

## RHMS 200 Spring 2019

Meeting times: M 3-4:40pm; TH 3:30-5pm

Location: JHRR 258

Screening: M 6-9pm (Miller 205)

.

Melanie Kohnen

Office: JRHH 368

Office Hours: TTH 12:30-1:30pm, and by appointment.

Email: [mkohnen@lclark.edu](mailto:mkohnen@lclark.edu)

### Course Overview:

This course is designed to re-introduce you to TV and film, to inspire you to think creatively, and to introduce you to the culture and practice of studying the media critically. In order to understand the cultural, social, political, economic, industrial, and technological significance of media messages, we will examine how messages originate, how they form, and how they are delivered to audiences. We will examine both practical and theoretical aspects of storytelling, including industrial and historical production contexts and techniques, as well as possible stylistic questions suggested by the texts. In so doing, we will work to develop critical and analytical thinking skills.

Our concentration for the majority of the semester will be on the intersection between form and content in film and television. We will pay close attention to how production formats, editing, camerawork, lighting, and sound create and shape the stories and characters we see on TV and in film. We also examine genre and narrative structures to understand better how writers craft fictional stories. Through examination of media messages and their implicit as well as explicit assumptions about the world, we will uncover how media participates in the creation of meaning writ large.

In addition, you will become familiar with the methodology of videographic criticism—that is, with the creation of video essays that carry out a scholarly analysis of film and television by re-editing television/film footage. You will learn about different styles of videographic criticism, watch examples by scholars and RHMS students, and produce your own videos.

### Course Goals:

- Carry out formal analyses of films and television programs
- Understand how form and content intersect and interrelate in television and film

- Edit video using Adobe Premiere Pro
- Understand and apply videographic criticism, i.e. the critical analysis of moving images through the use of moving images in the form of a video essay

### **Assignment Overview:**

#### Screening Journal (200 points)

You will keep a paper journal throughout the semester in which you record your reactions to our screenings. We will take time after each screening to write down initial thoughts and questions; these notes prepare for discussing the screenings in the Thursday class meeting. I will collect your journals at random points of the semester.

#### Midterm (100 points)

We will have a midterm exam covering the first six weeks of class, during which we cover fundamental ideas about TV style, genre, and narrative,

#### Videographic Exercises and Portfolio (pass/fail; 200 points)

During the first half of the class, you will complete exercises that introduce you to the craft of video editing. You will receive a new exercise every week for three weeks. If you fail to complete these exercises, I will deduct 25 points from your participation grade as you won't be able to participate in our workshops without completing these exercises.

After spring break, you will compile your two best exercises and a newly created exercise into a portfolio, which will receive a letter grade.

#### Video Essay Project (400 points)

You will create a 5-8min video essay on a topic related to this class, such as the analysis of a film or TV show.

#### Participation (100 points)

In-class discussions are an important aspect of this course. Consequently, your participation is crucial to the overall success of the class. You are expected to keep up with the readings and come to class prepared for discussion. This means you should not only have completed the readings, but be ready to discuss and engage the reading's major arguments. During class discussions, I will frequently ask you to suggest passages that we should examine in more detail; you should be able to identify these passages quickly by either underlining, marking the page, or taking notes in advance of class.

Good participation means contributing thoughtful comments and questions that refer to readings, screenings, and core concepts during our class discussion. The quality of your remarks is at least as important as the quantity of your remarks.

In addition to taking part in class discussions, you can also meaningfully participate in class by sending me links to interesting popular and academic articles relevant to our course and by coming to office hours to discuss assignments or to chat about topics related to our course.

### **Assignment Schedule**

If not specified otherwise, all assignments are due at 11:59PM on the due date.

Extensions are only available in the case of dire personal circumstances, and you must contact me at least 24 hours before the deadline. If you don't contact me 24hrs before the deadline and don't submit an assignment, you will not receive any points.

Late assignments are graded down half a letter grade. I do not accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Points</b>
Videographic Exercises	See reading schedule	Pass/Fail
Participation	Ongoing	100
Screening Journal	Ongoing	200
Midterm	02/26	100
Portfolio of Exercises	04/07	200
Video Essay Draft	04/29	200
Final Video Essay	05/09	200
<b>Total</b>		<b>1000</b>

### **Reading Schedule**

#### **Week 1**

01/24 Introduction and Overview

#### **Week 2: Production Formats**

**Screening:** *I Love Lucy*, “Job Switch” ; *Dragnet*, “The Big Seventeen”

01/29

Thompson, Ethan, and Jason Mittell. “Introduction: An Owner’s Manual for Television.” In: *How to Watch Television*. NYU Press: 2013, 1-13.

