Several guests are anticipated in class, including San Francisco Dance Film Festival Director Greta Schoenberg, Dance Filmmaker Kate Duhamel and Tap Dancer/Choreographer Joe Orrach. There is also the possibility of the presentation of films by San Francisco Ballet dancer Tiit Helimets.

A list of films to be covered will be provided (see below for films currently listed in this syllabus), and students will do most of their viewing independently outside of class. In class, excerpts will be viewed for the purpose of discussion, and we will have one or two filmmakers or other experts visit class to enhance our conversations and to screen short films. Guests and film lists subject to change.

Class 1: Making Dance Films - San Francisco Dance Film Festival Screenings
Filmmaker and SFDFF Director Greta Schoenberg will highlight this year’s Festival line-up (the festival is in October). She will bring a selection of cutting-edge films to screen in class. Schoenberg will guide us in our film viewing, and we will discuss the latest trends in the making of dance films both nationally and internationally. We will have the opportunity to learn about a variety of genres of dance films and also learn how a film is composed and structured, and what to look for in dance films. We will also hear from Schoenberg about the creation and growth of her film festival, and about how she searches out and selects films.

Class 2: The Art of the Dance Film: Filmmaker Kate Duhamel
San Francisco Filmmaker Kate Duhamel specializes in dance films. She directs Fountain 3 Films and is the founder of IndieArtery, an informational website for independent filmmakers, producers, and funders. She also created video for San Francisco Ballet’s “The Swimmer.” She will bring her films to class for viewing and discussion as well as telling us about her upcoming feature film project.

Class 3: Dance Documentaries and Dance Feature Films
We will look at the art of the documentary dance film including highlights from recent documentaries. Under consideration are Hilla Medalia’s “Dancing in Jaffa” and Jody Lee Lipes’ “Ballet 422.” We will also learn about filmmaker Sara Ballantine’s “Troupers,” documenting the lives of entertainers in their 80’s and beyond. We will lean the story behind popular dance feature films such as Rob Marshall’s “Chicago” and look at the influence on dance in film by Jerome Robbins and Bob Fosse.

Class 4: Tap Dance and Film with Joe Orrach
We will look at tap dance in classic films with Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly and then fast forward to tap now with innovator Joe Orrach. Orrach has performed his cutting-edge performances in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Paris in addition to performing in New York City. Orrach will also give a tap demonstration in this class.

Class 5: Upcoming Screenings
In our final classes, we will look at international films. Instructor Kathryn Roszak discusses her recent short film on the Women Ballet Choreographers Residency taking place at the Djerassi Resident Artists Program and at the 92nd Street Y in New York City. She is also making a dance film tribute to Nobel Prize winning Swedish poet Tomas Transtromer. We will have a wrap-up discussion of our viewing, and in our last class we’ll preview upcoming dance film releases and festivals.