

VISUAL LANGUAGE: ON TIME AND SPACE

ARTV 10300 - 02 (CMST 10300, TAPS 23400)

Winter 2014, MW 1:30-3:20PM, Logan Center 003 and 014

Instructor: Marco G. Ferrari, marcoferrari@uchicago.edu

Extra Tech Lab/Office Hours, Logan Center 003, 1:00-3:00PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a studio course that focuses on the production of moving image based work, exploring how time and space are used as materials to create form and inspire content in digital video. Readings, screenings, discussions, museum visits and the creation of video works are essential components of the course. Sound recording, image capturing, available and studio lighting, and editing using Final Cut Pro will be covered and experimented with. The key aspects of video-making to be studied in this course have been divided into four modules: planning, filming, editing and presenting. Students will follow this cycle of production for five creative projects. Each project will focus on an aspect of the four modules building upon what was learned from preceding projects. By mid-quarter I ask students to propose their individual final project.

An important part of the fabric of contemporary society is made up of the images we produce and receive everyday. How these images affect us is tied to how and why we produce them. This studio course is a way to facilitate the awareness of this interaction through fundamental technical exercises in looking, listening and making—connecting the moving image craft to fine art, narrative, and documentary genres.

The course will strive to answer: How do students perceive their relationship to the environment? How can that relationship be translated into a visual vocabulary? How can this vocabulary be refined, through the craft of writing, filming, editing and presenting? Ultimately, how can the environment itself participate in facilitating the students' creative expression?

GOALS

1. To explore the creative process by being introduced to the fundamental techniques in pre-production, production and post-production using digital video.
2. Through historical and theoretical readings explore the ability to see the world cinematographically and find creative solutions to “capture” or “interpret” that vision.
2. To be an attentive spectator and cultivate the skill of critiquing, reflecting sincerely and meaningfully on readings, discussions, screenings, and in peer review contexts.

CLASS STRUCTURE

- Discussions based off of assigned readings or in class film screenings
- Conceptual lesson, technical demonstration and/or studio session (work in progress)
- Presentation of works (critiques)

All required readings will be posted on CHALK. Supplemental readings will also be posted on CHALK. These readings will generally be on technical aspects of production and can be used as reference materials during production. Additional photocopied material may be distributed in class or uploaded onto the course home page. In the event of absence, the student is responsible for all new assignments and information given during class time.

PROJECTS

Due to the quarter system and the nature of the video-making creative process you are required to work on your projects in and out of class. This includes allowing ample time to plan, film and edit your projects as well as for final delivery submission.

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Project I: Sound—Sculpting Place (2 min)

Project II: Composition—Capturing an Object (1-2 min)

Project III: Video Essay—Camera as Performance (3-5 min)

Project IV: Narrative—Crew (3-5 min)

Project V: Final Projects (5-7 min)

WRITINGS

Projects III, IV and V will be accompanied by a one page “Response Text,” referencing the theoretical and historical readings assigned in class while explaining the student’s personal vision and technical challenges encountered while creating the work. Though this is a studio course, evaluating one’s own expression will help to highlight certain forms that took place during the creative process. Reflecting on your own work is not an easy exercise, but through repetition certain tendencies and themes will come to the surface that can help inform the following project.

EVALUATION

The success of this course depends on the commitment of the students to engage creatively with theoretical and technical course matter. The student’s openness and sensitivity towards their fellow classmates expression will allow for greater growth and exploration in the class as well. Evaluation of all student work will take into consideration the student’s availability to experiment intellectually and creatively in a way that demonstrates a thoughtful consideration and creative interpretation of the themes and technical matter raised through course readings, screenings and class discussions.

Projects and assignments will not be letter graded. Written feedback is given throughout the quarter, and at mid-quarter I will provide an evaluation on your progress. Final grades will be determined on: Projects = 50% & Participation = 50%

OUT OF POCKET MATERIALS

Macintosh formatted external 250-500GB hard drive, preferably with a Firewire 800 port

ATTENDANCE

Students must attend the first two classes to be eligible to take the course. Regular attendance is required. More than two absences in class will result in a full letter drop in the final grade. A quarter is a very short amount of time, missing one class can mean missing out on a major technical lesson, which can affect the quality of your projects. In the case of excused absences due to documented illness or family emergencies, please present a dean's note as soon as possible.

EXTRA TECH LAB/OFFICE HOURS

I have blocked off the computer lab (LC 003) from 1-3pm for each Friday during the quarter. I will be available to assist you with current projects and/or to discuss any concerns during this time. If you need to meet with me outside this time regarding non-technical matter please email me.

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SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Wednesday, January 8th

- Introduction and course overview; Project I assignment; Steve McQueen screenings
- Logan Media Center (Cage) Full Access/Permissions

DUE for Monday, January 13th:

1. Project I: Idea/Sketch of sound recording locations
2. Reading: André Bazin, "The Ontology of Photographic Image," in *What Is Cinema?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 9-16.
3. Reading: Rick Altman, "Material Heterogeneity of Sound Recording," Chap. 1, in *Sound Theory, Sound Practice*, ed. R. Altman (Routledge, 1992), 15-34.

*Order external hard drive

WEEK 2

Monday, January 13th

- Discussion/Examples—Sound and Film Form
- Demo: Sound recording basics (Zoom), gather material in building, compare/contrast
- Demo: Final Cut Pro introduction—importing sound, sound track basics and exporting

DUE for Wednesday, January 15th:

1. Project I: Capture and Edit (you will have time to mix and export in class on Wednesday prior to presentation)
2. Reading: David Bordwell, "The Significance of Film Form," Chap. 2, in *Film Art: An Introduction* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008), 54-73.

