

Media Toolkit
Spring 2013
Course Syllabus
Instructor: Eduardo Navas, navase@newschool.edu
Cultural Studies
Eugene Lang College, The New School University
Mondays 9:00 – 11:40 AM

Course Description (as defined by Eugene Lang)

This course situates media in the broader context of an innovative and integrative liberal arts education. As such, it enables students to evaluate and make decisions concerning their relationship to proliferating technologies and various new media. This course combines lectures and lab-work to help students familiarize themselves with various software platforms and multimedia tools, in order to more effectively gather, analyze, contextualize, present, and re-present information within a broad political and cultural framework. After completing the five different modules (intro, image, word, sound, number), students better understand--and are more confident in using--the various modes and methods that enable the critically informed to read between the pixels, as well as meaningfully contribute to the ever-expanding digital public sphere. This is an Integrative course. [Counts for All Tracks]

Emphasis of Class:

In this course students explore the language of media with a hands-on-approach to produce experimental projects. The class is specifically focused on how to create a believable or engaging experience with image, word, sound, and number. Participants will gain an overall theoretical and practical understanding of media production that will prepare them to develop advanced projects for their own interests as well as for future classes.

Class Structure

Class sessions take place on Mondays. Each session consists of a contextualization of the introduced techniques, along with discussions of assigned readings, selected to enhance the understanding of media production. Project assignment critiques will take an entire class session for proper critique. Students will turn in a total of three projects which emphasize the relation of image, word, sound, and number:

Project 1: Pixels

Project 2: Vectors

Project 3: Networks

Learning Outcomes:

1. To understand how form and content are combined to communicate with time-based media.
2. To understand the basic history and theory that is relevant to culture and media.
3. To acquire an advanced understanding of conceptual models important in culture and media.
4. To gain practical knowledge of diverse tools used for media production.
5. To produce projects that communicate messages effectively, and are critically invested.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's work as one's own in all forms of academic endeavor (such as essays, theses, examinations, research data, creative projects, etc), intentional or unintentional. Plagiarized material may be derived from a variety of sources, such as books, journals, Internet postings, student or faculty papers, etc. This includes the purchase or "outsourcing" of written assignments for a course. A detailed definition of plagiarism in research and writing can be found in the fourth edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, pages 26-29. Procedures concerning allegations of plagiarism and penalties are set forth in the Lang catalog.

THE NEW SCHOOL ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY POLICY (excerpt)

The New School views "academic honesty and integrity" as the duty of every member of an academic community to claim authorship for his or her own work and only for that work, and to recognize the contributions of others accurately and completely. This obligation is fundamental to the integrity of intellectual debate, and creative and academic pursuits. Academic honesty and integrity includes accurate use of quotations, as well as appropriate and explicit citation of sources in instances of paraphrasing and describing ideas, or reporting on research findings or any aspect of the work of others (including that of faculty members and other students). Academic dishonesty results from infractions of this "accurate use". The standards of academic honesty and integrity, and citation of sources, apply to all forms of academic work, including submissions of drafts of final papers or projects. All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the standards of academic honesty and integrity.

Definitions and Examples of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating on examinations, either by copying another student's work or by utilizing unauthorized materials
- using work of others as one's own original work and submitting such work to the university or to scholarly journals, magazines, or similar publications
- submission of another students' work obtained by theft or purchase as one's own original work
- submission of work downloaded from paid or unpaid sources on the internet as one's own original work, or including the information in a submitted work without proper citation
- submitting the same work for more than one course without the knowledge and explicit approval of all of the faculty members involved
- destruction or defacement of the work of others
- aiding or abetting any act of academic dishonesty
- any attempt to gain academic advantage by presenting misleading information, making deceptive statements or falsifying documents, including documents related to internships
- engaging in other forms of academic misconduct that violate principles of integrity.

Please download the complete document, available on Blackboard along with this syllabus.

Disabilities

In keeping with the University's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student requesting accommodations must first meet with Student Disability Services. Jason Luchs or a designee from that office will meet with students requesting accommodations and related services, and if appropriate, provide an Academic Adjustment Notice for the student to provide to his or her instructors. The instructor is required to review the letter with the student and discuss the accommodations, provided the student brings the letter to the attention of the instructor. This letter is necessary in order for classroom accommodations to be provided. Student Disability Services is located at 79 Fifth Avenue - 5th Floor. The phone number is (212) 229-5626. Students and faculty are expected to review the Student Disability Services webpage. The webpage can be found at: <http://www.newschool.edu/studentaffairs/disability/> and the office is available to answer any questions or concerns.

