural activities of major international film festivals and markets using the Toronto International Film Festival as a case study.
- Students will complete practical and experiential activities and assignments using first-hand knowledge gained during TIFF to examine the macro-level workings of the global film business.
- Students will gain professionalization opportunities and forge pathways towards successful creative careers in the media industries.
- Student will cultivate a robust variety of critical thinking and soft skills: self-direction, adaptability, time management, confidence, networking, open-mindedness and intercultural awareness of a diverse global issues and worldviews.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Students must have previously completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following courses: MRTS 3615 Understanding Media Industries, MRTS

4360/5460 Global Media, MRTS 4450/5660 Film Festivals and Markets or equivalent course topic, MRTS 5125 Media Industry Studies.

- Students must participate in the seven-day intensive academic experience abroad taking places at the Toronto International Film Festival.
- Students must attend all general and program specific pre-departure orientation meetings and commit to full participation during the program, which may include daily meetings and film screenings, and TIFF Market panels.
- Students must complete all required program activities and specific assignments listed in the syllabus.
- Student must have access to a cell phone with an international data plan at TIFF; a tablet or laptop is recommended but not required.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

- Email and Canvas (before and after TIFF)
- WhatsApp messaging (during TIFF)

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Your PASS/NO PASS for this class will be based on the following:

- Active participation in program activities and meetings (50 points)
- TIFF Scavenger Hunt (25 points)
- TIFF Final Reflection (25 points)

GRADING SCALE

- Pass (P)
- No-Pass (NP)

Participation

For the majority of your time at TIFF, you will create your own schedule for attending screenings and market panels alongside other requirement meetings and assignments:

MRTS Program Meetings

You are required to attend all UNT meetings, activities, and group meals. You are expected to show up on time and be prepared to participate.

Morning Check-ins

You are required to show up for daily morning check-in in the Clarence Park every morning (Friday to Wednesday) at 8 am.

Screenings

You will be required to attend at least five films from programs outside of Gala and Special Presentations. See the full list of different festival categories on the TIFF schedule.

TIFF Market Panels

You will be required to attend at least three panels as part of the TIFF Market. Also, take this opportunity to pick up copies of industry trade publications like *Variety*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, and *Screen International* and chat with other TIFF attendees.

TIFF Scavenger Hunt

To facilitate your participation in different areas of TIFF, you will be completing activities as part of our scavenger hunt. You have seven days (Thursday to Wednesday) to complete the number of activities you need to receive full credit for this assignment. Space out the activities and plan ahead.

Keep track of what activities you completed each day and post pictures or short videos to our Canvas discussion board. Your daily post will be due to Canvas by 10 am the next day. For example, you must complete your scavenger hunt post for Day 1 (Thursday) by Day 2 at 10 am. See the separate handout with specific activities for the Scavenger Hunt assignment.

TIFF Final Reflection

We recommend you have a journal or notebook to carry with you at TIFF. You are encouraged to track your on-the-ground field experiences at TIFF. Think of it like a descriptive journal of what you are doing, seeing, watching, thinking, etc. I recommend buying a paper journal for this assignment or downloading journaling app to your phone or tablet.

Use your daily notes to write a final reflection about your experience at TIFF 2026. You can focus on any aspect of the festival (films, market panels, events, etc). The reflection must be 750-800 words in length and will be due to Canvas by Sunday, September 27 at 11:59 pm.

TRIP ITINERARY

(Parts of the schedule may change – please be flexible and check WhatsApp and email regularly before and during TIFF)

Thursday, September 10 (Day One)

7 am – Arrive at DFW Airport for check in (checking luggage & security lines are long early AM) ****Bring lunch/snacks for the flight****

9 am – Meet Dr. CBD and Dr. Jen at the gate [after you go through security]

9:51 am – American Airlines 1993 DFW to YYZ (Toronto Pearson)

1:59 pm – Arrive at Toronto Pearson International Airport → As a group, we will pass passport check, get luggage, go through customs, grab water or snack

TBD – Group transportation to Toronto

TBD – Check-in at The Clarence Park Hostel // Free time to unpack/rest

5 pm – Walking tour of Toronto neighborhood/TIFF “Festival Street”

TBD – TIFF Market screening as a group / Learn to rush a film, part 1

8:15 pm – Group dinner @ O&B Canteen (inside the TIFF Lightbox)

Friday, September 11 (Day Two)

8 am – Morning check-in with Dr. CBD and Dr. Jen (Clarence Park)

TBD – TIFF Market panel as a group

TBD – Lunch at King St. food trucks

TBD – TIFF screening as a group / Learn to rush a film, part 2

Saturday, September 12 (Day Three)

8 am – Morning check-in with Dr. CBD and Dr. Jen (Clarence Park)

Attend screenings and Market panels!

Sunday, September 13 (Day Four)

8 am – Morning check-in with Dr. CBD and Dr. Jen (Clarence Park)

Attend screenings and Market panels!

Monday, September 14 (Day Five)

8 am – Morning check-in with Dr. CBD and Dr. Jen (Clarence Park)

****Free Day**** Go explore Toronto or feel free to go see more movies!

Tuesday, September 15 (Day Six)

8 am – Morning check-in with Dr. CBD and Dr. Jen (Clarence Park)

10:45 am – Meet in the TIFF Lightbox lobby for a Film Reference Library tour with Natania Sherman (Senior Manager)

Attend screenings and Market panels!

5 pm Closing Night Dinner – Bello Pizza inside Waterworks Food Hall (50 Brant St off Richmond) / 12-minute walk from Clarence Park

Wednesday, September 16 (Day Seven/travel day)

8 am – Morning check-in with Dr. CBD and Dr. Jen (Clarence Park)

TBD – check out of your room and drop off luggage to store until departure

2 pm – Departure meeting time outside Clarence Park (Bring all luggage and belongings!)

2:30 pm – Van leaves for Toronto Pearson Airport

6:15 pm – American Airlines 1111 YYZ (Toronto Pearson) to DFW

8:30 pm – Arrive at DFW airport

STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

UNT promotes the integrity of the learning process and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the university. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the university's actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence. UNT's Student Academic Integrity includes, but is not limited to, cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and others. Violations in this course of UNT's Student Academic Integrity policy will be addressed in compliance with the penalties and procedures laid out in this policy. The policy is available at:

<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>.

STATEMENT OF ADA COMPLIANCE

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at <https://disability.unt.edu/>.

ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>.

SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, & ASSAULT

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs:

<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu>

TIFF Program Categories

- **Gala Presentations:** high-profile feature films, often featuring international movie stars, presented with a red carpet
- **Special Presentations:** high-profile feature films, usually Canadian premieres if not world premieres
- **Centrepiece:** narrative feature films generally by directors all over the world who may be established and influential
- **Midnight Madness:** genre films, usually premiering at midnight, what TIFF calls “the wild side” of the program
- **Platform:** a competitive section with a jury launched in 2015, named for Jia Zhangke's film *Platform*; films that according to TIFF “showcase bold and distinct directorial voices and emerging international talent”; New this year: Non-English language films have a chance to qualify for Best International Feature Film at the Academy Awards.
- **Discovery:** films that are typically the director’s first or second feature film
- **Primetime:** television episodes making either their world premiere or North American premiere projected cinematically
- **Short Cuts:** a section of short films (usually six to ten short films included at each screening) both Canadian and international
- **TIFF Classics:** films from all eras of cinema, often classic films that have been newly restored
- **TIFF Docs:** High-profile premieres of documentary films
- **Wavelengths:** both feature-length and short experimental and art films