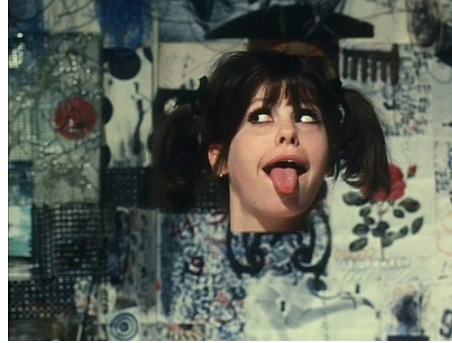


**ENG 260: Media Aesthetics
(Film Art)**
Mon/Weds: 10:00 a.m.-11:50 a.m. MCK 214

Instructor: Professor Danielle Seid
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Office Location: PLC 331
Office Hours: Mon 12-3 and by appointment



Course Description: This course will build on our abilities to watch, analyze and write about media objects, particularly film. We will learn to recognize, define and elaborate on various kinds of cinema (fiction, documentary, etc), genres (musical, western, crime, etc), and elements of narrative (script, plot, point of view); we will develop an understanding of and gain familiarity with technical vocabulary used to analyze film form; we will examine in details aspects of film aesthetics including mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, sound, and effects, and learn to use terminologies relevant to each aspect of filmmaking as well as identify and analyze these elements in particular films. Finally, the course will situate its exploration of aesthetic concepts in a historical and cultural frame by centering queer and feminist filmmaking and representation, including themes of desire, memory, rage, survival, home, and mourning.

Learning Outcomes:

- Recognize, identify, and define the main elements through which film is analyzed including light, color, space, time, motion and sound
- Explain the significance of different aesthetic elements that comprise the film experience and use terminology specific to film aesthetics
- Learn to analyze how these elements individually and collectively contribute to the perception and appreciation of cinema
- Gain some knowledge of the historical and cultural contexts through which cinema has evolved as an art form
- Through in-depth reading of assigned material and by regularly attending both screenings and lectures, develop an understanding of the various formal and aesthetic strategies deployed by film and video makers creating work about queer subjects, bodies, and issues
- Through work on individual analytical papers, students will be practice analysis of film aesthetics and express their ideas in well-organized written form

Class Materials:

The recommended book for the course is *Looking at Movies* (Fourth Edition) by Richard Barsam and David Monahan (relatively affordable copies are available on Amazon); I will post scanned versions of the reading, as well as other readings and clips, on Canvas. I also highly recommend you purchase either *Writing about Movies* (Third or Fourth Edition) by Gocsik, Barsam, and Monahan, or *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* (Seventh or Eighth Edition) by Timothy Corrigan.

Class Meetings and Procedures:

1. The class meets 2 times a week and attendance is mandatory. There are in class writing assignments and group assignments that will be based on the screenings/readings for the day as well as other forms of assessment that require attendance. I will only allow work to be made-up in the case of documented absences or absences that have been pre-authorized by the instructor in advance. My attendance policy is as follows: 1-2 absences (no penalty); 3 absences (letter grade deduction); 4 absences (automatic failure). Two late arrivals to class result in one absence.
2. Typically though not always class will comprise film screenings and readings. I will expect you to have completed the readings before class. Please bring copies of readings to class and have access to supplementary materials (if any) on Canvas. If you miss class, you are responsible for screening the film on your own. I highly recommend you find a friend in class that can fill you in on any missed material.
3. Some of the films in the course are subtitled--- this means you have to pay special attention during screenings to both reading the subtitles and watching what is onscreen. This can prove challenging, so I strongly recommend that you review these films at home, if possible. They are all available for purchase at various online retailers but they may also be accessible free online. If you have difficulty procuring a film, please get in touch with me and I can guide you to some sources.
4. Please be respectful towards your classmates and your instructor and refrain from talking, texting and browsing in class. Studies have shown that texting or browsing can prove disruptive and distracting to the people sitting around you and it can negatively impact their learning and overall class experience. So, please let us all be sensitive to this issue.
5. I do not allow other screens to be open during screenings since the light from these screens (phone/computer/ipad) really distract and disrupt the screening experience.
6. While open and engaged dialogue and discussion and a plurality of views is encouraged in this class, we will attempt, at all times, to keep our speech respectful and civil towards individuals and groups.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism:

You are responsible for understanding and adhering to the standards of academic honesty outlined in the student handbook. Document ALL sources consulted in preparing your work, including TV shows, magazines, your friends, parents, and, of course, anything found on the web. At a minimum, documented plagiarism will result in course failure.

