

## CMST 2012: Introduction to Film

Fall 2015 MWF 1:30-2:20 PM, 109 Coates and Wednesday 6:00 – 8:50 PM, 151 Coates

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### Required Course Materials

Giannetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*. 13<sup>th</sup> ed., Pearson: 2013.

*If you have the 12<sup>th</sup> edition that will be fine.*

Bang, Molly. *Picture This: How Pictures Work*, Chronicle: 2000.

Additional materials will be posted on Moodle as the semester progresses.

### Course Description

"Nature and function of film as a mode of communication; film theory and criticism; historical and technological development of the film industry; selected films screened and studied." (LSU *General Catalog*). In order to gain a deeper understanding of how films communicate, you will also practice the concepts by making short video projects.

### Goals

By the end of this course you should have:

1. A deeper understanding of how moving images communicate meaning.
2. An understanding of the various languages of film and the vocabulary of terms used in filmmaking and film studies.
3. Developed an appreciative and critical capacity for watching films and analyzing how they communicate.
4. Gained confidence and experience working with digital video technology.
5. Developed your ability to communicate with moving images and sound through course projects.

### C-I course

This is a certified Communication-Intensive (C-I) course which meets all of the requirements set forth by LSU's Communication across the Curriculum program, including

- instruction and assignments emphasizing informal and formal visual and technological communication;
- teaching of discipline-specific communication techniques;
- use of draft-feedback-revision process for learning;
- practice of ethical and professional work standards;
- 40% of the course grade rooted in communication-based work; and
- a student/faculty ratio no greater than 35:1.

Students interested in pursuing the LSU Distinguished Communicators certification may use this C-I course for credit. For more information about this student recognition program, visit [www.cxc.lsu.edu](http://www.cxc.lsu.edu).

### Course Policies

#### Participation and attendance

This is a 4-hour course that includes a lab component during which we will screen films and discuss them; your enthusiastic attendance at all scheduled meetings including Wednesday evening screenings is expected. In addition, you will be working in groups on many of the graded projects for this course. You should anticipate a considerable amount of outside time and labor developing, planning, shooting, and editing these projects as part of the workload for this course. Managing how to work in your group is part of each group assignment.

## Citizenship

As a member of this class you are expected to be prepared and engaged. Don't be late; it slows us all down. The ringer on your phone must be turned off during class-- not vibrate, *off*--and you should not be texting or using social networks during class. Be forewarned that controversial topics, images, and language are often a part of films and will be a part of this classroom experience. If you are concerned that some of the scheduled films might somehow interfere with your ability to learn, please contact me to discuss *before* screenings.

## The Americans with Disabilities Act and The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a Coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letters, please meet with me during the first two weeks of class to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a violation of the fundamental principles of intellectual property. If you fail to give proper citation for the direct quote or paraphrase of another's idea, or represent someone else's ideas, sentences, essays, or speeches as your own you are engaging in plagiarism. Consult the Code of Student Conduct for information about the serious sanctions that will result from plagiarism or any other academic misconduct.

## Assignments

### Projects

You'll work in teams to create four short video projects. Detailed descriptions and parameters for each assignment will be distributed and discussed in class. Each project has a number of steps such as the creation of storyboards and shot logs; these materials and steps are graded along with the video itself.

### Reading and tests

You will need to keep up with the assigned readings to be prepared for our discussions and projects. Assigned readings are expected to be complete prior to class; you should come prepared to discuss them or ask specific questions. Rather than long exams, there are 6 or so short tests designed to assess your attention to this requirement. We may drop the lowest grade. Tests do not appear on the schedule but may be announced in class.

### Screening responses

Following screenings we ask that you write a short response to the film in question; often we will steer you toward a particular aspect of the film to write about, applying concepts from the course readings. These cannot be made up; you must be present at the screenings to complete these assignments.

## Grading

This class is graded using a 1000-point scale. Points that you earn will compute to letter grades as below:  
967-1000 = A+; 933-966 = A; 900-932 = A-  
867-899 = B+; 833-866 = B; 800-832 = B-  
767-799 = C+; 733-766 = C; 700-732 = C-  
667-699 = D+; 633-666 = D; 600-632 = D-  
0-599 = F

As of fall 2015, LSU grades will be reported with the +/- system as above.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Cut-out storyboards	50 points
Project #1	100 points
Project #2	100 points
Project #3	100 points
Project #4	200 points
Tests	250 points
Screening responses	200 points
<b>Total Points:</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

These are quality points you may earn for completing assignments, assessed by the following qualities: “A” work indicates achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet the requirements of the assignment. It reflects near-perfect technical execution and creativity that exceeds expectations. “B” work indicates achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet the requirements of assignment. “C” work meets, but does not exceed, the requirements of the assignment in every way. “D” work is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet the requirements of the assignment. “F” work fails to meet the basic parameters of the assignment. Plus and minus grades within each of the above generally pertain to more nuanced particulars of each assignment.

