

CMST 28925: Expanded Cinema  
Cross-listings: (CMST 38925 ARTV 23861 ARTV 33861 CHST 28925)  
Spring 2024, W & F, 12:30AM–3:20PM, Logan Arts Center 014 & 003  
Lecturer: Marco G. Ferrari, [marcoferrari@uchicago.edu](mailto:marcoferrari@uchicago.edu), 773-230-1106 (mobile)  
Office--Classics 314A. Hours--by appointment (in-person or remote)

## **SYLLABUS**

### **Course Description**

Though often overlooked, the act of projection is at the heart of cinema (the act or process of causing a picture to appear on a surface). This studio course focuses on the creation of moving image-based work, exploring how time and space are used as materials to create form and inspire content within the contemporary film genre known as expanded cinema. The technical, historical and psychological aspects of the projected image will be studied in order to re-think cinema as a group and investigate how the projected image can find meaning outside the black box of theaters or the white cube of galleries. Two personal experimental video projects will lead to a final group video installation that will use the environment within the vicinity of the UChicago's campus to inspire your work while also become the location of the final public outdoor projection event.

### **Course Overview**

This course focuses on the history, theory and production of an exciting contemporary art form known as expanded cinema, which encompasses cinema, visual, sound and performance-based arts. Linked to other branches of cinema such as counter cinema, video art and experimental film, expanded cinema is rooted in the origins of film. It later developed as a branch of cinema in the 1960s upholding the idea of revealing and breaking conventions through modes of production and spectatorship. Yet as technology has evolved, its practice has increasingly become a popular vehicle of expression for artists, often entering popular culture through art galleries, museums, TV, film and commercial entertainment. Today expanded cinema stands at the intersection between cinema and art, image and object, underground and mainstream.

A cinema of thought that is constantly questioning itself, the practice and study of expanded cinema can facilitate an awareness of the interaction between maker and viewer, image and environment, self and otherness. Through fundamental technical exercises in looking, listening and making—connecting the moving image craft to experimental, documentary, fine art, and narrative genres, students will study and create moving image-based work, exploring how time and space are used as materials to create form and inspire content in film.

Readings, screenings, discussions, excursions, technical exercises, written response texts and most importantly the creation of two personal works are key components of the class that will lead to a final group outdoor video projection project on or within the vicinity of the University of Chicago's campus. Digital sound recording, image capturing, available lighting, editing, and writing will be explored in order to re-think cinema as a class and investigate how the projected image can generate meaning inside and outside the black box of theaters or the white cube of galleries.

The course will strive to answer: How do students perceive their relationship to the environment? How can that relationship be translated into a cinematographic 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**

- To introduce the history of cinema, visual, sound and performance-based arts through focusing on key developments in expanded cinema from its origins to the present.
- To strengthen the student's ability to develop a visual language using space and time as key materials in creative works.
- To gain greater technical and critiquing skills related to the production and exhibition of moving image-based works.

### **Class Structure**

- Discussions based off of assigned readings, viewings and in-class film screenings.
- Lab time (planning and production, conceptual and technical demonstrations).
- Presentation of works (critiques).

### **Readings**

All required readings are posted on **Canvas** along with auxiliary readings and points of reference that can help further understanding. The auxiliary readings will generally be on technical aspects of production or to expand on theoretical topics discussed in class. Additional material may be distributed in class and/or uploaded onto the course home page.

### **Viewings**

Each class will have a time where we will view screenings of works. A compiled Viewings List (with links when possible) will be available on Canvas and updated on a weekly basis.

### **Audiovisual Projects**

Within each class there will be time given to work on the production aspects related to your projects. But due to the course structure, the nature of the creative process and technical aspects connected with each project, students are required to work on projects in and out of class. This includes allowing ample time to plan, record, edit and experiment. 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 the three projects, building upon what was learned from preceding projects.

**Project I)** Surface—Projection —Image + Surface Material. 1-3 min. video, silent, looped. (20%).  
Critiques 4/3 & 4/5.

**Project II)** Space— Installation—Image + Sound + Object. 3 min. video with sound, looped (25%).  
Critiques 4/24 & 4/26.

**\*Project III)** Collective Projection—Site-Specific —Outdoor Public Event. 3-5 min. video, silent.  
(25%). 5/15 Projection Test, 5/16 Projection Event.

<https://filmstudiescenter.uchicago.edu/event/expanded-cinema-outdoor-site-specific-projection>

\*After site visits and research, as a class we will choose a public outdoor structure as the site/surface for the collective projection event, keeping in consideration key logistical and conceptual concerns. Student's individual video projects, which will in turn be connected to the location site via inspiration or recorded material, will be projected one after another onto the surface of the structure, so as not to not be experienced as separate videos, but as a collective expression. The entire sequence of student videos will run on a loop for the duration multiple hours allowing for the interaction of the passerby and environmental shifts in the evening. Curatorial elements such as site design, logistics, promotion and community involvement will be part of the entire class' responsibility. Individual tasks will be worked through during the initial planning process, similar to role distribution within the production of a film.