Required Equipment

You should not need extra equipment or software if you have access to the school's computer lab beyond class sessions.

Required Book

I will not require a book for class, but I strongly encourage you to buy the following texts which are meant to function as complementary reference manuals. They will be quite useful not only during class, but also for other classes and future projects.

Photoshop CS for Windows and Macintosh: Visual QuickStart Guide, by Elaine Weinmann and Peter Lourekas, Peachpit Press.

Illustrator CS for Windows and Macintosh: Visual QuickStart Guide, by Elaine Weinmann and Peter Lourekas, Peachpit Press.

Dreamweaver CS for Windows and Macintosh: Visual QuickStart Guide, by Tom Negrino and Dori Smith, Peachpit Press.

Special note: make sure to purchase the latest versions or ones that correspond with the software you will be using on your computer/lab at New School.

Course Requirements

Please note that final grades are dependent upon consistent performance in all course requirements.

- **Attend every class session.** (See attendance below for more details.)
- **Participate in class exercises, as well as lab time.** Class participation will also include in-class exercises.
- **There are a total of 3 projects.** The point breakdown is below.
- **There are no make-ups.** Please check with me for possible exceptions. Not consulting with me prior to the dates when assignments are due will lead to an automatic F.
- **Final projects cannot be late—no exceptions.**

Grading

- Attendance and Class Participation 20%

- Project 1: Pixels 25%
- Project 2: Vectors 25%
- Project 3: Networks 30%.

Total 100%

Grade Scale

- 94-100 = A
- 90-93 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 84-86 = B
- 80-83 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 74-76 = C
- 70-73 = C-
- 60-69 = D
- 0-59 = F

Attendance/Tardies

Four absences and/or tardies will result in an automatic reduction of one letter grade for the course. 15 or more minutes late is equivalent to a tardy. More than four absences and/or tardies will result in an automatic failing grade for the course, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as the following: 1) an extended illness requiring hospitalization or visit to a physician (with documentation), 2) a family emergency, e.g. a serious illness (with written explanation), 3) observance of a religious holiday. Students failing a course due to attendance should consult with an academic advisor to discuss options.

The attendance and lateness policies are enforced as of the first day of classes for all registered students. If registered during the first week of the add/drop period, the student is responsible for any missed assignments and coursework.

Office Hours: I have no official office hours but I am available on Mondays and Tuesdays by appointment.

Semester Schedule

Note that the class includes a series of short exercises, which are considered part of class participation. These exercises are designed to complement the successful completion of your projects. Lectures will shift according to the students' needs to gain practical knowledge from week to week

Week 1

January 28, 2013

Introduction to Class

Introduction of First Assignment

Assignment for Week One

Review the four part video series Everything Is a Remix

Also read my notes on the video series:

“Notes on Everything is a Remix, Part 1, 2, and 3”

“More Notes on Everything Is a Remix” and Ferguson’s Lecture at Creative Mornings

Also Read further on Cultural Citation and Material Samplings, link available on Blackboard: “Not a Remix–Nor a Sampling: Why Fareed Zakaria’s Plagiarism is Unacceptable”

Read “Operation Margarine” and “Myth Today” by Roland Barthes (PDF available on Blackboard)

We will discuss the readings during our meeting for week 2.

Week 2

February 4, 2013

Lecture on Photography, Film, and Pixels

Weekly Assignment:

The instructor will provide you with three pieces of paper.

1) On the first piece of paper write the name of an object or thing, then give it back to the instructor.

2) On a second piece of paper write a concept or idea. Keep it.

3) On the third piece of paper describe an action, then, give it back to the instructor.

The instructor will ask you to choose from the two sets he collected. If you happen to choose your own materials, please return them and choose others.

Based on the three elements that you will have, develop a visual composition that puts in effect the action in relation to the idea and the object. You can create your own material, as in drawing it or taking photographs, or you may use pre-existing sources. You do need to provide me with information about the sources (links, book citations, etc).

This project is due on Blackboard on February 11, 2013 at 9 AM. We will discuss your assignment during class. If you don't upload the file by the beginning of class, it will be considered late.

Guidelines:

1) You need to upload the material on the corresponding forum under the link "Discussions." You will find this link on the left menu bar of Blackboard.

2) To upload your assignment, write a reply to the corresponding thread, and select upload from the Blackboard interface.

