



## Call for Papers, Spring 2025

### Flash Essays on Why Film Matters Now, or Hot Takes on Hot Takes

In “How to Tell the Difference Between a Hot Take and a Good Idea,” critic and essayist [Jia Tolentino](#) describes a “hot take” as a piece of writing that’s “primarily gestural” and “primarily based on reaction—both the illusory need to react, and the idea that a reaction is worth paying attention to simply because it exists.” She defines a “hot take” as “close to [her] personal definition of trolling.” Innumerable magazines and media sites ridicule the “hot take” as shallow and superficial clickbait; we seek to transform the notion of the hot take into a substantive yet brief piece of film criticism.

We want to hear your hot takes, so we hope that you’ll contribute your ideas and voices to our Call for Papers. For our Spring 2025 special issue of *Film Matters*, especially as the world moves more quickly and existing structures (and forms of culture) risk disappearance, we want to build a collection of film-focused and impassioned arguments. We invite you to add your voice to this chorus, to contribute your reflection, such that we appreciate—for ourselves, in the writing; and for each other, as readers—how movies can offer a source of comfort, connection, debate, and discovery.

**Choose one film** that fulfills one of the following criteria:

- A movie that’s popular that you don’t like, or a movie that you love that’s unpopular (note: avoid “strawman” arguments about “what critics say” so as to differentiate your voice by comparison; if you choose this option, briefly establish, as convincingly as possible, the general consensus against which you’re arguing via either critical [quote an established critic’s words] or popular [box-office data] contexts). You might turn to Rotten Tomatoes aggregate numbers (imprecise as they might be) as one way of establishing data for a beloved or critically derided film. (You might, for example, explore the redemptive value of a film that’s considered “cringe cinema...films that encourage our compassion or conversely, provoke our contempt,” as [Aidan O’Malley argues](#) in a recent issue of *Film Matters*).
- A movie that you read against the grain, as in, a film that’s conventionally thought of as mainstream that you perceive as having revolutionary or inspiring potential (i.e., a film might not explicitly include a gay character but could nonetheless have queer underpinnings, e.g., *Frankenstein* [1932] or *High School Musical* [2006]; or maybe you appreciate genre’s affordances in unconventional ways, e.g., *Die Hard* [1988] as the perfect breakup movie). In other words, write about a film that surprises you for the better.

Your flash essay should be built of strong feelings and also should elicit strong feelings from your readers. More than a screen rant, paean, or manifesto, your essay should offer **brief analysis of the film via details (about character, film techniques, history, etc.) that make and support your argument.** **Focus on one scene or moment** that supports your argument and encapsulates your ideas most vividly. What, within this scene/moment, do you despise or celebrate? What, here, do you find uplifting, disappointing, inspiring, compelling, and how? **Please submit 250-750 words** of your most polished, detail-rich, exacting, precise, inspired prose. We look forward to reading your work, and we aim to offer feedback in April 2025. We will publish selected submissions online, as a dossier of capsule reviews, with *Film Matters*.

At the heart of this project is a commitment to movies and art as transformative, meaningful, and central to our lives. Implicit in this call is a chance to have a broader conversation about survival within tumultuous times, about belonging to and finding community through divergent perspectives. Participating in this CFP gives all of us—from a variety of colleges—a chance to learn from each other through sharing our ideas about film.

Deadline: 1 April 2025

Please send your work to [FilmMattersOnline@gatech.edu](mailto:FilmMattersOnline@gatech.edu)

Yours in cinephilia,

**Georgia Tech *Film Matters* Online Editorial Board**

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