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MAR 101L.51: Introduction to Media Arts

Vera N. Brunner-Sung

University of Montana - Missoula, vera.brunner-sung@umontana.edu

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MAR 101L.51 Online

Introduction to Media Arts

Spring 2014

Jan. 27-May 16

Professor: Vera Brunner-Sung

Office Hours: Scheduled—Skype or in-person

Email: vera.brunner-sung@mso.umt.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the course is to introduce you to the analytical processes involved in “reading” film narrative. We will cover three major areas: fictional, documentary and experimental filmmaking. On a broader level this course delivers experiences that should help you expand your ability to:

- think creatively
- develop your ideas through collaborative and lateral thinking processes
- articulate core meaning and thematic concepts in existing films and your own work
- understand the context behind your personal point-of-view and to look empathetically at other global cultures whose context may be quite different from your own

GOALS

I. FILM LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURES

A successful student will be able to understand and clearly articulate their understanding of film stories through the following modes of analysis:

- THE FOUR COMPONENT AREAS: Dramatic, Filmic, Structural, Literary
- GENRE DESCRIPTION/CLASSIC PLOT MODELS
- NORTHRUP FRYE’S MODES OF NARRATIVE (HERO)
- ROBERT MCKEE’S STORY TRIANGLE
- FOUR MODES OF DOCUMENTARY

II. THE WORLD INSIDE—YOUR POINT-OF-VIEW AND CANONICAL STATE

Through the principles that broaden your understanding of the idea of storytelling, you will be able to articulate the nature of your “world view” as well as themes, characters and types of stories that might emerge from someone like you. These principle are based in:

- THE THREE LEVELS OF READING
- FOLK PSYCHOLOGY
- THE CANONICAL STATE OF BEING
- THE IDEA OF “CORE”
- STORYTELLING AS A MEANING-MAKING PROCESS

III. THE WORLD OUTSIDE—THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY

By focusing on other cultures (outside and inside of our own country) and their stories you will be able to compare and contrast your context with theirs and therefore open up your mind to what stories might mean to them and you.

TEXT & MATERIALS

There is no required text for the class, but the class requires viewing of films that are to be your responsibility. This means having access to them via Netflix, iTunes, Amazon, or some other

source from which you can access the materials. The rest of the material is available in documents and video packages that will be found on our Moodle shell.

WORK LOAD & TIME MANAGEMENT

There are a total of FOURTEEN weekly units that are to be completed in sequential order. Each unit has video material, documents and, most weeks, a movie to view. This is not a small amount of material so the best advice I have is: ***get started on your work early in the week and make sure to get movies lined up in advance!*** For the sake of consistency, each week will be structured in a similar manner:

Materials to study:

- 1) **Murph videos:** These instructional mini-lectures by UM Media Arts Professor Michael Murphy are from 3-6 minutes in length and get at the main focus of a given week's work. I highly recommend viewing each one at least twice—once before you read the week's documents and then once after!
- 2) **Weekly documents:** These offer more detail than can be contained in a short video and include the major vocabulary and concepts for the class.
- 3) **Film clips:** Sections of films referenced in the class are here for additional viewing.
- 4) **Additional resources:** This area gives you the opportunity to expand your research into topics generated through assignments and forums.
- 5) **The Core Forum:** This is our central "meeting place," the only spot where we will access the group as a whole. It is for me to share additional information; and for you to ask questions of me or of your classmates. You will notice that there are no points, but I consider it to be a place where I can get to know you and that is a big help when it comes to understanding how to address your particular thoughts and challenges. You might also think of it as "classroom participation." It's a good place for me to look if I'm wavering between one grade and another at the end of the semester, to consider your level of engagement.

Weekly Activities:

- 1) **Assignments (450-600 words, 4pts. each).** Each week will have a written assignment, due via its Moodle upload zone, by the end of that week by 11:55 pm. I do my best to upload my individual feedback to you by the following Tuesday (either as a document or as notes — make sure to check your gradebook to view this). The criteria for each week will be found through the link in the assignment upload area for the week.

IMPORTANT:

- Only the following file formats are accepted: **.doc .docx .pdf**
- Use the following format for file name: **Lastname_Assignment#.format**
*Example: My first assignment for week one, handed in as a Word .doc, would be:
Brunner-Sung_assignment1.doc*

- 2) **Weekly quizzes (2pts. Each.)** *Each week* of the course, a quiz will be available to take beginning Sunday morning and closing the following Saturday night 11:55 pm. In order to get all 3 points you must get all answers correct for the quiz of the week. You will be allowed three attempts in order to do so.