*Bring external hard drive to class

Wednesday, January 15th

- Studio: Project I—edit and export
- Presentations: Project I (critique)

DUE for Wednesday, January 22nd:

1. Reading: David Bordwell, "The Shot: Cinematography" Chap. 5, in *Film Art: An Introduction* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008), 162-217.
2. Reading: Alexandre Astruc, "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Camera-Style," *The New Wave: Critical Landmarks*, ed. Peter Graham and Ginette Vincendeau (London: BFI, 2009), 1-5.
3. Project III: Idea/Sketch

WEEK 3

Monday, January 20th

MLK Day, No Class

Wednesday, January 22nd

- Presentations: Project I (critique)

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DUE for Monday, January 27th:

1. Reading: David Bordwell, "Documentary, Experimental, and Animated Films" Chap. 10, in *Film Art: An Introduction* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008), 338-370.
2. Reading: Luise Bunuel, "Cinema, Instrument of Poetry" in *The Shadow and Its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on Cinema*, ed. Paul Hammond (London: British Film Institute, 1978), 66-69.

WEEK 4

Monday, January 27th

- Discussion/Examples—Camera Composition and Project II assignment
- Demo: Camera Basics—Manfrotto Tripod, Canon G10 HD, Available Light

DUE for Wednesday, January 29th:

1. Reading: Nora Alter, "Translating the Essay into Film and Installation," *Journal of Visual Culture*, 6, no. 1 (2007): 44-57.
2. Project II: Shoot

Wednesday, January 29th

- Discussion/Examples—Project III assignment and video essay examples
- Screening: Chris Marker, *Sans Soleil*, 1983, 100 minutes

DUE for Monday, February 3rd:

1. Project II: Have all video material saved on hard drives, ready to be edited
2. Project III: Written Proposal

WEEK 5

Monday, February 3rd

- Demo: Final Cut Pro—footage into FCPro, basic editing, superimposition, and exporting
- Studio: Project II—Edit and Export
- Studio: Project III—individual meetings

DUE for Wednesday, February 5th:

1. Project II—Exported and Ready for Presentation
2. Project III: YouTube links that are connected to your project, could be footage you might use as material which you will manipulate or for research purposes

Wednesday, February 5th

- Demo: Final Cut Pro—found footage and conversion
- Project II (critique)

DUE for Monday, February 10th:

1. Project III: Shoot and Compile footage
2. Reading: David Bordwell, "The Relation of Shot to Shot: Editing" Chap. 6, in *Film Art: An Introduction* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008), 218-263.

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WEEK 6

Monday, February 10th

- Demo: FCPro— titles/text and effects
- Studio: Project III—Edit
- Mid-Quarter Individual Meetings

DUE for Wednesday, February 12th:

1. Project III: Rough Cut Due

Wednesday, February 12th

- Demo: FCPro—color correction and sound sweetening
- Studio: Project III—Edit
- Mid-Quarter Individual Meetings

DUE for Monday, February 17th:

Project III—Exported and Ready for Presentation

WEEK 7

Monday, February 17th

- Presentations: Project III (critique)

DUE for Wednesday, February 19th:

1. Project III: Response Text
2. Reading: David Bordwell, “The Shot: Mise-en-Scene” Chap. 4, in *Film Art: An Introduction* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008), 112-161.

Wednesday, February 19th

- Discussion/Examples—Mise-en-Scene
- Studio: Project IV assignment—organize into crews
- Demo: Three Point Lighting and Crew Sound Recording (boom and wireless)

DUE for Monday, February 24th:

1. Project IV: A) determine roles (writer, camera, editor, sound, director, and producer); choose a location and idea as a group; and B) Writer—create script
- *2. Project V: Proposals due at 9AM

WEEK 8

Monday, February 24th

- Discussion/Examples—Production Breakdown
- Studio: Project IV—crew meetings, work on draft of script, and production breakdown
- Studio: Project V—individual meetings

DUE for Wednesday, February 26th:

1. Project IV: Final Script with Production Breakdown

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Wednesday, February 26th

- Studio: Project IV—crew continue developing project
- Studio: Project V—individual meetings
- or
- Screening: Michelangelo Antonioni, *Blow-Up*, 1966, 111 minutes

DUE for Monday, March 3rd:

1. Project IV: Continue Production
2. Project V: Continue Production
3. Susan Sontag, “Against Interpretation, and Other Essays,” (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966), 1–10.

WEEK 9

Monday, March 3rd

- Museum Visit (video installations and screenings): Venue TBD—either The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago or The Art Institute of Chicago

DUE for Wednesday, March 5th:

1. Project IV: Continue Production
2. Project V: Continue Production
3. Readings: Walter Murch, “In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing,” (Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 2001), selected readings 15–22; 32–33; 40–42; 43–51; 57–63.

Wednesday, March 5th

- Studio: Project IV—editing
- Studio: Project V—development

DUE for Monday, March 10th:

1. Project IV: Finish for Monday Presentation
2. Project V: Continue Production
3. Reading: Roland Barthes, “Leaving the Movie Theater,” in *The Rustle of Language* (Berkeley [u.a.]: Univ. of California Press, 1989) 345-349.

WEEK 10

Monday, March 10th

- Project IV Presentation (critique)

DUE for Wednesday, March 12th:

1. Project IV: Response Text

Wednesday, March 12th

- Studio: Project V editing

DUE for Monday, March 17th or Wednesday, March 20th

- Project V: Final Edit and Response Text

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WEEK 11

- Presentations: Project V (critique), Date/Time/Place TBD—either Monday, March 17th or Wednesday, March 20th in the Logan Screening Room 204 or 014.

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