

“Changing how we see images is clearly one way to change the world.” (bell hooks)

In this class, you will learn to identify, define, and apply the vocabulary used to describe and analyze the aesthetics of cinema (including film, television, and some new media). This class provides the foundational formal knowledge and vocabulary that anchor the analytical (ideological, historical, etc.) and/or production work that you may pursue as a media studies scholar.

By design, this course explicitly addresses “professional development” by contextualizing class conversations within the professional frameworks of academic teaching and writing. This course includes a pedagogical component.¹ However, we will achieve this mission by tending to our writing, research, and professional performances.

One of the many goals of this course is to help you to think about your future lives as writers and teachers, whatever your eventual career may be. Teaching is about learning and vice versa.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, you will be able to:

“Content” Learning Outcomes

- 1 Formally analyze a film/television scene using key terms
- 2 Analyze frames/clips using techniques specific to the academic discipline of Media Studies
- 3 Describe the crew/labor required to produce the look or sound of a particular scene
- 4 Identify how formal aspects of media production are foundations of ideological/cultural meaning
- 5 Explain how formal analysis anchors (or provides evidence for) other modes of media analysis

“Method” Learning Outcomes

- 6 Explain the form and function of a Humanities course
- 7 Assess and determine optimal methods of teaching analytical and critical thinking skills (for you, for the students, for the goal of the class)
- 8 Develop strategic methods for writing/teaching
- 9 Practice collaborative feedback for writing/teaching to improve skills, performance, etc.
- 10 Find your voice as scholar-teachers while practicing technical/analytical skills

Book: Popular undergraduate textbook on form to think about teaching/learning at various levels: *Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film* by Richard Barsam and Dave Monahan.

Disclaimer: By permission and with named credit to the original producer, the materials produced in this class may be invited to support courses that I teach and research that I produce. If our class decides to collaborate in this way, we will develop a contract as a group and sign individually.

Week 1 Narrative & Conventions (10/1)

Meaning, Form, and Content by discussing:

- ch1 Looking at Movies (1-33)
- ch 2 Principles of Film Form (35-63)
- Table Reading: *Juno* scene
- Screening: Trailers

Of some 10-billion videos watched online annually, movie trailers rank #3, after news and user created video. —Jennifer Merin

¹ We will discuss practical skills like syllabus and lesson plan preparation and your work may contribute to some of the lesson modules taught in the ENG 260 Media Aesthetics or ENG 266 History of Motion Pictures classroom.

Week 2 Narrative & Cinematography (10/8 — ASA conference)

The Shot by discussing:

- ch 6 Cinematography (225-275)
- Screening: *Citizen Kane* (Welles 1941) 120 min US
- Class Visit: JSMA
- Assignment #1 Due: Your Goals for this class

Week 3 Cinematography continued (10/15 — SA)

Genres and Narratives by discussing:

- ch 3 Types of Movies (65-117): Generic Conventions
- ch 4 Elements of Narrative (121-168): Narrative construction
- Screening: *Documentary Now!* (Thomas 2015) c30 min US
- Event Screening: “Jack Smith and Queer Theatre” ****NOTE:** This screening event, which includes special guest Jerry Tartaglia, a filmmaker and Jack Smith archivist, is on Wed Oct 14th at 7pm. Please make arrangements to attend

Week 4 Mise-En-Scene Part 1 (10/22)

Creating Texture by discussing:

- ch 5: Mise-en-Scene (171-222)
- “Aesthetic Film History” from *Film History: Theory and Practice* (65-105) — on Canvas
- Screening: *Daisies* (Chytilová 1966) 74 min Czech
- Screening: *Ruka aka The Hand* (Trnka 1965) c18min Czech
- Assignment #2 Due: Aesthetic Analysis of *Documentary Now*

Week 5 Pedagogical Practices & Mise-En-Scene Part 2 (10/29)

Teaching, Race, Hair, and Costuming by discussing:

