

## Camera, Light, and Motion

David Tamés, 617.216.1096, david.tames@massart.edu, office hours by appointment

### Course description

An introduction to fundamental visual language elements and construction of cinematic sequences. Exploration of codes and genre conventions filmmakers express in narrative, documentary, or experimental form. Study of space, line, shape, color, tone, movement, rhythm and how these elements are structured through the process of observation, writing, directing, acting, lighting, camerawork, editing, and production design. Final projects build on cinematic literacy in the form of a research paper or a dynamic media, machinima, or video game prototype exploring the future of cinema in a post-film context. You will learn how to apply cinematic language to your work in video, design, or inter-related media forms.

### Prerequisites

You must be familiar with fundamental video production and editing and be comfortable shooting and editing on your own. The *Introduction to Video Production* and *Documentary Video Boot Camp* courses offered through Professional and Continuing Education, or equivalent experience, meet the prerequisites. If you have any concern about meeting the prerequisites, please discuss this with the instructor.

### Class meetings

Mondays, 6:35 P.M. to 10:00 P.M., January 25 - May 10, 2010 in Tower room 312 (time was revised).

### Resource page

Handouts, reference materials, and links related to the class are available at: <http://Kino-Eye.com/clm/>

### Readings

You are required to obtain two books from which readings will be assigned:

*The Visual Story, Second Edition: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV and Digital Media* by Bruce Block (Focal Press, 2007).

*Grammar of the Edit, Second Edition* by Roy Thompson and Christopher J. Bowen (Focal Press, 2009)

We will not discuss the readings in class explicitly, however, you are expected to integrate the concepts presented in the assigned readings in your visual explorations, class discussions, questions, and critique of other student's work. The following books are not required, but recommended (depending on your specific interests):

*The Cinematic*, Documents of Contemporary Art Series, edited by David Company (Whitechapel, 2007).

*Cinematic Storytelling: The 100 Most Powerful Film Conventions Every Filmmaker Must Know* by Jennifer Van Sijll (Michael Wiese Productions, 2005)

*On Stories* by Richard Kearney (Routledge, 2001)

*Aristotle's Poetics for Screenwriters* by Michael Tierno (Hyperion, 2002)

*The Five C's of Cinematography: Motion Picture Filming Techniques* by Joseph V. Mascelli (Silman-James Press, 1998)

*In the Blink of an Eye*, 2nd Edition by Walter Murch (Silman-James Press, 2001)

*The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 2nd Edition by H. Porter Abbott (Cambridge University Press, 2008)

*Sight, Sound, Motion: Applied Media Aesthetics* by Herbert Zettl (5th edition, Wadsworth Publishing, 2007)

*Expanded Cinema* by Gene Youngblood (Dutton, 1970)

*Essential Deren: Collected Writings on Film* by Maya Deren (Documentext, 2005)

*Film at Wit's End: Essays on American Independent Filmmakers* by Stan Brakhage (Polygon, 1989)

*Essential Brakhage: Selected Writings on Filmmaking* by Stan Brakhage (McPherson, 2001)

*Experimental Film and Video* by Jackie Hatfield (Indiana University Press, 2006)

### Class procedures

Class sessions will include presentations, screening, and critique of student work. You will be expected to do a reading, planning, shooting and editing outside of class time. In addition, a scene analysis project and a final project will be assigned. There is a great deal of flexibility in terms of the tools and media used to create project deliverables, as the primary emphasis is on your use of cinema language. Therefore, you should work with tools you are familiar with. Equipment malfunctions or data loss will not be accepted as excuses for incomplete assignments

### Required format for deliverables

You must bring your assignments to class ready to screen as a self-contained QuickTime .mov file. The written component of the film analysis and final assignments must be submitted as a PDF document.

### Grading

Grading is on a Pass/No Credit basis. Active participation in class is required. Assignments will be evaluated on the basis of organization, storytelling, and technique. An incomplete grade may be given if at least 80% of the requirements of the class have been met and there are extenuating circumstances.