### Writings

Each project will be accompanied by a "Proposal" outlining the student's initial idea. A "Response Text," will follow each project that will reference readings, screenings and site visits assigned in class while explaining the student's personal vision and technical challenges encountered while creating the specific work. Though this is a studio course, planning and then evaluating one's own expression in relation to the course material will help to highlight certain forms that took place during the creative process. Planning and reflecting on your own work is not an easy exercise, but through repetition, tendencies and themes will come to the surface that can help inform the following project.

Additional short writing prompts may be assigned for each 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. \*Late Assignments will affect your grade.

- 1) Three creative projects with proposals and response texts (70%).
- 2) General class preparation, including active participation in class \*discussions and "Peer Critiques" (20%).
- 3) Weekly journal entries on Canvas based off readings (10%).

\*When readings are assigned for class one or two students will lead the discussion through two questions based off the readings. The student(s) will be selected the class prior to the assigned readings. Class-discussion, in this course, is understood as instructor-guided but student driven.

## Attendance

This class does not meet remotely. Regular in-presence attendance is required. Three late arrivals (more than 10 minutes) are counted as one unexcused absence. Two unexcused absences will result in a full letter drop in the final grade and **three unexcused absences** will result in failure. 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.

## Equipment

- Digital Media Center, <https://www.logancenter.uchicago.edu/resources>. Through the media center certain gear will be explored and available for your use on projects. As the course develops you will be introduced to gear and technical demonstrations.

- Out of Pocket Materials: Students enrolled in this course **must** provide their own external hard drive (250-500GB) to store and archive captured material and video projects. You should also expect minimal additional expenses for the installation aspects of your project.

## Office Hours

I am available to discuss any concerns or questions outside of class time. Please do not hesitate to email me to schedule a meeting.

## Grading

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 fellow classmate's 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. \*Late Assignments will affect your grade. Written feedback is given throughout the quarter, and an individual meeting at the mid-way point of the semester will be arranged to go over the student's current status and any concerns.

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### Final Assessment Criteria

A = Outstanding participation and attendance, asks questions and embraces the process, substantial growth is evident by the end of the quarter.

B = Above average participation and attendance, palpable growth is evident by the end of the quarter.

C = Average execution of assignments, participation and attendance, little or no growth is evident by the end of the quarter.

D = Well below average of the above.

F = Unsatisfactory work, participation, and attendance.

### **SCHEDULE** (*please note that this schedule is subject to change.*)

#### **WEEK 1**

##### **Wednesday, March 20**

- Introductions, course overview, viewings.
- Lab: Project I—Assignment given.

#### Due 3/22

Readings:

- Rush, Michael. “Introduction” in *Video Art*, 2007.
- Thompson, Kristin, and David Bordwell. “Chapter 1” of *Film History: An Introduction*, 2003.

Assignment:

- Project I Proposal.

##### **Friday, March 22**

- Discussion on Readings; Cinema from Projection to Conception (1900s–60s)
- Lab: Camera Basics—one-shot; In-class Assignment; Project I Proposals Review

#### Due 3/27

Readings:

- Rush, Michael. “Chapter 1: Shaping a History” in *Video Art*, 2007.
- Gunning, Tom. “The Cinema of Attractions Early Film, Its Spectator and The Avant-Garde.”
- Barthes, Roland. “Leaving the Movie Theater”.

Assignment:

- Project I—Image recordings and gather Screen/Surface Material.

#### **WEEK 2**

##### **Wednesday, March 27**

- Discussion on Readings; History/Theory: Cinema/Video Art to Installation (1970s–2000s).
- Lab: Project I—Camera Basics; Editing and Projection Tests.

#### Due 3/29

Readings:

- Mondloch, Kate. “Introduction” & “Interface Matters” of *Screens—Viewing Media*, 2010.

Assignment:

- Project I—Record, Edit, Screen/Surface Material and Test Projections.

##### **Friday, March 29**

- Discussion on Readings; History/Theory: Cinema/Video Art to Installation (2000s–present)
- Lab: Project I—Editing and Projection Tests.

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### Due 4/3

Readings:

- Rush, Michael. “Chapter 2: “Video and the Conceptual Body” in *Video Art*, 2007.
- McGinn, Colin. “Chapter Two: Vision and the Screen” of *The Power of Movies*, 2005.

Assignment:

- Project I—Finalize Project/Ready for Critiques on 4/3 or 4/5.

## **WEEK 3**

### **Wednesday, April 3**

- Discussion on readings and in-class viewings.
- Presentation—Project I—Critiques (group 1, room 014).