01/31

Hilmes, Michele. “Seeing Through the Fifties.” In: *Only Connect: A Cultural History of Broadcasting in the U.S.* 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

- Further viewing: [A Date with Your Family](#) (1950)

Mittell, Jason. "Modes of Television Production." In: *Television and American Culture*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

### **Week 3: Television in Context: The Age of Relevance**

Screening: *The Courtship of Eddie's Father*; *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*; *M\*A\*S\*H*

02/05

Murray, Noel. "M\*A\*S\*H: Socially Relevant Comedy." In: *How to Watch Television*. Edited by Ethan Thompson and Jason Mittell. NYU Press, 2013.

02/07

Hilmes, Michele. "The Age of Relevance." In: *Only Connect*, 264-273.

Further reading on ratings:

- VanDerWerff, Todd. [How Many People Are Watching Netflix?](#) Vox 2019.

### **Week 4: Visual Style I: Staging, Camerawork**

Screening: *Miami Vice*, "Milk Run" (S1 E13, 1985); clips from *Daredevil* and *Touch of Evil*

02/12

Mittell, "The Elements of Television Style." 176-194.

LJ Frezza, "Nothing," <https://vimeo.com/88077122> (A video essay about *Seinfeld*)

Verdeure, David. [The Apartment](#). A deformative video essay about *The Apartment* (dir. Billy Wilder, 196).

Suggested:

- Zoglin, Richard, and Denise Worrell. "Hot Cops, Cool Show." Time Magazine, 1985.
- Camerawork clips:
  - <https://twitter.com/Criterion/status/1088539180509085698> [Hitchcock's *Notorious*]
  - <https://twitter.com/thisisinsider/status/1093147299197345793> [*Haunting of Hill House* long take]

02/14

Butler, Jeremy. "Stylistic Crossover in the Network Era: From Film to Television." (*Miami Vice* analysis). In: *Television Style*. Routledge, 2010.

### **Week 5 Visual Style II: Editing, Graphics, Sound**

Screening: *House Hunter* Season 109, Ep. 3, "Seeking a Vintage Charmer in Portland, OR"; TV credits; *UnReal*

02/19

Mittell, "The Elements of TV Style," 195-212.  
Barry, Matt. *Life of an American Fireman* (1903): Editing Analysis.  
<https://vimeo.com/271387947>

02/21

Max, D.T. [Confessional: On UnReal, a former Bachelor producer satirizes her experience.](#) *The New Yorker*, 2016.

### **Week 6: Midterm**

Screening: No screening this week

02/26 Midterm

02/28

Introduction to video editing (via *Hannibal/The Wire*)

Sunday, March 3: Exercise I due at midnight

### **Week 7: Narrative**

Screening: 24 (S5, "7-8pm" is also a bottle episode); opening scene of *Lost; Master of None*, "New York I love You"

03/05

Introduction to video editing II (multi-screen; task: re-edit Hannibal in the style of 24)  
Mittell, "The Form of Television Narrative," 213-234

03/07

Mittell, *Lost* analysis, 259-267

Sunday, March 10: Exercise II due at midnight

### **Week 8 Genre I**

Screening: Clip from Ken Burns' *The Civil War* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7HmBmWz9ml>); *Community*, "Pillows and Blankets" (S3 E14, 2012); *Supernatural*, "Changing Channels" (S5 E8, 2009)

03/12 Mittell, 234-255

03/14 – SCMS

**Instead of class, attend** "Queer Voices, Queer Images: Video Essays as Queer Media Scholarship" panel at the Gender Studies Symposium, featuring presentations by RHMS students (3:30-5pm in the Council Chamber). **In your screening journal, take notes and reflect** about what you learned about videographic criticism in this panel.

Sunday, March 15: Exercise III due (change the genre of Hannibal/The Wire through editing)

## **Week 9 Genre II**

Screening: Exercises

03/19

In class: Peer Review of Exercise I, II, and III (groups select one exercise from each group member to feature during the screening)

03/21

Morimoto, Lori. [Hannibal: A Fanvid](#). [in]Transition, 2016.

## **Week 10: Spring Break**

### **Week 11: Videographic Criticism**

Screening: *Columbus* (dir. Kogonada, 2017, 104min)

04/02

Introduction to Videographic Criticism I:

- Wes Anderson, Centered: <https://vimeo.com/89302848>
- Todd Haynes + Negative Space: <http://mediacommmons.org/intransition/negative-space>
- The Follow-Shot, <http://mediacommmons.org/intransition/2018/03/08/chained-camera>

04/04

Introduction to Videographic Criticism II

Pisner, Noah. [An Interview with Kogonada](#). 2018.