- 3) **Final reflection assignment (4pts).** A chance for you to reflect on your experience of the course this term, what you've learned, etc.
- 4) **Final exam (12pts).** This covers the material from the previous quizzes. You are permitted one attempt.

MAR 101L Points Distribution	
Assignments (14 @ 4pts.)	56 pts.
Weekly Quizzes (14 @ 2pts.)	28 pts.
Final reflection assignment	4 pts.
Online Final Exam	12 pts.
Total Points for the semester	100 pts.

DEADLINES AND LATE WORK!!!

The only possibility for turning in LATE WORK is with weekly assignments. You may turn in a late assignment during the week immediately following its due date, for up to 50% of the points allotted for that assignment (i.e., 2 points). NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS "GRACE WEEK." THERE ARE NO LATE QUIZZES.

A NOTE ON VIEWING FILMS!! VERY IMPORTANT!!

We are in a brave new world of the film "experience." All of the movies we will be viewing this term were intended to be watched in the company of strangers, in a darkened theater. YOU, however, can watch them on your computer, and if you have a laptop, tablet, or smartphone, you could be just about anywhere. And along with this comes infinite distractions. Out of respect for the films, filmmakers, and your own education (which, after all, is a big part of what we are all here for), please be a conscientious viewer. Minimize your distractions: turn off your phone, close the door, dim the lights. Do your best to watch these films without interruptions, as they were intended to be seen. You'll be glad you did.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

As mentioned, the Core Forum is the place for us to talk — about the course material, as well as about clarifications on the syllabus, schedule, assignments, etc. Chances are, if you have a question, your classmates will, too, so let's keep it public! I will be checking in there several times per week. If you would like to contact me personally, please use the email address listed at the top of this syllabus. I will do my best to respond to you within 48 hours.

PLAGIARISM

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/vpsa/index.cfm/page/1339>

STUDENTS NEEDING ACCOMMODATIONS SHOULD INFORM THE INSTRUCTOR

Students with disabilities who may need accommodations for this class are encouraged to notify the instructor or TA and contact the Disability Services for Students (DSS) early in the semester so that reasonable accommodations may be implemented as soon as possible. Students may contact DSS by visiting the Center (located in the Lommasson Center Room 154) or by phoning 243-2243 (voice) or e-mailing dss@umontana.edu. All information will remain confidential.

**MEDIA ARTS 101L DAILY SCHEDULE
WINTERSESSION 2014**

Day 1 Jan. 2	<p>SECTION I—THE BASICS</p> <p>Story, Culture and Meaning-Making (What is Core?)</p> <p>Read: Word-Docs: Story and Meaning-making/3 Levels of Reading The Canonical State</p> <p>View: Murph Videos: The Core/3 Levels of Reading The Canonical State/Triangle/Square Animation</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Assignment #1: Triangle/Square Animation—Story, yes or no? Quiz #1: Canonical and Meaning-making</p>
Day 2 Jan. 3	<p>The Whole Story (Structural Components)</p> <p>Read: Word-Docs: 4 C's Structural Components Three-Act Structure in <i>Casablanca</i></p> <p>View: Murph Video: Structure and Patterns/Narrative, Plot, Story View: <i>Casablanca</i> (1942) dir. Michael Curtiz</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Assignment #2: Tell a story from your canonical state and break it into acts. Quiz #2: Structural Components</p>
Day 3 Jan. 6	<p>The Whole Story (Dramatic Components)</p> <p>Read: Word-Doc: Formalism v. Realism pt.1 4 C's Dramatic Action Components</p> <p>View: Murph Video: Formalism/Realism Review: <i>Casablanca</i> (1942) dir. Michael Curtiz</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Assignment #3: Analyzing a scene from <i>Casablanca</i> Quiz #3: Dramatic Action Components</p>
Day 4 Jan. 7	<p>Editing: The Language of Film (Filmic Components)</p> <p>Read: Word-Docs: 4 C's Filmic Components/Editing and Film Grammar Shot Sizes/Aspect Ratio</p> <p>View: Murph Video: Editing View: <i>The Graduate</i>, dir. Mike Nichols (1967)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Assignment #4: Scene From <i>The Graduate</i>—Dramatic Action through shots Quiz #4: Editing and Filmic Components</p>