- Guest Speaker: Lee Rumbarger (Teaching Effectiveness Program)
- Selection from *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*
- Dissertation Chapter from “Casting Race: A history of makeup technology in the U.S. film industry, 1890-1940”
- TBD
- Screenings: *Maria Mercedes* episode; *The Muppet Show* (w/Rita Moreno)
- Due noon next Tuesday (week 6): EXAM (online)

Week 6 Editing: Space and Time (11/5)

Space and Time by discussing:

- ch 8 Editing 339-386
- Selections from *In the Blink of an Eye* (pages 1-25)
- Screenings: *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Deren 1943) US
- Exam Discussion (Online exam due on Tuesday week 6 @ noon)

Week 7 Sound (11/12)

Sounding Out Images by discussing:

- ch 9 Sound (387-429)
- “Resounding Silence & Soundless Surveillance, From TMZ Elevator to Beyoncé and Back Again” (Ovalle)
- Screening: *Duck Amuck* (Jones 1953) US
- Screening: “Haunted” Music Video (Åkerlund) & “****Flawless (remix)” single
- Due: Project Proposals Due

Week 8 Acting (11/19)

Performance and Persona by discussing:

- ch 7 Acting
- TBD
- Screening TBD

Week 9: Thanksgiving Break (11/26)

Week 10: Review & Presentations I (12/3)

Due: Presentations

Exam Week: Presentations II (Friday 12/11)

Due: Presentations

ENG 695 Media Aesthetics Assignments

“Goals for This Class” Assignment:

- Review the Learning Outcomes for this course. How will you tailor these opportunities to enhance your graduate education?
- Time Commitment: How does this course fit into your curricular/extracurricular goals this term or this year? What should I, as someone working to support your short- and long-term goals, know about your level of investment in this particular course?
- Your Moment of Zen: What has been the most satisfying part of your college/grad education thus far? What did you learn/do that made it so rewarding?
- At the end of the term, please review this document and submit a 1 page “Self-Evaluation” based on your initial outline of personal course goals

1 Essay (Aesthetic Analysis of *Documentary Now*): The goal of this comparative analysis assignment is to develop the skills identify media samples, apply vocabulary, and analyze according to ideological, historical, cultural, technological, or other frameworks. This 4-5 page essay will be formatted according to the **supplied worksheet** and submitted online via Canvas. Writing will be graded by me according to the **rubric posted on our course website**.

1 Online Exam: After the first half of the class, students will complete an online exam. The exam will include **multiple choice, T/F, and/or fill-in-the-blank items**. The goal of this assignment is two-fold: 1) to assess vocabulary/concept skills for course discussions and 2) to serve as the basis of pedagogical course activities. [Students will evaluate exam questions to determine their structure, clarity, etc. to be revised as needed and develop more effective questions, etc.]

1 Final Project: Final projects will be delivered in 10-minute blocks at the end of the term with about 10 minutes for feedback. Proposals for final projects are due by week 7.

Teaching Module Assignment or Conference-Style Presentation (default assignment): Students will develop one writing assignment into a short conference-style presentation or a teaching module. The goals of this assignment are to practice writing or teaching prep, peer feedback methods, and presentation/performance skills.

- Drafts of papers/modules will be circulated in small groups for online feedback.
- Drafts will be graded by me according to the **rubric posted on our course website**. Feedback and final presentations will be graded by me and your peers according to the **rubric posted on our course website**. Written Projects will include an Annotated Bibliography that supports your module.
- Final presentations will be delivered in 10-minute blocks at the end of the term.

1 Syllabus & Short Presentation—by permission only: Develop an Undergraduate Course:

- Develop a 10-week Undergraduate Syllabus and 4-5 page Narrative of the Course
- Deliver a 10 min teaching module presentation
- Syllabus and presentation will be graded by me. Feedback and final presentations will be graded by me and your peers according to the **rubric posted on our course website**.