

MCOM 417: Advanced Video Production

Spring 2016

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-2:15 p.m., UC323

Professor Drew Morton

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10-12 p.m. (UC228)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

Advanced Video Production is a both a seminar that deals with the theory of film and a practicum that results in a series of videographic criticism that brings together the theoretical readings of the course, a research subject of your own choosing, and film production technology. Students are expected to critically engage with these readings both in an essay format and in an in-class discussion and to utilize them as a philosophical foundation to their visual essay (which will be completed in the final five weeks of the semester, both with in-class supervised lab time and on your own).

Before the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the fundamental theories of Cinema Studies.
2. Critically engage with the theories discussed in class via short videographic works.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of basic new media production tools.
4. Mobilize the new media theories assigned in class for the creation of new media objects.

REQUIRED TEXTS/MATERIALS:

Monaco, James. *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, and Beyond* (4th Edition, Oxford University Press, 2009).

Other required readings will be distributed in PDF format via electronic distribution.

You will also need to be able to secure the films being assigned for a given day. You can do this through Netflix or Amazon Streaming most easily.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Videographic Essay #1 (Terminology): 10%

Videographic Essay #2 (Summary): 15%

Videographic Essay #3 (Rebuttal): 20%

Videographic Essay #4 (Final Project): 35%

Videographic Analysis: 10%

Class Attendance/Participation/Quizzes: 10%

The Portfolio

You are expected to pick one film from the BFI/*Sight and Sound* ranking of the 50 Greatest Films Ever Made (<http://www.bfi.org.uk/news/50-greatest-films-all-time>) and produce a series of videographic works about it. The first piece (terminology) requires you to define one basic Cinema Studies term through the film you have chosen *without*

voice-over. The second assignment (summary) is a videographic summary - not extended quotation - of a scholarly article you have found while researching your chosen film. The third assignment (rebuttal) is a videographic response to the piece of scholarship you have found for previous assignment. Finally, the final project allows you to create either an argumentative or poetic videographic work (the former requires a thesis and supporting evidence that are integrated into the work, the latter requires a rigorously written and theorized artistic statement).

NOTE ABOUT THE COURSE SCHEDULE: Due to the varying levels of expertise in this classroom (both in terms of theory and software skills), please consider this schedule “soft” and subject to dialogue and compromise.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

MODULE ONE: INTRODUCTION, TERMINOLOGY, AND ESSAY #1 (WEEKS 1-4)

Week One (January 17-23): Introductions, Film Terminology Handout, and *The Five Obstructions*.

Reading: Monaco, Chapter One.

In-Class Screening: *The Five Obstructions* (Lars von Trier and Jørgen Leth, 90 minutes).

Week Two (January 24-30): Catch Up, Introductions to the Portfolio and Software.

Reading: Monaco, Chapter Two.

You must choose a film from the BFI list and acquire a DVD copy by the end of the week (purchase or via Netflix DVD subscription)!

Week Three (January 31-February 6): Lab Time

You must submit a rough cut digitally (via Vimeo or YouTube) by Friday at 5 p.m. so I can provide notes.

Week Four (February 7-13): Lab Time and Screening of Essay #1

You must have a final draft of Essay #1 on Vimeo or YouTube before class on Thursday.

MODULE TWO: THE LANGUAGE, SHAPE, AND STORY OF FILM AND ESSAY #2 (WEEKS 5-8)

Week Five (February 14-20): The Language and *Story of Film*

Reading: Monaco, Chapter Three.

In-Class Screening: *The Story of Film* (Mark Cousins, 2011, 915 minutes).

Week Six (February 21-27): The Shape of Film History and Videographic Examples

Reading: Monaco, pgs. 252-317.

In-Class Screenings: Various Videographic Works.

You must submit a citation and one paragraph summary of the article you have chosen

for Essay #2 on Thursday.

Week Seven (February 28-March 5): Lab Time

You must submit a rough cut digitally (via Vimeo or YouTube) by Friday at 5 p.m. so I can provide notes.

Week Eight (March 6-12): Lab Time and Screening of Essay #2

You must have a final draft of Essay #2 on Vimeo or YouTube before class on Thursday.

