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# CMST 2012 Syllabus

## Introduction to Film (Spring 2014)

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Class: M/W/F 1:30-2:20 (Coates 237)

Lab: Tues. 6-8:50pm (Coates 151)

Instructor: Lyndsay Michalik

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Office: 151(E) Coates Hall

Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 2:30-3:30pm, & by appointment.

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### 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 learn and practice basic digital video making skills.

### Goals

- 1) Gain a deeper understanding of how moving images communicate meaning.
- 2) Gain an understanding of the various languages of film and the vocabulary used in filmmaking and film studies.
- 3) Develop an appreciative and critical capacity for watching films and analyzing how they communicate.
- 4) Develop a functional understanding of the technological elements necessary to create digital videos.
- 5) Increase your confidence and experience working with digital video technology.
- 6) Develop your ability to communicate with moving images and sound through course projects.

### Expectations, Participation, and Attendance

This is a 4-credit course that includes a lab. Your enthusiastic attendance and active participation at all meetings (including evening screenings) is expected. Active participation in class is worth 7% of your final grade. You will also work in groups on several graded projects for this course. You should anticipate that a considerable amount of outside labor (i.e. developing, planning, shooting, and editing the major group projects) will be a part of your workload for this course. Failure to commit fully to these course components assures a performance that is lackluster at best. **Attendance policy:** You are allowed 5 absences from class & screenings (combined). Your final grade will drop by 50 points for each additional absence, after 5. Your reasons for being absent do not matter, aside from official university excused absences (e.g. verified sports-related travel, serious illness with a doctor’s note stating date and reason). In other words, plan ahead and use your absences wisely.

### Textbooks and Materials

- Giannetti, Louis (2011). *Understanding Movies* 12<sup>th</sup> Ed. New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Bang, Molly (2000). *Picture This: How Pictures Work*. New York: SeaStar Books.
- You will also need several DVD-Rs.
- Additional articles and assignments will be posted to Moodle.

### Moodle & Email

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Please check **Moodle** for announcements and assignments. Your syllabus, schedule, readings, assignments, and other information will be posted here. It is your responsibility to access this information. Also, please check your posted grades throughout the semester and let me know **immediately** if there has been an error in your posted grade. You must notify me of the error within two weeks of the grade being posted to Moodle. Otherwise, the grade in question will remain as it appears.

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If you **email** me with a question about an assignment or any other question concerning the class, please allow at least 24 hours for a reply. If you email me the night before an assignment is due, there is no guarantee I will read and respond to your email before class. There is also no guarantee that I will check my email over the weekend. (I.e. If you have an assignment due on Tuesday, please do not wait until Monday night to email me with questions.)

## Class Decorum

Feel free to roll out of bed and come to class as you are, but please don't be late; it slows us all down, and is especially disruptive during evening movie screenings. You will be expected to come to class prepared, and constructively engage in class discussions.

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 the scheduled films may somehow interfere with your ability to learn, please contact me early in the semester to discuss this in person.

## Late Work/Missed Exams

In accordance with university policy, make-up exams will only be granted with a university excused absence and must be scheduled as close to the regular exam date as possible. Make-ups will be different from the regular exam. Late work, in general, will affect your group's ability to move forward on a given project.

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## Major Assignments

**Projects:** You'll work in teams to create three short video projects. Detailed descriptions and parameters for each assignment will be posted to Moodle 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 final video your group creates.

**Show and Tell & Screening Responses:** Once during the semester you'll be asked to find a short clip that illustrates a particular concept, and prepare a brief (2-3 minute) discussion, to help the class make connections to course material. This requirement is split into 5 days over the course of the semester—you will only be required to present once. During each Wed. night screening, you will also write a short and immediate response to the film in question. These can't be made up; you must be present at the screenings to complete these assignments. **No exceptions.**

**Know Thine Honor Code**, particularly as it relates to plagiarism. Plagiarizing a written assignment or cheating on a quiz or exam is grounds for **failing** the assignment and/or the course. Just don't do it. Consult your student handbook for guidelines about academic misconduct.

## **The end of semester temporary empathy lapse**

The last two weeks of the semester are stressful for all of us. Please keep in mind that I am significantly more able to help you raise your grade early in the semester than I am later on. A lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.

## **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 to discuss the necessary provisions.

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## **Quizzes and Exams:**

You are expected to keep up with the assigned readings, and be prepared for class discussions and projects. Assigned readings should be complete before class; you should come prepared to discuss the readings or ask specific questions. There are **six reading quizzes** designed to assess your attention to this requirement. When calculating your final grade, I will drop your lowest quiz grade. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class period, and can *only* be made up with a university excused absence, documentation of which should include the reason for your absence, date, and time. This course also includes a **midterm** and a **final examination**.

## Evaluation

**NOTE:** Please check Moodle for your recorded grades throughout the semester and notify me immediately of any errors.

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>% of final grade</u>
Cut-out storyboard	40	4%
Group Project #1	80	8%
Group Project #2	120	12%
Group Project #3	180	18%
Reading quizzes (30 each)	150	15%
Screening responses (10 each)	130	13%
Class participation	70	7%
Show and tell clip & discussion	30	3%
Midterm	100	10%
Final	100	10%

**Total Possible Points            1000 points**

This class is split up into 1000 points, and uses a standard A – F grading scale:

900 - 1000	= A
800 - 899	= B
700 - 799	= C
600 - 699	= D
0 - 599	= F

“**A**” work indicates outstanding achievement, above and beyond the requirements of the assignment. This reflects near-perfect technical execution, creativity that exceeds expectations, and excellent contributions to class discussions.

“**B**” work indicates achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet the requirements of the 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.

**SYLLABUS CONTRACT - CMST 2012**  
**SPRING 2014**

Due in class by Fri. Jan 17th

**I confirm that I have read the syllabus for CMST 2012 (Instructor: Lyndsay Michalik/SPRING 2014), and understand and will abide by the expectations and the course policies detailed therein.**

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Signature

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Print Name Clearly

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Date