- Lee, Kevin B. The Video Essay: Lost Potentials and Cinematic Futures. 2018. <https://vimeo.com/298734232>
- Kacprzak, Mikolaj. Kogonada's Columbus Subconscious Reflections. <https://vimeo.com/groups/audiovisualcy/videos/260872019>

04/07 Exercise Portfolio due (three exercises from before break plus Epigraph based on *Columbus*)

## **Week 12 Deep Dive: Film Editing**

Screening: *Rushmore* (dir. Wes Anderson, 1998, 93min)

04/09

## Video Essay Project overview

🎬 Screening of video essays by previous students

- "Falling" and "Escaping" as Queer Tropes, <https://vimeo.com/245845818>
- Do We Really Know *All About Eve*?, <https://vimeo.com/294878579>

🎬 Patrick Keating on Camera Movement in 1920s films:

<http://mediacommmons.org/intransition/2015/12/29/homeless-ghost>

04/11

Skype conversation with Luke Pebler, Film and TV Editor

## Week 13 Deep Dive: Film Sound and Narrative

Screening: *Arrival* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2016, 116min); Clips from *Gravity* (dir. Alfonso Cuaron, 2013)

04/16

Mera, Miguel. "Towards 3-D Sound: Spatial Presence and the Space Vacuum." In: *The Palgrave Handbook of Sound Design and Music in Screen Media*. Ed. Liz Greene and Danijela Kulezic-Wilson, 2016.

Related clips:

🎬 2001: A Space Odyssey Blue Danube scene:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZoSYsNADtY>; Frank Poole's death scene:

<https://youtu.be/-3m-Zu3qgM4>; Stargate sequence: <https://youtu.be/ebmwYqoUp44>

🎬 Star Wars opening scene: <https://youtu.be/yHfLyMAHrQE>

🎬 Apollo 13 nightmare scene: <https://youtu.be/OnH0L2Hsth0>

🎬 Star Trek (2009) space jump scene: <https://youtu.be/dnpZeA1s3KY>

🎬 The Sound of Gravity: <https://vimeo.com/76123849>

04/18

- The Sound of Arrival (podcast). <https://soundworkscollection.com/post/the-sound-of-arrival>
- [Denis Villeneuve on Arrival](#). New York Times, 2016.
- Directorial Trademarks: Denis Villeneuve, <https://vimeo.com/292863499>

## Week 14 Deep Dive: Lighting and Cinematography

Screening: *Moonlight* (dir. Barry Jenkins, 2016, 111min)

04/23

Dyer, Richard. "The Light of the World." In: *White: Essays on Race and Culture*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Routledge, 2017.

Latif, Nadia. [It's Lit! How Film Finally Learned to Light Black Skin](#). The Guardian, 2017.  
[An Interview with Barry Jenkins](#)

04/25

- [Anatomy of a Scene: Moonlight](#)
- The Cinematography of Moonlight, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr6aYjtT288>
- Lighting and Color Palette in Moonlight,  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYh\\_IrwZXmo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYh_IrwZXmo)

## **Week 15**

Screening: Video essay drafts

04/30

Video essay drafts discussion

05/02

Course wrap-up

Final Video Essay due: Thursday, May 9, 1-4pm

### **General Grading Criteria:**

A= Excellent

This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, and readings. Writing is clear, analytical, and organized. Arguments offer innovative insights, specific examples, and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade for participation are consistently prepared for class, synthesize course materials effectively, and contribute insightfully.

B=Good

This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly, but leans toward broad analysis rather than innovative perspectives. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C=Average

This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague, tangential and/or features significant grammar and spelling mistakes. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis, and features misunderstandings of key concepts/theories. Classroom participation is inarticulate, superficial, and/or infrequent.

D= Unsatisfactory

This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material, and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared, and off-topic.

F=Failed

This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

### **A Note on Laptops and Cell Phone Usage**

We will decide on our technology policy during the first class meeting.

### **Absences**

Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed two unexcused absences during the semester (if your unexcused absences exceed that limit, you put yourself at risk of failing the course). All other absences must be for valid, non-academic reasons, such as medical emergencies, athletic commitments, or religious holidays. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to catch up on the work we have done during class. Also note that showing up more than ten minutes late to class automatically translates into an unexcused absence for that class meeting.

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

For information on what constitutes academic integrity, see the College's official policies here: <http://legacy.lclark.edu/dept/pathfind/academicinteg.html> If you haven't already done so, take the tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism available here:

<http://library.lclark.edu/reference/plagiarism/index.htm>

### **Accommodations**

Please come and speak with me if you are having difficulties with the course material, readings, or assignments. I am also very happy to work with students who are in need of special accommodations. If you anticipate needing special accommodations, contact the Student Support Services Office to discuss your situation. That office will contact me, and we can take appropriate action to make sure all your needs are accommodated.