<p>Day 5 Jan. 8</p>	<p>The Whole Story (Literary Components) Read: Word-Docs: Formalism v. Realism pt. 2 4 C's Literary Components/It's All Greek View: Murph Video: Formalism/Realism Review: <i>The Graduate</i>, dir. Mike Nichols (1967)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Assignment #5: Analyze a scene from <i>The Graduate</i> for Formalism/Literary Components Quiz #5: Literary Components</p>
<p>Day 6 Jan. 9</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SECTION II—VARIATIONS</p> <p>Genre, Plot, Structure (Development and Lateral Thinking) Read: Word-Docs: Genre + Plot Types Categories of Hero Characteristics of Film Noir View: Murph Videos: Genre Development/Plot Types View: <i>Vertigo</i>, dir. Alfred Hitchcock (1958)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Assignment #6: Identify the elements of Film Noir in <i>Vertigo</i>. Also, describe the protagonist in terms of Frye's Categories of Hero Quiz #6: Genre</p>
<p>Day 7 Jan. 13</p>	<p>Beyond the Classical Hollywood Film: Other Canonicals Read: Word-Docs: Culture, Philosophy and the Canonical State View: Murph Video: "Post WWII Canonical Shifts: Japan" "What is Neorealism," by Kogonada for <i>Sight & Sound</i>: https://vimeo.com/68514760 Review: The Canonical State Video View: <i>Ikiru</i>, dir. Akira Kurosowa, 1952</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Assignment #7: Analyze <i>Ikiru</i> from the point of view of McKee's Triangle, Hero Types, Genre and Plot Types. Quiz # 7: In-depth Canonical and Meaning-making</p>
<p>Day 8 Jan. 14</p>	<p>Beyond the Classical Structures: The Post-Modern Effect Read: Word Doc: Post-modernism and Self-Reflexivity in Film View: Murph Video: The Post-Modern in Film View: <i>Adaptation</i>, dir. Spike Jonze (2002)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Assignment #8: In-depth on Structural Components Quiz #8: In-depth on Structural Components</p>

<p>Day 9 Jan. 15</p>	<p>Reviewing the Fiction Film: Structures and Dramatic Action View: <i>Blue Valentine</i>, dir. Derek Cianfrance (2010)</p> <p>Assignment #9: Using the film for the week discuss the use of these two component areas.</p> <p>Quiz #9: In-depth review and catch-up on vocabulary.</p>
<p>Day 10 Jan. 16</p>	<p>Reviewing the Fiction Film: Literary and Filmic Review: <i>Blue Valentine</i>, dir. Derek Cianfrance (2010)</p> <p>Assignment #10: sing the film for the week discuss the use of these two component areas.</p> <p>Quiz #10: In-depth review and catch-up on vocabulary.</p>
<p>Day 11 Jan 20</p>	<p>SECTION III—ACTUALITY AND EXPERIMENTATION Documentary: Narrative and Actuality Read: Doc: Documentary Modes pt.1 View: National Film Board of Canada Interview clips Visit: http://films.nfb.ca/capturing-reality/#/39/</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Under the “topics” tab, choose “Exploring the Genre.” Select “What is Documentary?” and view the 5 clips. 2. Return to the “topics” tab and “Exploring the Genre” again. Select “Cinema Verité: The Fly on the Wall” and watch the 6 video clips. 3. Return to the “topics” tab, choose “Truth, Perspective & Ethics.” Select “Truth,” and view the 4 clips. <p>View: <i>Hearts and Minds</i>, dir. Peter Davis, (1973)</p> <p>Assignment #11: Analyze <i>Hearts and Minds</i> using you understanding of the canonical state, structures and genre.</p> <p>Quiz #11: The Documentary</p>
<p>Day 12 Jan. 21</p>	<p>Post-Modern Documentary (Reflexivity) Read: Doc: Documentary Modes pt.2” View: Murph Video: From the Voice of God to the Voice of Everyone View: <i>Stories We Tell</i>, dir. Sarah Polley (2013)</p> <p>Assignment #12: Discuss Davis and Polley’s films, and explain how they attempt to get at the Truth.</p> <p>Quiz #12: Documentary II</p>
<p>Day 13 Jan. 22</p>	<p>Poetic realities: Experimental films Read: What IS experimental film?” View: Murph Video: 2-Minute History Experimental Film View: <i>Fake Fruit Factory</i> (1986) dir. Chick Strand; <i>Castro Street</i> (1966) dir. Bruce Baillie; <i>Diary</i> (2010) dir. Tim Hetherington.</p> <p>Assignment #13: Which of the three films captivated you the most, and why? What are these films about? Are they “documentary”?</p> <p>Quiz #13: Experimental Film</p>

Day 14
Jan. 23

FINAL ONLINE TEST