### **Late work, missed tests and assignments**

Late work does not meet any given assignment’s requirements by virtue of missing its deadline. Any work turned in late will therefore merit a lesser grade than if it were handed in on time. In accordance with university policy, make-up tests will only be granted with an excused absence that could not have been foreseen, and must be scheduled as soon as possible. They will be different tests than those given in class. If you have a university-excused absence that you know about in advance, you must do the work in advance rather than make it up.

### **Technology**

For this class, you will have access to the technologies needed to create your digital video projects (cameras, audio recorders, computers with editing software) through Studio 151, where we also hold our screenings. When you enter Studio 151 you must swipe in using your Student ID. Students must adhere to Studio 151 policies in order to use the equipment. For those of you who are new to any of the technologies or desire a brush-up, you may consult with the instructors and make use of the tutorials on Lynda.com available to you free with your MyLSU accounts. You may come to Studio 151 any time during open lab hours for help and practice, and/or you may schedule an appointment for help. You are welcome to use your own equipment, but be careful to check issues of compatibility with your team members.

**Schedule** subject to change to meet the demands of the course

M 8/24 Introductions	M 9/21 Continue workshop
W 8/26 Intro to elements of film: <i>City of Cranes</i>	W 9/23 Giannetti Chapter 3, Movement
Screening: <i>Rear Window</i>	Screening: <i>Heavenly Creatures</i>
F 8/28 Continue <i>Rear Window</i> discussion	F 9/25 Continue Chapter 3
Introduce <i>Picture This</i>	
	M 9/28 Project 1 due; Project 2 assignment
M 8/31 <i>Picture This</i> (entire text)	W 9/30 Giannetti Chapter 4, Editing
W 9/2 <i>Picture This</i> cont’d.	Screening: <i>Run Lola Run</i>
Screening: <i>Lumiere &amp; Company</i>	F 10/2 Continue Chapter 4
F 9/4 Cut-out assignment	
	M 10/5 Giannetti Chapter 5, Sound
M 9/7 Labor Day holiday	W 10/7 Continue Chapter 5
W 9/9 Giannetti Chapter 1, Photography	Screening: <i>Mon Oncle</i>
Screening: <i>Visions of Light</i>	F 10/7 Sound workshop
F 9/11 Cut-out assignment due	
	M 10/12 Continue workshop
M 9/14 Project 1 assignment	W 10/14 Giannetti Chapter 6, Acting
W 9/16 Giannetti Chapter 2, Mise en scene	Screening: <i>The Passion of Joan of Arc</i>
Screening: <i>Spirit of the Beehive</i>	F 10/16 Giannetti Chapter 7, Dramatization
F 9/18 Cinematography workshop	

M 10/19 Giannetti Chapter 8, Story  
W 10/21 Continue Chapter 8  
Screening: *Amarcord*  
F 10/23 Project 2 due; Project 2 assigned

M 10/26 Project 3 work  
W 10/28 Project 3 work  
Screening: *Fast Cheap & Out of Control*  
F 10/30 Fall holiday

M 11/2 Giannetti Chapter 9, Writing  
W 11/4 Continue Chapter 9  
Screening: *North by Northwest*  
F 11/6 Project 3 due; Project 4 assigned

M 11/9 Giannetti Chapter 10, Ideology  
W 11/11 Continue Chapter 10  
Screening: *Antonia's Line*  
F 11/13 Project 4 pitches

M 11/16 Giannetti Chapter 11, Critique  
W 11/18 Project 4 screenplays due  
Screening: TBA  
F 11/20 Project 4 work

M 11/23 Project 4 storyboards and shot lists due  
W 11/25 Thanksgiving holiday  
F 11/27 Thanksgiving holiday

M 11/20 Giannetti Chapter 12, Synthesis  
W 12/2 Continue Chapter 12  
Screening: *Citizen Kane*  
F 12/4 Review and wrap-up

F 12/11, 3-5 PM Final exam (screening of projects)

### Screening Schedule

8/26	<i>Rear Window</i> /Alfred Hitchcock/1954
9/2	<i>Lumière &amp; Company</i> /Sarah Moon/1995
9/9	<i>Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography</i> /Arnold Glassman et al./1993
9/16	<i>Spirit of the Beehive</i> /Victor Erice/1973
9/23	<i>Heavenly Creatures</i> /Peter Jackson/1994
9/30	<i>Run Lola Run</i> /Tom Tykwer/1998
10/7	<i>Mon Oncle</i> /Jacques Tati/1958
10/14	<i>The Passion of Joan of Arc</i> /Carl Theodor Dreyer/1928
10/21	<i>Amarcord</i> /Federico Fellini/1974
10/28	<i>Fast Cheap &amp; Out of Control</i> /Errol Morris/1997
11/4	<i>North by Northwest</i> /Alfred Hitchcock/1959
11/11	<i>Antonia's Line</i> /Marleen Gorris/1995/102
11/18	TBA
11/25	No screening (Thanksgiving holiday)
12/2	<i>Citizen Kane</i> /Orson Welles/1941