Access For Students With Disabilities:

If you have a disability, which you believe may affect your performance in this course, please contact me the first week of the term so we can make the necessary arrangements for your full access to the course and its activities.

Please Note: This is a college level course and so some of the films contain explicit representations of a violent or sexual nature. If this is something you need to discuss, please see me as soon as possible.

Course Grading Breakdown:

Midterm Exam	30%
Final Project (Music Video Analysis)	30%
In-Class Writing + Quizzes	20%

Group Work

20%

Grade Scale:

A+ 100 - 97	B+ 89.9 – 87	C+ 79.9 - 77	D+ 69.9-67	F Below 60
A 96.9 -93	B 86.9 - 83	C 76.9 - 73	D 66.9-63	
A- 92.9 - 90	B- 82.9 – 80	C- 72.9 - 70	D- 62.9-60	

Course Schedule

(subject to change)

Week 1**Introduction to Media Aesthetics / Experimental Art Films**

“What is Media Aesthetics?”

Reading: “Looking at Movies,” pp 1-33 (Wednesday)

“Gender,” Judith Halberstam (Wednesday)

Screening: Meshes of the Afternoon (Maya Deren, 18 minutes, USA, 1943)*Fireworks* (Kenneth Anger, 14 minutes, USA, 1947)*Bridges-go-round* (Shirley Clarke, 8 minutes, USA, 1958)**Week 2****Film Form and Voyeurism / Fictional Drama and Suspense**

Reading: “Elements of Film Form,” pp 36-49 (Monday)

“Elements of Film Form,” pp 49-66 (Wednesday)

Screening: Psycho (Alfred Hitchcock, 115 minutes, USA, 1954)

*Wednesday: Instructor away at conference

In-class Writing Assignment 1**Week 3****Genre and Gender / Trash Cinema**

Reading: “Film Typologies and Genre,” pp 68-105 (Monday)

“Female Trouble' Was the Film That Taught Me I Didn't Need to Have an Ordinary Life,”

Amelia Abraham (Wednesday)

Screening: Female Trouble (John Waters, 89 minutes, USA, 1974)

Assorted clips, Hollywood melodrama and crime films

Week 4

Narrative and History / Contemporary World Cinema

Reading: "What is Film Narrative?" pp 122-166 (Monday)

Screening: *Where Do We Go Now?* (Nadine Labaki, 110 minutes, Lebanon/France, 2011)

In class writing assignment 2

Week 5

Mise-en-Scene / Hollywood Musical

Reading: "Defining Mise-en-Scene," pp 172- 209 (Monday)

"Introduction: *The Hollywood Musical*," Jane Feuer (Wednesday)

Screening: *Flower Drum Song* (Henry Koster, 133 minutes, USA, 1961)

[Midterm review](#)

Group Assignment 2

Week 6

Exam / New Queer Cinema

Midterm: In-class midterm on Monday

Reading: "'I Blame Society': On *Totally F***ed Up*'s Uncanny Angst," Alice Royer (Wednesday)

Screening: *Totally Fucked Up* (Gregg Araki, 78 minutes, USA, 1993)

Week 7

Cinematography / Contemporary Queer Indie Film

Reading: "Regarding Cinematography," pp 226-244 (Monday)

"Regarding Cinematography," pp 244-286 (Wednesday)

Screening: *Tangerine* (Sean Baker, 88 minutes, USA, 2015)

Group Assignment 3

Week 8

Editing: Dis/continuity and Play / Czech New Wave

Reading: "Types of Editing," pp 340 – 375 (Monday)

Screening: *Daisies* (Vera Chytilova, 74 minutes, Czech Republic, 1966)

In class writing assignment 3

Week 9

Film Sound / Hong Kong New Wave

Reading: "Elements of Film Sound," pp 388-413 (Monday)
"Elements of Film Sound," pp 414-428 (Wednesday)

Screening: *Chungking Express* (Wong Kar-wai, 102 minutes, Hong Kong, 1994)

Group Assignment 4

Week 10

Presentations on music videos

Wrap-up

Final Projects due on last day of class