### Attendance

Attendance to all class meetings is mandatory. If you miss a class, you must show your work the following week. Missing more than two class meetings will result in a No Credit grade in accordance to MassArt policy.

### Media storage and supplies

You must supply your own videotape and other expendable items required to complete assignments. It is recommended you purchase a portable, bus-powered hard drive for storing your media. A triple-interface (USB, FireWire 400/800) drive (e.g. LaCie Rugged) is recommended.

### Equipment

You will benefit if you are able to use your own camera and editing system, however, if you need to check out cameras, microphones, and lighting kits from the Professional and Continuing Education equipment pool, these can be checked out from MassArt Audiovisual Services (AVMS). Call them to confirm hours. Equipment may be reserved in person or by calling 617.879.7160.

### Editing lab

If you don't have your own editing setup, you can use the Computer Arts Center labs on the 3rd floor of Tower which are open seven days a week. Call 617.879.7300 to confirm lab hours. Both Final Cut Express and Final Cut Pro are available in the labs.

## Schedule

#	Date	Presentation + Discussion	Readings Due	Assignment Due / Screening + Critique
01	January 25	<b>Cinematic Language</b>		
02	February 1	<b>Tone &amp; Color</b>	<i>The Visual Story:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Ch. 1 The Visual Components</li> <li>• Ch. 2 Contrast and Affinity</li> <li>• Ch 5. Tone</li> <li>• Ch. 6 Color</li> </ul>	Visual Biography Exploration
03	February 8	<b>Space &amp; Frame</b>	<i>The Visual Story:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 3 Space</li> </ul>	Tone & Color Exploration
	February 15	No Class, Presidents' Day		
04	February 22	<b>Line &amp; Shape</b>	<i>The Visual Story:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 4 Line and Shape</li> </ul>	Space & Frame Exploration
05	March 1	<b>Movement &amp; Rhythm</b>	<i>The Visual Story:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 7 Movement</li> <li>• Ch. 8 Rhythm</li> </ul>	Line & Shape Exploration
	March 8	No Class, Spring Break		
06	March 15	<b>Montage</b>	<i>The Grammar of the Edit:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 1 Editing Basics</li> <li>• Ch. 2 Understanding the Footage</li> <li>• Ch. 3 When to Cut and Why?</li> <li>• Ch. 4 Transitions and Editing Categories</li> <li>• Ch. 5 General Practices for Editors</li> </ul>	Movement & Rhythm Exploration
07	March 22	<b>Sound Design</b>	<i>Reading will be provided as a handout</i>	Editing Exploration
08	March 29	<b>Narrative, Documentary, and Experimental Strategies</b>	<i>Reading will be provided as a handout</i>	Sound Design Exploration
09	April 5	<b>Cinematic Storytelling</b>	<i>The Visual Story:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 9 Story and Visual Structure</li> <li>• Ch. 10 Practice, Not Theory</li> </ul>	Final Project Proposals
10	April 12	<b>Cinema + New Media: Interactive, Performative, and Net-based Cinema</b>	<i>Reading will be provided as a handout</i>	Film Analysis Presentations
	April 19	No Class, Patriots' Day		
11	April 26	<b>TBA</b>	<i>Self-selected, project related</i>	Final Project (work in progress presentations)
12	May 3	<b>TBA</b>	<i>Self-selected, project related</i>	Final Project (work in progress presentations)
13	May 10	<b>Final Project Presentations</b>		Final Project Presentations

Class meetings will typically run along the lines of this schedule but may vary week by week:

6:35 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. Screening and critique of assignments (or presentations)

8:00 P.M. – 8:15 P.M. Break

8:15 P.M. – 9:15 P.M. Weekly topic presentation and discussion

9:15 P.M. – 9:30 P.M. Presentation of the next assignment