What are the core cultural, social, aesthetic, and political principles of “the avant-garde?” Are these principles shared across temporal, geographical, and medium-specific boundaries? How have different theories shaped our understanding of the avant-garde’s scope, whether in historical, formal, or cultural terms? Have existing histories framed our perception of what might be theorized as “the avant-garde?”

These questions will animate our seminar’s exploration of canonical historical and theoretical texts across the arts; our scrutiny of key episodes in the cinematic or filmic avant-garde; and our consideration of film and cinema’s impact on how we both historicize and theorize “the avant-garde.”