### Due 4/5

- Group 2 prepare for presentation.

### **Friday, April 5**

- Presentation—Project I—Critiques (group 2, rooms 014 & 028).
- Lab: Project II—Assignment given.

### Due 4/10

Readings:

- Rush, Michael. “Chapter 3: Video and the New Narrative” in *Video Art*, 2007.
- McGinn, Colin. “Chapter Four: Dreams on Film” in *The Power of Movies*, 2005.

Assignment:

- Project I—Response Text.
- Project II—Proposal.

## **WEEK 4**

### **Wednesday, April 10**

- Discussion on readings and in-class viewings.
- Lab: Project II—Proposal Review and related in-class work.

### Due 4/12

Readings:

- Sontag, Susan. “The Image-World” in *On Photography*, 1973.
- Sontag, Susan. “Against-Interpretation”, 1964.

### **Friday, April 12**

- Discussion on readings and in-class viewings.
- Lab: Project II—Image Making and Editing—color correction, cuts, superimposition, timing.

### Due 4/17

Readings:

- Rush, Michael. “Chapter 4: Extensions” in *Video Art*, 2007.
- Leighton, Tanya. “Modes of Film Practice in the Avant Garde” by Johnathan Walley in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, 2008.
- Leighton, Tanya. “White Cube, Black Box, and Grey Areas: Venues and Values” by Gregor Stemrich in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, 2008.

Assignment:

- Project II—Production—shoot, edit, plan and gather materials.

## **WEEK 5**

### **Wednesday, April 17**

- Discussion on readings and in-class viewings.
- Lab: Projection Technologies & Camera Composition—mis-en-scene, movement, and performance.

#### Due 4/19

##### Readings:

- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. “Introduction” & “The-Film and the New Psychology”, 1964.
- Armstrong, Karen. “Introduction” in *A Short History of Myth*, 2005.

##### Assignment:

- Project II—Production--shoot, edit, plan and gather materials.

### **Friday, April 19**

- Discussion on readings and in-class viewings.
- Lab: Camera Composition—mis-en-scene, movement, and performance.
- Project III—Assignment given.

#### Due 4/24

##### Readings:

- Rush, Michael. “5: Global-Groove-Fully-Global” in *Video Art*, 2007.
- Solanas, Fernando and Gentino, Octavio. “Towards a Third Cinema”, 1969.

##### Assignment:

- Project II—Finalize production—shoot, edit, plan and gather materials.

## **WEEK 6**

### **Wednesday, April 24**

- Discussion on readings and in-class viewings.
- Presentation—Project II—Critiques (group 1, room 014).
- Lab: Project III—Projection Location Possibilities

#### Due 4/26

- Project II—Group 2 prepare for presentation.
- Project III—Location preferences.

### **Friday, April 26**

- Presentation—Project II—Critiques (group 2, rooms 014 & 028)
- Lab: Project III—Location selections and other matters

#### Due 5/1

##### Readings:

- Harvey, David. “The Future of the Commons”, 2011.
- extra. Harvey, David. “Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction”, 2007.

##### Assignment:

- Project II—Response Text
- Project III—Proposal.

## **WEEK 7**

### **Wednesday, May 1**

- Discussion on readings and in-class viewings.
- Lab: Project III—Proposal review.

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Due 5/3

Readings:

Connolly, Maeve. “Intro” & “Chap 1: Between Space Site Screen” in *Place of Artists’ Cinema*, 2009.

**Friday, May 3**

- Discussion on readings and in-class viewings.
- Lab: Project III Production—Projects, Event Logistics and Promotion.

Due 5/8

Readings:

-Youngblood, Gene. “Preface”, “Chapter One” and part of “Chapter Two” in *Expanded Cinema*, 1970. pp. 41-91.

Assignment:

- Project III Production—Projects, Event Logistics and Promotion.

**WEEK 8**

**Wednesday, May 8**

- Discussion on readings and in-class viewings.
- Lab: Project III Production—Projects, Event Logistics and Promotion.

Due 5/10

Assignment:

- Project III—Rough Cut.

**Friday May 10**

- Lab: Project III Rough-Cut Review and Production—Projects, Event Logistics and Promotion.

Due 5/15

Assignment:

- Project III—Final edit. (5/15 projection test at 8pm; 5/16 projection event at 8pm)

**WEEK 9**

**Wednesday, May 15**

- Project III Final edit review.
- Lab: Project III Production—Projects, Event Logistics and Promotion.
- Projection Evening Test, meet at 6pm.

**\*Thursday, May 16**

- Meet at 6pm, event is at 8pm. <https://filmstudiescenter.uchicago.edu/event/expanded-cinema-outdoor-site-specific-projection>

**Friday, May 17**

- Event documentation exchange and class conclusions.

Due 5/22

- Project III—Response Text.

~ *FINE* ~