3) Technical process: once you have finished your assignment, please save it as a Photoshop file (PSD). This format should allow you to save all layers. (Do not flatten it.)

4) You need to save a different version as either a jpg (jpeg) or png. For both of these formats you need to flatten the document. Also make sure to "save as" so that you don't write over the original PSD file. Make sure to upload both formats on Blackboard.

Week 3

February 11, 2013

Principles of Compositing in image, word, sound, number

Weekly Assignment:

Combine four objects from different sources.

Choose objects which in real life would never be found together.

Your rendering of the objects must appear "realistic," meaning that your composition

appears as though you simply took a snapshot.

The objects must be presented as follows"

- 1) One must function as a background.
- 2) One must function as a midground.
- 3) One must function as a foreground.
- 4) One must vacillate between the planes.

You should take the liberty to push the meaning of the terms background, midground and foreground.

Your composition should be uploaded to the discussions folder under the corresponding forum.

Project is due at the beginning of class on Monday, February 25, 2013.

Week 4

February 18, 2013

HOLIDAY: President's Day

Week 5

February 25, 2013

Principles of Montage and Collage

Review of weekly Assignment, prepare for first major assignment

Week 6

March 4, 2013

DUE: First Assignment

In-class Critique

(Note: the Major assignment described below was made available on the first week of class.)

Due: Monday, March 4, 2013

Develop two separate elements/objects/images. One should explore the potential of material samplings, and the second the potential of cultural citations. Develop your project using Photoshop. Your assignment should demonstrate a clear exploration of the software.

The project should take a critical stance, meaning that it should offer a space for reflection and interpretation. It should not be didactic by any means. The project can support or question the concepts of material sampling and cultural citation. This is up to you, but you must develop your position through research, which you will show and discuss along with your final project.

For material samplings you will need to take pre-existing images and recombine them.

For cultural citations you will need to develop your own material.

You will upload your assignments as jpgs. You must also upload your Photoshop file and a list of your sources that you found online, or other places, such as books that you may have scanned.

Weekly assignment:

Review the text of "Margarine" and "Myth Today" by Roland Barthes, assigned on the first week of class.

Make sure also to read the text "The Rhetoric of the Image" which is attached to this post. Download as a PDF.
We will discuss it in class on March 11 in preparation for the second major assignment.

Week 7

March 11, 2013

Introduction of Second Assignment

Lecture on Design, Illustration and vector graphics

Choose an image that is complex in detail, such as a high contrast photograph with a wide range of values.

In Illustrator, with the pen tool, outline the shapes which you think best define the objects in the composition. You will then color each element with a palette of your choice.

When done, choose a single word that in your view changes the image's meaning. The word should provide some tension and appear to have equal importance as the image. Please provide the original source--upload it along with your Illustrator file. You also need to include a PDF version of your image. PDF works best because it embeds the fonts properly. This assignment is due on Monday, March 18, 2013.

Week 8

March 18, 2013

Principles of Vectors in image, word, sound, number

Assignment due Monday, April 1, 2012

Design a layout along the lines of an adbusters cover:

<http://www.adbusters.org/magazine> that includes a photo or photo-based image, an image you designed in Illustrator, and a word or phrase that makes a "violent" connection between the two images. Your image must have a formal 50/50 amount of material of photo and vector images.

Your layout should have a minimal background, designed in Illustrator. You may have extra elements, but your overall design must be minimal. Look at the examples discussed during class, and visit the adbusters magazine archives to get more ideas:

<https://www.adbusters.org/>

Also look at their images on Google

And you must view all four videos on The History of the Self. This history informs the critical position of adbusters. You need to be aware of this history in order to develop and/or critique effective media today. Allocate proper time for viewing. The four documentaries add up to a total of four hours.

The History of the Self (to be viewed by April 1st.)

Part 1: <http://vimeo.com/20861423>

Part 2: <http://vimeo.com/20869978>

Part 3: <http://vimeo.com/20874210>

Part 4: <http://vimeo.com/20876519>

If down view these:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prTarrgvkjo>

<http://redpill.tv/the-century-of-the-self-part-1/>

<http://redpill.tv/the-century-of-the-self-part-2/>

<http://redpill.tv/the-century-of-the-self-part-3/>

<http://redpill.tv/the-century-of-the-self-part-4/>

Week 9
March 25, 2013
SPRING BREAK

Week 10
April 1, 2013

Principles of design and media production

Read "The Third Meaning" By Roland Barthes (PDF attached to this entry).

