

Intro to Digital Film▶TV▶Streaming Video

ANALYSIS AND PRODUCTION

MJD 266: Intro to Digital Film▶TV▶Streaming Video

Fall 2025: 1:45-3:20

Classroom—JEM 142 + Media Creation Studio(MCS)

Web: [LINKS](#) [LECTURES](#) [SCREENINGS](#) [PROJECTS](#)



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THE COURSE: *CINEMATIC STORYTELLING & Streaming Media*

This course is an introduction to the creative conception, production, analysis, and consumption of film, television and streaming video. Throughout the course we will be exploring these areas in several complementary ways.

THE ARTISTRY of CINEMATIC VISION & STORYTELLING. First and foremost, this course is about **cinematic vision and STORYTELLING**. It's about **ARTISTRY**. Throughout the semester, we will be taking a critical look at a broad range of film, television and streaming video productions as multi-faceted **art forms**. Our focus will be on learning about **the people, the techniques, the technologies and all of the skillsets** involved in creating captivating characters and engaging stories. **Film theory, history, semiotics, writing, cinematic language and narrative editing are at the very center of this course** as are the incredible ways they are employed by film, video, and streaming TV producers today.

PERSPECTIVE: Important Questions and Critical Assumptions. Along the way, we'll be re-assessing our assumptions and asking fundamental questions about **what makes a GREAT film, TV, and/or video story?** How can you tell an **excellent** film story from one which is ok... or merely mediocre? What factors tend to come-together in the creation of truly captivating film or TV programs? How does **writing** fit into the creative processes of film or TV? What **kinds of stories translate well** on film, TV or video? What kinds don't? On the viewing side, **what hooks us into binge-watching** a series? And what does it mean to be "creative" or **truly innovative** within a visual culture that so often relies upon sequels, clichés, and stereotypes? What has the **streaming revolution** really done to film and television production, economics, distribution, exhibition? These are some of the central questions we will be exploring.

CREATIVE Production(s): Most importantly, this is also an intensive and creative Film-TV-Streaming VIDEO **PRODUCTION** course. We will be producing a variety of projects over the course of the term and each project will involve **a series of CREATIVE ACTS** (large and small) including → scripting, staging, acting, lighting, recording, shooting, editing, and last but not least, the posting/streaming of your final projects to the Web. Film/TV production is labor-intensive. Throughout the semester, you will become familiar with (and ideally, skilled at) ALL aspects of production. Additionally, you will be presenting your own work and **constructively critiquing** other people's projects to help them create better work throughout the term.

Course Objectives. Overall, there are **several main focal points and objectives** we will tackle throughout the semester:

- 1) **Cinematic EYE (and Ear) → STORY VISION.** This course is designed to help you develop **a more sophisticated cinematic EYE (and Ear)** for seeing and producing strong film-TV-and video stories. Knowing **WHAT** makes a good cinematic story is essential as is **HOW** to create one. This is a **PERCEPTUAL** and mindful skillset more than a technical skillset.
- 2) **DIRECTORIAL PEOPLE SKILLS.** Film-TV-Video production is about **PEOPLE MANAGEMENT**. Throughout the course you'll be working on developing your creative abilities to direct and manage people who are involved in production.
- 3) **FILM THEORY.** We will examine **film theory, or really theories (plural)**, as we look at competing notions of **HOW** and **WHY** some films succeed while others don't.
- 4) **SEMIOTICS & FILM LANGUAGE.** We will learn the essentials of **film "language"** and the cinematic semiotics used to understand and develop moving image productions.
- 5) **THE ACTS of PRODUCTION.** We will engage in the **many acts of creative production** of film and TV programs – from phases of concept and scripting development through to marketing and screening.
- 6) **SCRUTINIZING STEREOTYPES & FORMULAIC TROPES.** We will **critically scrutinize the stereotypes, tropes, and other production patterns** which tend to dominate our film and TV universes.
- 7) **AGENDAS.** We will examine a variety of **MAJOR and minor industries and the agendas** which influence **what is produced and how we watch**.

EVALUATION & PROJECTS

1. Attendance, In-Class Participation, Health Protocols, Collaboration, Screening Guides, & Discussions ► 20%

This requirement refers to: (1) Attendance in person and online; (2) Ethical Integrity/Honesty; (3) Participation refers to how much you contribute verbally to discussions and how well you **constructively** contribute to the overall well-being of the class; and (4) Daily write-ups, readings, in class projects, screening guides, collaborations, etc.)

2. Projects, Assignments, Treatments, and Screening Guides ► 50%

There will be a series of major film projects and several shorter WIPs and script/critique assignments due for the course. These projects/assignments will involve both written and film production work. Guidelines for each project/presentation will be handed out in advance. **PLEASE NOTE:** All projects must be polished and handed in on time. **IMPORTANT:** (1) Late projects will be penalized 10% for every day they are late. (2) **Failure to complete major projects in this course results in a minimum 2-full grade drop and often translates into an F for the course.**

3. Exams & Portfolio ► 30%

There will be 2 exams and a final portfolio for the course. The exams will be comprehensive and cover all readings, screenings, discussions and presentations. The final portfolio will include polished versions of all of your work.