MODULE THREE: FILM THEORY OVERVIEW, VIDEOGRAPHIC ANALYSES, AND ESSAY #3 (WEEKS 9-11)

SPRING BREAK FROM MARCH 14-18

Week Nine (March 20-26): Film Theory, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, and Videographic Analyses

Reading: Monaco, Chapter 5.

Outside of Class-Screening: *Los Angeles Plays Itself* (Thom Anderson, 2004, 169 minutes).

You must submit a one page, single placed and 12 point font, analysis of a videographic work *not* watched in class by Thursday.

Week Ten (March 27-April 2): Lab Time

Week Eleven (April 3-9): Lab Time and Screening of Essay #3

You must have a final draft of Essay #3 on Vimeo or YouTube before class on Thursday.

MODULE FOUR: ESSAY #4 (WEEKS 12-15)

Weeks Twelve-Thirteen (April 10-23): Lab Time

Week Fourteen (April 24-30): Rough Cut Screening and Lab Time

You must have a rough draft of Essay #4 on Vimeo or YouTube before class on Tuesday for an in-class screening.

Week Fifteen (May 1-7): Lab Time and Screening of Essay #4

You must have a rough draft of Essay #4 on Vimeo or YouTube before class on Thursday for an in-class screening.

COURSE POLICIES:

Be sure to complete your reading and assignments on the date they are scheduled on the syllabus.

Late assignments are not accepted.

Attendance/participation grades may be determined by quizzes and/or presentation of notes or outlines.

Cell phones are to be set on vibrate and not to be used during class.

Be sure to bring *all* your course materials to class each day we meet.

This is a lab-intensive course. That means that attendance and participation are especially important. You will be asked to share and critique one another's creative work (constructively and kindly!). Please see me if you have any reservations about this.

You are not required to buy any software for this course. Supervised, in-class, lab time will be provided to you. If you should you need access to the lab's resources outside of class, let me know.

This class involves new media theory and practice. You need not be an artist to function as a designer! All I ask is that you approach everything with a patient and open mind. Do not admit defeat in the face of these new technological and creative challenges. If I can do it, you can do it (and that is meant to be self-effacing towards me, not you)!

In accordance with the University's academic integrity policy (see below), students who violate the policy will earn an automatic F for the course.

Finally, please allow a 24-48 hour turn-around time for any e-mails. Due to this policy, be sure not to leave any major concerns/questions about assignments for the last minute!

I reserve the right to alter this syllabus.

TAMUT POLICIES:

Disability Accommodations: Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the A&M-Textarkana Disability Services Office by calling 903-223-3062.

Academic Integrity: Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism, and undocumented use of materials from any source constitute academic dishonesty and may be grounds for a grade of 'F' in the course and/or disciplinary actions. For additional information, see the university catalog.

A&M-Textarkana Email Address: Upon application to Texas A&M University-Textarkana an individual will be assigned an A&M-Textarkana email account. This email account will be used to deliver official university correspondence. Each individual is responsible for information sent and received via the university email account and is expected to check the official A&M-Textarkana email account on a frequent

and consistent basis. Faculty and students are required to utilize the university email account when communicating about coursework.

Drop Policy: To drop this course after the census date (see [semester calendar](#)), a student must complete the Drop/Withdrawal Request Form, located on the University website <http://tamut.edu/Registrar/droppingwithdrawing-from-classes.html>) or obtained in the Registrar's Office. The student must submit the signed and completed form to the instructor of each course indicated on the form to be dropped for his/her signature. The signature is not an "approval" to drop, but rather confirmation that the student has discussed the drop/withdrawal with the faculty member. The form must be submitted to the Registrar's office for processing in person, email Registrar@tamut.edu, mail (7101 University Ave., Texarkana, TX 75503) or fax (903-223-3140). Drop/withdraw forms missing any of the required information will not be accepted by the Registrar's Office for processing. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the form is completed properly before submission. If a student stops participating in class (attending and submitting assignments) but does not complete and submit the drop/withdrawal form, a final grade based on work completed as outlined in the syllabus will be assigned.