Read "Postmodernism or The Logic of Late Capitalism" by Fredric Jameson (PDF attached to this entry)

View the following documentaries online:

The Persuaders: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/persuaders/>

The Merchants of Cool: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/>

Be prepared to answer questions on these items in a forum that will be created on the 15th. The discussion will be part of the overall research for your final project, and will be worth 10 percent of your final project's grade.

Week 11
April 8, 2013

DUE: Second Assignment

Make sure to read the excerpt of the text "The Mashup of Analog and Digital Code" attached to this assignment as PDF.

Using Illustrator develop two compositions that explore the relation of image and text in terms of analogical and digital code. You may look back at how these terms are discussed in "The Rhetoric of the Image" by Roland Barthes.

Both images must include a text (short phrase or statement), but one of your compositions must emphasize the textual message, while the other must subvert it. In other words, the first must emphasize the text, while the other must play it down.

Requirements:

One of the images must have a sense of depth in terms of figure and ground, that is a clear dimensional relation of the objects in terms of background, middle-ground and foreground. The other composition must question these three concepts and can therefore be "flat" (interpret flat as openly as possible while still making sure technically the composition can be defined literally as "flat").

Both images must have at least three elements, but no more than six; at least one of them must be text. The text can be a phrase or a single word. The phrase should not be too long, and must not overwhelm/dominate your over all composition (this applies to both images).

For each composition, at least one of the elements must be created by you. This could include a photoshop file as well. (This does not include the typeface you will be using because you will choose it in Illustrator.)

For each composition, at least one element should be created in Illustrator, according to the techniques learned during class.

Your two compositions must be completed and outputted in Illustrator as a PDF, JPG or PNG. As previously noted, you can use photoshop files, but these must be embedded as part of the layout in Illustrator.

Both compositions must be critical commentaries on one the following topics:

- 1) Politics (including the economy)
- 2) Advertising
- 3) Issues of gender difference or race/ethnicity

You also need to share your research on three online projects/websites/resources that are relevant to the issue that you choose to focus on (see three options above). There is a corresponding discussion forum available on Blackboard for you to do this. You should write a 250 word analysis for each project as part of your individual thread. You may begin to discuss your research as soon as this assignment is available: March 11, 2012. You need to have finished your own analysis by the time that we critique your project, April 8, 2013, and relate it to your own compositions at the time of critique.

You also need to comment on the research of at least two of your classmates. In this case you can be brief (a few sentences), but make sure to discuss all three online projects shared. You can finish your comments a week after we review the work in class.

Week 12

April 15, 2013

Introduction of Third Assignment (Final Project)

Lecture of Networks, Web Development

Due: Monday, May 13, 2013, All revisions based on in-class critique to be uploaded by Monday, May 20, 2013

The final consists of two parts:

1) The first part is the production of two videos. For the first you will shoot and edit your own footage, and for the second you will revisit the content and form of your first video by remixing only online material. In other words, for the first video you must develop an abstract story of your own, then reconsider how your story and the aesthetic that you developed can be recreated with material already online that you can remix to recreate your original message.

For the first video you can use any software of your choice, such as Final Cut. For the video remix you will be using Popcorn Maker.

Popcorn js:

<http://popcornjs.org/>

Popcorn Maker:

<https://popcorn.webmaker.org/>

Review Part two of Everything is a Remix, in which you can see how Lucas and Tarantino remake previous shots: Part two: <http://vimeo.com/19447662>. In your case you will not be recreating your own footage in the remix, but rather searching for material online that can "look like" or somehow conceptually perform the same role of a scene/shot/character in your own video.

Things that must be met:

a) The specific content of your videos is open for you to decide, but some type of tension must be at play: mystery, ambiguity, suspense, potential conflict, etc. It must appear to be a defining moment if the loop were part of an actual story.

b) Each video must be no longer than 30 seconds. If you find this difficult in order to develop your content, think of TV commercials, which are able to tell complete stories in less than 30 seconds. Ask yourself, how do they do it?

c) Your videos must present some type of tension: mystery, ambiguity, suspense, potential conflict, etc. The footage must appear to be a defining moment in a bigger

story.

d) Your video remix, to be produced using Popcorn Maker, must implement at least one "just-in-time" media, such as Twitter, or Google Maps. You must find a way to make the implementation actually part of your remix, as opposed to simply a way of pointing to a link or article which people can click on. This may be possible, but the just-in-time element must somehow become an actual "character in the story."

e) For your video remix you are encouraged to use more than videos. You have the option to embed still images as well. How would stills enhance your storyline?

f) If you're more advanced and know html 5, for your video remix you can embed a page you created that may have images or information that you put together, which will change by using a random script. (See me about this if you to try it).

