

The Creative Writing Program at UBC:

Policies & Manuals

Using Films in the Classroom

Based on the copyright laws of Canada, all films screened in classrooms or at viewing stations on campus are subject to copyright protection. For any film screened, a Public Performance Rights (PPR) license must have been granted to the Department in order for it to be shown in a classroom or viewing station on campus.

The faculty member in charge of the class is responsible for ensuring that this PPR license is in place prior to the screening of the film. This includes even the briefest of clips that will be brought in and screened by students or teaching assistants. Television and internet programming must also have granted a PPR license to the Department.

The Copyright Act states that a person found guilty of infringement of PPR may be fined or imprisoned or both. Ignorance of the law is not a defense. Many people can be held accountable when breaking the Copyright Act. This can include administrators, technicians or teachers, depending on their involvement. Every individual involved in the violation can be liable. Punishment includes fines, imprisonment, or both.

There is no educational exemption in the Canadian Copyright Act for classroom use of films. U.S. copyright law, which allows any legal copy of a film to be shown in a face-to-face teaching situation without a PPR license, does not apply in Canada.

The term 'film' in this document refers to films, videotapes, DVD's or any other audio visual format on which there is material protected by Copyright Law.

Making a compilation of clips from several films is also a violation of copyright and may only be done with written permission from all the rights holders.

Finding Films that are cleared for Classroom Use

The Faculty member in charge of the class is responsible for ensuring that the films screened in their class or at viewing stations on campus have granted the Department a PPR license. If the Department does not have these rights, the films cannot be shown.

There are several ways in which you can access films cleared for use in the Department.

Criterion Pictures and Audio-Cine Films

Two major film distributors, Criterion Pictures and Audio-Cine Films, have granted the Department, between them, PPR licenses for classroom and viewing station use for approximately 80% of the feature films and many short films currently available in Canada.

To determine whether or not a film you want to screen is covered by either of these PPR licenses, you must contact these distributors and confirm that the film you want to show is covered by either one of their licenses.

Audio Cine can be reached at www.acf-film.com or 1-800-289-8887.
Criterion can be reached at www.criterionpic.com or 1-800-663-0991.

Once you are at the website, simply type in the name of the film you wish to show. Each of these licensors has thousands of films in their library. The search engine on the website will let you know if the title you have entered is in their collection and therefore licensed for PPR with the Department.

NOTE: For films covered by the Criterion Pictures or Audio Cine licenses, the actual film copies shown in the classroom can be from any legal source - the film library, the public library or any retail outlet. They cannot be taped from television or otherwise pirated.

Department Film Library

Another way you can find films cleared for classroom use is to contact the Department Film Library. The Department Film Library has acquired PPR licenses for approximately half of the 1800 films in the collection. To determine if in a film you want to use from the Department Library has granted a PPR license to the Department, contact the Librarian, Richard Payment at rpymt@interchange.ubc.ca, or 604-822-6154.

NOTE: Some of the films cleared through the Department Film Library require you to use the actual film copy they have in their library. Others have licenses which allow you to use a copy acquired from any legal source (retail outlet, other library, etc.)

UBC Library System

Another way you can find films cleared for classroom use is to borrow them through the UBC Library. All of the films in the UBC Library system have PPR licenses for use in any classroom at UBC. To locate and book films through the UBC library, visit their website, Guide to Videos and Films at www.library.ubc.ca/home/about/services/gtuid.html.

Faculty has two options for obtaining a film held by the UBC Library system. First, films can be signed out like a book. The loan period for most films is three days and can be renewed unless another user places a request for the film.

Second, a film can be booked for a specific show date. Faculty can submit a booking form to the owning branch holding the film, along with the show date. The branch will confirm the availability of the item. In the case of the Koerner Library, the film can be delivered to and picked up from the department office. The faculty can also pick up the film from the Koerner Library on the appropriate day. The cost for booking a film is \$5.00 per booking.

If you want a film from another post-secondary institution in BC, you send your request to Media Bookings, Koerner Library. They will try to obtain a copy of the film. If the film cannot be used in a classroom at UBC, they will let you know.

NOTE: With UBC Library films, the actual copy that is in the possession of the library and that is loaned to you is the one that must be screened in the classroom.

Planning and Reporting Requirements

A list of all films to be screened in class or at viewing stations on campus must be submitted by faculty to the Program Chair prior to the beginning of the relevant term. The deadlines for this are Aug 1, Dec 1 and April 1. The Chair must also be notified in writing prior to a screening if any of these films change. On this list, it must be clearly indicated who has granted the PPR license to the films being screened (e.g. Criterion, Audio Cine, and UBC Library).

If there is no PPR license for the Department in place, a film cannot be screened without violating copyright law.

Requesting PPR Licenses for New Film Titles

If there is a film that you require for your course and the Department does not hold a PPR license to this film, you must first find out who holds the rights to this film and how much they will charge for a PPR license. Then you must submit a written request to your Program Chair for consideration.

As available, Richard Payment in the Department Film Library can offer assistance to faculty researching the rights holders for specific film titles.

Further Information

The Copyright Act and articles related to film use in the classroom are available on the website of the Copyright Board of Canada at www.cb-cda.gc.ca/info/regulations.

Another informative website is the FAQs page on the Criterion Pictures website. The direct link is http://media2.criterionpic.com/cpl/lc1_englishmetable.html. This website answers a lot of associated questions on the rights issues associated with activities like

watching a taped theatrical play, listening to an audio-only recording and lending tapes for home use.