REQUIRED

This course is **media rich**. Go figure. We'll take advantage of a range of interesting and important resources in a variety of media forms. Each week, you'll be responsible for a series of readings, screenings, or podcasts. These will come from a wide range of sources and media outlets. These screenings are **MANDATORY!** [You will need to have access to Netflix, Amazon, YouTube, and other OTTs \(over the top subscriptions\) throughout the semester.](#)

Equipment

- **Portable External SSD Hard Drive USB-3 or Flash Drives.** For this course you will need to purchase an external SSD USB3 hard drive. You will be storing and editing your films off of this drive throughout the semester. Your drive should have at least **300-500GB of free memory**.
- **SDCards x 64GB+ Speed 90mb/s+—**You will need one or two 64GB (or larger) SD cards WITH A MINIMUM 90mb/s WRITE SPEED!
- **Good OVER THE EAR Headphones—**You will be listening and mixing audio intensively throughout the semester in groups of 2 or more people. You'll want to have a set of OVER-THE-EAR headphones that you don't mind passing to someone else's ears. Full coverage headphones generally work best for film editing.

IMPORTANT NOTES & WORDS TO THE WISE

Class Contributions to Health and Happiness—One of the fundamental elements of human health, happiness, and well-being is that it is **not** merely a “me” issue but a “WE” set of issues. There is very much a collaborative aspect to most aspects of our well-being. It's important in this course to find ways to contribute to the collective well-being of the class.

DIVERSITY and INCLUSION: Our classroom should be an inclusive learning environment for all students, and it is important that we work together to create and maintain an inclusive community for all forms of diversity: race, gender, class, culture, nationality, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion, ethnicity, etc. Acts of hate or bigotry will not be tolerated.

ETHICAL COMMUNICATION/INTERACTIONS: It is of absolute importance that you treat all of the people with whom you work with the **utmost respect and integrity**. This goes for your face-to-face interactions as well as ALL print, telephone, text, tweets, or other forms of communication.

Lessons from Global Pandemic: Adaptability and Flexibility—This course is taking place in the post-COVID era. We hope. If any future health-related outbreaks occur, the course and the syllabus *may* need to change during the semester. Hopefully not. It's important to note that this is distinctly an “in-person” course. It is not offered remotely.

PHONES, TEXTING, & LAPTOPS/IPADS — Be **PRESENT in class, both mentally and physically**. Help others to do the same. Make sure that when we start class, your devices are OFF. Period. **Texting/calling/computing during class counts as an absence.**

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
1	<p>▶ Course Overview and Introduction: MOVING IMAGE Stories Everywhere</p> <p>Are we <u>in</u> or <u>out</u> of a “Golden” age of Streaming Cinematic Stories?</p> <p>Developing YOUR MINDS EYE: The ARTISTRY of VISUAL COMPOSITION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Shots and SEQUENCES: Conceiving-Sketching-Storyboarding 	<p>(See course LECTURES-LINKS & SCREENINGS web page)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readings: 2. Screenings: 3. Production:
2	<p>▶ Camera Work and CINEMATIC SEMIOTICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VISUAL Composition within the FRAME - Shots, Angles, Coverage • Shooting for EMOTION and PSYCHOLOGICAL DRAMA • Pre-Production ESSENTIALS: <i>There be DRAGONS</i> 	(South End ArtHOP Field Shoot: Fri-Sun Sept5-7)
3	<p>▶ Story LINES-I-EYES/EARS: Developing Scripts & Stories to be Seen and Heard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CINEMATIC WRITING and Adaptation for a Film/TV “EXPERIENCE” • The FILM CREW: Creative Collaboration and The Different Roles and Responsibilities involved in Production 	
4	<p>▶ Story LINES-II: It’s ALL in the Editing-1: Assembling SEQUENCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Basics of Digital Non-Linear Editing (NLE) • B-Roll You Say? 	
5	<p>▶ It’s ALL in the Editing-2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing and Cinematic edits - <i>Mise en Scene</i> 	
6	🚩 MID-TERM EXAM!	
7	<p>▶ The Principles of Light and Lighting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling, Shaping, Sculpting Using Lights 	
8	<p>▶ The Joys of VOICE-OVER Narration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where’s Morgan Freeman when you need him? • The Audio MIX: Music, Voice, Dialogue, FX 	
9	<p>▶ Performance for Film and TV:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with REAL people as Actors (non-professional). Coaching, Blocking, Staging, Emotional Counseling 	
10	<p>▶ The FINE LINES Between Fiction and NON-Fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-enactments – How to create them? When to use them? 	
11	▶ Story Work III: Persuasive Storytelling Techniques	
12	▶ Refining Scripts and the Realities of Production Changes	
13	THANKSGIVING	
14	▶ The Future(s) of Film, TV, and Video	
15	<u>Final PORTFOLIO</u>	