2) The second part of your final consists of choosing six of your projects from the last semester. The choices could be major or weekly projects. The projects you choose must be improved on if necessary in order to meet the standards of a final production.

You will create a webpage which presents your two final videos at the top and the six selections below them (See attached diagram)

Your videos should be embedded and viewable on your page, but also should have a link to YouTube and Popcorn Maker Respectively (this is already part of any embedding). Your project images should be thumbs (meaning smaller versions of the actual image/project) which when clicked will offer the actual image or video, cinemagraph, etc.

To develop your page may adjust a default template I will provide.

You must upload all material ready for viewing to Blackboard by Monday, May 13, 2013, and must make any adjustments as explained during your final critique by May 20, at which time you will turn in your finalized files by uploading them to Blackboard. You cannot think that May 20 is the actual deadline. If you show up with an incomplete project on May 13, your project will be graded down automatically by one letter grade. If you fail to make the adjustments mentioned during your in-class critique, your final project grade will also be lowered one letter grade.

You also need to share your research on three online projects/websites/resources that are relevant to the subject of your final video. There is a corresponding discussion forum available on Blackboard for you to do this. You should write a 250 word analysis for each project as part of your individual thread. You may begin to discuss your research as soon as this assignment is available: April 15, 2013.

You need to have finished your own analysis by the time that the final project is due, May 13, 2013, and relate it to your own compositions at the time of critique.

You also need to comment on the research of at least two of your classmates. In this case you can be brief (a few sentences), but make sure to discuss all three online projects shared. You can finish your comments a week after we review the work in class.

Week 13

April 22, 2013

Principles of online media production

Due on Monday, April 22

Shoot three fifteen second videos with your smartphone, or photo camera that has options for video. One video must be shot inside of a building, another outside in broad daylight, and the other in a space that is not clear whether it is outside or inside.

Edit your videos according to the lecture of April 15.

Make a 15 second video from the three clips you shot and add text to it as discussed in class. Your video must connote one of the following concepts: Love, Existentialism, Detachment.

Project is due on April 22.

Also view the videos, which are discussed in the essay, "The Mashup of Analog and Digital Code." Make sure to read the section in the text titled "E-lit Remixed" and the following section titled "Remix."

<http://dichtung-digital.mewi.unibas.ch/2010/navas/navas.htm>

The videos are below:

Playing Jeff by Cecelia Chapman and Jeff Couchs

<http://vimeo.com/10685011#at=0>

Distant Place by Cecelia Chapman and Jeff Couch:

<http://vimeo.com/10684966#at=0>

Also study the remixes by Elisa Kreisinger:

<http://popculturepirate.com/video/>

and Joshua Macintosh:

<http://www.rebelliouspixels.com/category/remixes>

Week 14

April 29, 2013

Work on Final Assignment:

Weekly Assignment Due May 6, 2013

Shoot video with your camera, and/or use still images that you took, or found online to develop a motion graphic video that is critical of one of the following:

- 1) Politics (including the economy)
- 2) Advertising
- 3) Issues of gender difference or race/ethnicity

Your video can be no longer than 15 seconds.

Your video must use text that is fully integrated as part of the video. You can think of this along the lines as your second major assignment for which you had to create two different images. Remember that you had to think of the text in both cases as another visual object. In the video you should do the same.

Feel free to move the text around and to use all other technics shown in class. Make sure to also read through the lecture notes on editing in Final Cut.

See some examples of image and text editing:

<http://www.brandnewschool.com/Reels/Ours>

Pay attention to how text is used in the reels for Live Action and Automobile.

Look at the relation of the text in these film Introduction Credits:

Se7en:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FD7w2l88dl8>

Panic Room Intro:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqIclb4qsJI>

Look at a few VH1 Bumpers on YouTube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3T_HHR8kPI

Look at MTV Bumpers:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bR_wdeCtMWE

Week 15

May 6, 2013

Work on Final Assignment (See April 15 for details)

Week 16

May 13, 2013

Present Third Assignment (Final Project) to class

Week 17

May 20, 2013

DUE: Final Project with revisions